ISLAMIC STUDIES
AND ISLAMIC EDUCATION
IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Editors

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FOREWORD

The development of Islamic education in Southeast Asia is tremendous and receiving an overwhelming support from the community. Many governments support the establishment of Islamic educational institutions both financially and administratively.

In a more recent development, a specialised international university, namely the International Islamic University of Malaysia was established. The university employs a unique methodology in its education system, having Islam at the core of its foundation. At the same time, knowledge which is loosely labelled 'conventional' or 'western' by some, is not neglected. The approach is synergistic and diverse in nature.

More Muslim parents are convinced that an educational institution which covers both parameters of education in their content and environment offers a better option for their children. Interestingly, an institution such as the International Islamic University of Malaysia attracts non-Muslims to study and to work at the university. Nowadays, many schools which are either being 'Islamic religious school' in its name or carrying out similar perspective receive strong support from the Muslim community. In Malaysia, it is certainly flourishing. In other parts of Southeast Asia, this system is gaining popularity.

What is important is that Islam becomes the pillar of this education system. The product of this education system, namely the students, must also be trained to live according to the teaching of Islam. Life is governed by the tenets of Islam regardless of its activities. To immediately have a comprehensive and advanced institution may not be possible to all. Initiative, effort and strong-will would assist in gradually realise the establishment of such an institution.

Another important aspect is teacher selection and training. Teachers must not be assumed to know what to do. Naturally, they have to meet the necessary criteria. However, if the human resource development part is not given serious attention, they may not be able to cope not only with academic responsibilities, but also in the understanding of the direction of the institution. Therefore, a holistic training module must be developed and performance is continuously monitored in order to meet the standard required.

What truly characterise a school or institution to be Islamic is not its name. It is the philosophy, content, environment and leadership that provide completeness

to the system. When they are well in place, we should be able to predict its positive result. Ideally, a good system is the one that is able to dig and impart knowledge form its original sources, namely the Divine revelations, which are combined with modernity. The discipline of specialisations must be varied and enough to cover the worldly needs. Ultimately, pious professionals with global perspectives should be able to lead the world. Knowledge is truly translated to serve the well being of the community. The era of civilisational glory would perhaps resurface.

DR. KHAIRUL 'AZMI MOHAMAD
Executive Chairman,
Yayasan Ilmuwan

INTRODUCTION

No-one would deny that in recent years there has been an explosion of interest in the study of Islam worldwide, both within the Muslim community and outside it. Islamic education and the burgeoning field of Islamic Studies in Southeast Asia are no exception. Such interest is contributing to significant changes in the way that the study of Islam is both conceptualized and taught in the region. Once dominated by scriptural interpretation and exegesis, for some years there has been a growing trend towards the use of new disciplinary approaches in the understanding of various religion-influenced phenomena in Muslim societies. The field of Islamic Studies now encompasses a wide variety of disciplines, including those of anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, and the more interdisciplinary fields of gender studies and area studies.[1] Outside of Islamic Studies scholars in these disciplines are also turning their attention to the study of issues pertaining to Muslims and Islam. The topics which such scholarship seeks to understand in Muslim societies are also increasingly diverse, and include democracy and political pluralism, secularism, gender, law, human rights, ethics, economic development, the environment, popular culture, consumerism, Islamic finance, even management and organizational theory.

A major factor impacting upon this enlarged field of Islamic Studies is the rapid growth in the number of scholars who are working in it, and in particular those who come from outside the Islamic religious tradition. The influence of the latter, working as they often are in prestigious academic institutions with abundant scholarly resources, using the latest methodologies, and in conditions of academic freedom, is in many cases significant. Yet their status as scholars who have grown up outside the Islamic tradition, who may live and work in non-Muslim countries, and who may lack a profound knowledge of Islamic scripture or a personal religious commitment to Islam, surely colours their interpretations. This dialogue between "insiders" and "outsiders" is one of the defining characteristics of Islamic Studies in Southeast Asia – one which, in fact, has a long tradition in Muslim scholarship.[2]

While it can, of course, be said that the study of Islam in Southeast Asia has a long history of being "globalized", it is clear that the educational networks and scholarly pilgrimages in Islamic Studies are also changing significantly. For some

years the universities of McGill, Temple, Leiden, Chicago, and the Australian National University (for Islam in Southeast Asia) have been competing with the traditional centres of Islamic Studies, such as Al Azhar or the Islamic University of Medina, for influence over a much more broader field of Islamic Studies. Globalization has given unprecedented opportunities to greater numbers of young Southeast Asian Muslims to study overseas than ever before, whether it is in the Middle East, Iran, South Asia, Europe, the UK, North America, or Australia. Student mobility, scholarly exchange, international conferences, joint research projects, the setting-up of Islamic Studies centers in Western universities, international benchmarking and quality assurance among universities in Muslim countries, the increasing use of English as a medium of academic discourse, and not least of all the communicative revolution made possible by the Internet and email, are all impacting upon the nature of the study of Islam in Southeast Asia. They are increasingly drawing it into a single, globalized academic landscape.

The expansion of material resources available for the study of Islam in Southeast Asia is a further crucial factor in the development of the field. The unprecedented interest in Islam has also attracted the attention of scholarly foundations and funding agencies globally – both in the Islamic world and the West. While the flow of Middle Eastern oil wealth into Islamic schools and education institutions worldwide is well-known, less attention has been given to how non-Muslim funding agencies are also impacting upon studies of Muslims and Islam. Some of these funding bodies may reflect the political agenda of the governments with whom they are affiliated (e.g. combating terrorism or promoting democracy), or at least concerns that are more prominent in the West: e.g. in the case of Europe, the integration of Muslim minorities into European mainstream society, or the promotion of a democratic, 'liberal' Islam. In the case of Southeast Asia, international funding agencies have long been active in funding local scholars and projects in the field of Southeast Asian Studies within the context of promoting economic and social development. Local funding sources should also not be overlooked. The relatively successful path to economic development of Muslim-majority countries like Malaysia and Brunei, and to a lesser extent Indonesia, has enabled the governments of these countries to provide greater resources for the study of Islam in their schools, colleges and universities.

Evidently the September 11 2001 attacks and the ensuing "war on terror" have affected the public image of Islamic educational institutions.[3] The education of Muslims in Southeast Asia has become an object of international attention, in particular since a spate of bomb attacks in Indonesia, a resurgence of violence in the Muslim

regions of the southern Philippines, and especially the bloody separatist uprising in Thailand's southern border provinces since 2004. The rhetoric of the militants involved in these incidents is couched in religious terminology. Governments (not only Western but also of countries in the region itself), intelligence organizations, security analysts, the mass media, and scholars in diverse fields studying Islam have sought to explain the ideology behind the violence by examining the education that young Southeast Asian Muslims receive. One of the results of this politicization of Islamic education has been the drowning out of the voices of the teachers and administrators as public discourse focuses on the presumed links between Islamic education and the global political situation – particularly the phenomenon of Islamic radicalism. It has also contributed to the mistaken view that recent developments in Islamic education are due purely to outside political pressure – especially that of Western governments – while underplaying the internal dynamics of Islamic educational reform that have been at work in Southeast Asia and elsewhere decades before 2001.

It was with these issues in mind that an international workshop was held at Walailak University, Nakhon Si Thammarat, southern Thailand, in January 2006, on the theme, "Voices of Islam in Europe and Southeast Asia". The aim of the workshop was to gather leading scholars from Southeast Asia and Europe from various disciplinary backgrounds, to discuss the diversity of perspectives within this rapidly developing field of Islamic Studies. The timing and venue of the workshop were prompted by a more immediate factor: the outbreak of violent conflict in southern Thailand. This development, which received great attention in both the local as well as the regional media in Southeast Asia, obscured the more far-reaching changes already taking place in the study of Islam in Southeast Asia – including in Thailand itself. While papers presented at the workshop covered a wide range of areas including radicalism, gender, migration, identity and conflict resolution, the theme that almost all papers touched upon – and for many was the focus – was education.

The essays selected for inclusion in this volume were drawn from papers that were presented at this workshop. The book is an attempt to capture a portrait of the current state of Islamic education and Islamic Studies in Southeast Asia. It argues that the study of Islam in Southeast Asia today, whether at the school or university level, is characterized by dynamism and change. This change has been an on-going phenomenon over at least the last three decades and is driven principally by internal factors which are too often overlooked by observers from outside the field. The book presents a region-wide survey of the state of Islamic education in Southeast Asia. It argues that, both because of the historical precedent of the "Jawi networks" in this

region,[4] as well as the more recent acceleration of the regionalization of Islamic education, the study of Islam in Southeast Asia today ought to be understood within a regional context.

At the same time, however, the development of Islamic education should primarily be seen as having been determined by the unique historical circumstances of each country. The landscape of Islamic Studies in the various countries represented in this volume is the outcome of long struggles with governments, religious bureaucracies, and different religious schools of thought, protecting varying interests – political and economic, as well as scholarly.

For example, in Indonesia since independence Islamic education has undergone a long struggle, firstly during the period of secular nationalism under Sukarno and his NASAKOM (nationalism-religion-communism) ideology, then through the period of heightened political control during Suharto's New Order regime. It was during the latter period that Western-educated scholars in Islamic Studies like Harun Nasution and Nurcholish Madjid began to exert their influence in the field, and this influence has increased since the end of the New Order in 1998 after a long contest with more traditional approaches. The result has been a gradual change of paradigm in Islamic Studies, particularly in relation to the increasing integration of social science methodologies.[5]

In the case of Malaysia the colonial legacy has loomed much larger over the development of Islamic Studies than in the case of Indonesia, as Shamsul and Azmi argue in this volume. Much of the debate has been about how to integrate and strengthen Islamic Studies within the university system, and, since the 1980s, to implement the "Islamization of knowledge",[6] a project seemingly born of disillusionment with secular, "Western" modes of knowledge. In Malaysia – and also in Brunei where, as Iik shows in his essay, the Ministry of Education has recently (2005) supported the Islamization of knowledge "at all levels of education" – Islamic Studies is a state agenda to a much greater extent than in other countries in the region. In that respect, more "liberal" interpretations of Islam are regarded with some suspicion. Another defining characteristic of debates about Islam in the plural society of Malaysia is that, unlike in Indonesia, Islam is never far away from race politics, and in particular the question of the status of one ethnic group – the Malays. Islam has become a vital element in discourses of Malayness favoured by conservative Malay sections of the government, which have a clear political agenda.[7]

Debates about Islamic education in countries where Muslims are a minority show rather different characteristics. In Islamic education in southern Thailand, the region where the largest proportion of Thailand's Muslim live and which has a

long tradition of Islamic education, there are two main dynamics. The first is the influence of southern Thai Muslims who have graduated from the Middle East – particularly from Egyptian universities, as Hasan Madmarn outlines in his essay. In this regard southern Thailand bears similarities to the situation of Islamic education in Indonesia in the 1960s, before the influence of Western social science perspectives. But another crucial aspect of Islamic education in southern Thailand is its role in the struggle against projects of national assimilation carried out by the Thai state since the 1940s. The *pondok*, or traditional Islamic school, is not only associated with religious study but with the preservation of Patani Malay cultural identity. Islam has thus, to a certain extent, become a pawn in a nationalist struggle for the identity of the Patani Malay population, which since 2004 has once again turned violent.[8] Owing to a sense of ethnic kinship with the Malays across the border, Malaysia looms large for Thailand's southern Muslims, both as a destination for Islamic education as well as a model for the development of Islamic educational institutions and programs. For the Muslim minorities of Cambodia and the Philippines the struggle for Islamic education is more formal than substantive. That is, the principal dynamic remains the need to establish a systematic system of education for Muslims, who are handicapped by their minority status, the reluctance of the state to give too much autonomy in educational matters, and a lack of resources.

All of the contributors to this volume of essays except for one are Southeast Asian scholars who are working, or have worked, in Southeast Asian tertiary institutions. Their disciplinary backgrounds range from Islamic law, to history, sociology, anthropology, politics and area studies. Many of the contributors to the book are not only scholars working on topics related to Islam and Muslims in Southeast Asia but are also university administrators who have had a significant impact on the study of Islam in their own universities and indeed in the countries in which they work.

While the national focus and the content of each of the essays selected for inclusion in this volume vary considerably, five dominant themes can be discerned.

First, all of the essays show that perhaps the most significant aspect of this dynamism in Islamic Studies is the field's engagement with the social sciences and integration with mainstream or "secular" education. This movement can be seen in the two powerhouses of Islamic Studies in Southeast Asia, Indonesia and Malaysia, although the place of the social sciences within the two systems differs significantly. Nur Manuty outlines the integration of Islamic Studies programs into the Malaysian university system over the last three decades. With the founding of the International Islamic University of Malaysia in 1983 and the Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization under Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas in 1987, social science method-

ologies gained an important place in Malaysian Islamic Studies programs, although they were formally subject to the concept of the "Islamization of knowledge". Azyumardi Azra's essay discusses the sweeping changes taking place in Islamic higher education in Indonesia, as the State Institutes for Islamic Studies (IAINs) are gradually transformed into state Islamic universities (UINs) based on, in Azra's words, "the reintegration of the so-called Islamic religious sciences and 'secular' sciences". Azra explicitly distinguishes the philosophy of the IAINs from the Islamization of knowledge concept that is so influential in Malaysia's Islamic Studies models. He argues that the "[n]atural sciences are of course already based on universal principles. If certain theories in the social sciences and humanities are Western-based, then the need is not to 'Islamize' them, but to develop theories that are based on Muslim social and cultural realities." In the case of the Muslim minority countries the development of such Islamic Studies programs integrating the social sciences at the university level lags behind. However in reforms to Islamic school education in Thailand, mainland Southeast Asia, and the Philippines, the emphasis is clearly now on mainstreaming and integrating religious education within the national education systems.

As Southeast Asian governments have gradually changed the focus of their education systems from nation-building to training for employment Islamic Studies programs program are being forced to become and more vocationally-oriented. Reforms in higher education in Muslim countries are making universities more responsive to market forces, with the result that innovative new areas of study and courses have emerged. In the case of Malaysia, one of the most developed economies in the region and where the vocational orientation of higher education has progressed the furthest, Nur Manuty gives one examples of a degree in Da'wah ("Missionary Work") which has been integrated with modern management studies to produce courses like "Principles and Theory of Leadership", "Islam and Contemporary Issues", "Human Resources Management", "Islamic Work Ethics", "Organizational Management", and "Planning and Strategy". Courses in Islamic finance are particularly popular with Malaysian students because of their direct relevance to the job market.

With the increasing pressure from government and a more competitive higher education sector issues of quality assurance have also come to the fore for university administrators. In a much-quoted paper in 2000 the former Vice Chancellor of the International Islamic University of Malaysia, Mohd. Kamal Hassan, argued that "institutionalizing the culture of quality" was one of the key challenges for Islamic Studies in Southeast Asia today.[9] In the case of Indonesia Azra shows that government demands for quality assurance, and competition for students both within the national system as well as internationally, have resulted in UIN Syarif Hidayatullah

Jakarta, the first former IAIN to begin the transformation to UIN status in 2002, achieving a high ranking in numerous "non-religious" categories when compared with other Indonesian "secular" universities. As the Malaysian government makes greater efforts to market its universities to overseas students, particularly from the Muslim world, it is giving greater attention than ever before to international rankings. Malaysian universities and indeed their Islamic Studies programs are now subject to increasingly stringent review processes.

Secondly, as mentioned above, this dynamism in Islamic Studies and education is an internal phenomenon that has been on-going for at least the last three decades. This period coincides with the rapid economic development of Southeast Asia, one of the results of which has been the provision of increased resources for the promotion of Islamic Studies as part of the state's support for education generally. The return of increasing numbers of highly-qualified, overseas-educated scholars both from the Middle East and North America, to expanding tertiary education systems in Southeast Asia, has been another significant factor in the reform of Islamic Studies. The much-discussed "Islamic Revival" over this period has also made Southeast Asian Muslims more conscious of their Islamic identity, which has translated into increased public support for Islamic education.[10]

Azra shows that the impetus for the transformation of Indonesia's IAINs into UINs actually began in the late-1970s, even though the process has only begun to be implemented since the Reformasi period following the fall of the Suharto and the New Order in 1998. The reform and modernization of Islamic education in Malaysia was receiving attention from the early 1980s if not earlier, as Nur Manuty's essay clearly demonstrates. Numerous regional conferences on the development of Islamic Studies in Southeast Asia over this period attest to this internal dynamic.[11] In the case of the Philippines, Carmen Abu Bakar claims that events after September 11 2001 have clearly stimulated the government's renewed attention to Islamic education. However, she also shows that at least since the Marcos period the government recognized the importance of Islamic education to the Muslim communities of the southern island of Mindanao, and the need to improve standards and integrate it with the national education system. Hasan Madmarn highlights the influence of Thais educated in Egyptian universities from the 1960s and 1970s on the development of Islamic education in Thailand. This influence marked a milestone with the establishment of the College of Islamic Studies at Prince of Songkhla University in 1989, and continues to the present day. In the case of Brunei Iik likewise shows the great contribution of the Al Azhar graduates to the development of Islamic education there from the 1960s.

A third point that emerges from the essays is the greatly varying quality of Islamic education in the different countries of Southeast Asia. Islamic education has, in recent decades, generally proceeded in leaps and bounds in the Muslim-majority countries of Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia. However, as Omar Farouk clearly demonstrates in his essay, in countries where the Muslim community is a minority, such as in Thailand, Cambodia, and the other countries of mainland Southeast Asia, Islamic education is lagging. This is due to a range of factors stemming from their minority status, including a chronic lack of resources, a lack educational leadership, and the Muslim community's comparatively weak political representation in the national governments. In the case of the Muslim region of southern Thailand – more specifically in the region of the former sultanate of Patani – the relative decline of Islamic education is a bitter pill to swallow for a community that still nurtures historical memories of Patani as a former regional centre of Islamic scholarship, a centre which produced Islamic scholars respected in the Middle East and read by students of Islam in many parts of Southeast Asia. It is also in these Muslim minority countries that the politicization of Islamic education following September 11 has been most keenly felt. For example, Carmen Abu Bakar shows that while steps to reform Islamic education in the Philippines and integrate it with the national system date from at least the early 1980s, the government's approach since then can be characterized at best as largely one of benign neglect. The fact that since 2001 the government's attention to the issue has too obviously been motivated by suspected links between madrasahs and terrorism, she argues, threatens the recent significant progress towards the "mainstreaming" of Islamic education in the Philippines.

Fourthly, and perhaps surprisingly, there are clear signs of the growth of a critical, even "liberal" trend in Islamic Studies scholarship in Southeast Asia.[12] Contrary to popular perception, as many of the essays in this volume demonstrate, it is the religious scholars who are often the more open-minded and critical, while governments (and government-controlled religious bureaucracies) tend to be more conservative in their attempts to frame religious discourse. A common observation made of Islam in Indonesia is that radical Islamic thinking tends to find a refuge not in the "religious" IAIN institutes but in the "secular"-oriented, state universities. What is motivating this "liberal", critical trend? One reason is the economic and political development of countries in the region, which have increased resources as well as opened up political space in which to express such critique. In the case of Indonesia the process of democratization following the collapse of the New Order in 1998 has ushered in a period of liberalization in Indonesia's politics, which Azra argues has also affected its education system. In his words the IAIN is "basically a liberal institute". By con-

trast, in countries with less open political systems criticism and debate are muted and religious educational institutions much more subject to state control – as can be seen in Iik's study of Islamic education in Brunei under the hegemony of the "Malay Islamic Monarchy" ideology.

The integration of the social sciences with religious studies discussed above is producing students with more diverse perspectives on Islam and issues facing Southeast Asian Muslims. Iik shows that in the case of Brunei programs that have integrated Islamic Studies with other disciplines such as literature, linguistics, history, English, geography, or economics tended to "widen the horizons of [the students'] thought and learning", making them "more articulate in diverse fields beyond purely Islamic Studies." He notes that similar observations have been made by Osman Bakar about students who have graduated from Malaysian institutions offering such programs.[13] Azra notes that besides working as *kyais* in *pesantren*, graduates of Indonesia's IAINs also work as "social and NGO activists, journalists, political activists, leaders of socio-religious organizations", and, since the end of the New Order, also as leaders of political parties and members of legislative bodies.

This approach is leading to a significant shift in the way Islam itself is being studied. In the context of the study of Islam in Indonesia this change is referred to in an influential 1996 book by Amin Abdullah, Rector of UIN Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta, as a progression from "normativity to historicity".[14] That is, formerly the study of Islam was dominated by an idealized, ahistorical view of religion that emphasized Islam's doctrinal and legal aspects and tended to ignore empirical realities. As Azra writes in his essay, the IAINs have gradually seen a paradigm shift where "historical and sociological approaches provide a wide range of analysis for the study of Islam, bringing social-historical realities into interaction with religious experience". In the case of Malaysia, too, Ibrahim Abu Bakar has argued that Islamic Studies in Malaysia has undergone a progression of phases, from "the religious", to "the linguistic" to the "pragmatic and liberal"[15] Nur Manuty calls for Malaysian scholars to engage with "liberal-minded" scholars in the Muslim world, including figures like Mohammed Arkoun, Hassan Hanafi, Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid, and Ibrahim Musa. If one were to place Brunei along this continuum, however, Islamic Studies has for the most part, according to Iik, remained "heavily religious".

One of the most interesting and challenging aspects of this progression has been the development of programs in comparative religion. How do Muslims study other religions, or members of other religions study Islam, in a multi-religious country? Is it possible to be truly objective in the study of religions not one's own, to go beyond "the production of subjective truths about the other"? Irwan and Zainal

assess the challenges, methodological as well as practical, facing the development of comparative religious programs in Indonesia during a period of religious conflict in Indonesia following the collapse of the New Order.

Finally, it is clear that besides its functions of teaching religious knowledge and vocational skills, Islamic education in Southeast Asia is bound up with the problem of Islamic identity. Educational reform is closely related to the desire to retain an Islamic identity. This desire has been a motivating factor in the internal political struggles that Islamic education has been involved in within their own countries, as outlined above, as well as the struggle with the legacy of Western colonialism that is so important to Southeast Asian nationalism. Indeed, Shamsul and Azmi argue in their essay that "of all the past influences that have influenced Islam, Muslims, and Islamic education in Malaysia it is British colonialism that has had the greatest impact. Indeed, its effects have lasted well into the postcolonial era."[16] Western educational models are one of the most powerful and enduring legacies of the colonial era. It is partly for this reason that the concept of the "Islamization of knowledge" resonates so strongly in Malaysia and in models of education for Muslims influenced by Malaysia, such as southern Thailand and Brunei. In the case of Indonesia, although they form only a minority, Indonesia's Salafi madrasahs reject the "corrupting influence of Western culture" and their students express an exclusive identity through a strictly regulated code of behaviour, dress and language, as Noorhaidi shows in his essay.

If Westernization may be seen as one challenge for Islamic Studies in Southeast Asia, then another is the issue of the appropriateness of developing programs in Islamic Studies based on the blind imitation of Middle Eastern models. The Southeast Asian Muslim community numbers around 250 million people. Its size, common Jawi tradition, and increasing regional interaction, make it one of the largest, distinct, and most dynamic communities in the Islamic world. While there is no doubt that Islamic Studies in Southeast Asia has had and will continue to have an organic connection to developments in the field in the Middle East, yet at the same time authors in this volume point out the necessity for the study of Islam in Southeast Asia to respond to contemporary realities and needs of Southeast Asian countries. Kamal Hassan noted in his 2000 essay the tendency of local Muslim organizations and "politically-oriented individuals" to rely on Middle Eastern scholars and activists who lacked knowledge of the "cultural, social and political history and complexity of Southeast Asian countries".[17] Nur Manuty offers examples of Islamic Studies programs in Malaysia today which, rather than transplanting methodologies and programs from Middle Eastern universities, have attempted to tailor their programs

to "the distinct social, political, and religious setting in Malaysia". Azra also sees in Indonesia the tendency for the development of a "distinctive Indonesian tradition of Islamic studies", that is the product of intense interaction both with Islamic learning in the Middle East and the Western intellectual tradition, and which is geared to local Indonesian contexts. This confidence is much less apparent, however, in the Muslim minority countries of mainland Southeast Asia, where, as Omar Farouk points out, movements to modernize education are viewed with mistrust as an attempt to "disconnect and uproot people from their own identity by separating their spiritual from their material needs" – particularly when the Muslim community in these countries is in a position of political and economic marginalization.

If the Middle East has a disproportionate influence on Southeast Asian Muslims, the "gaze" of the Middle East towards "the East" and Southeast Asia in particular is much less acknowledged. The image of Asia among Muslims in the Middle East is the subject of Mona Abaza's essay, which appropriately starts this volume. For Abaza, "the Middle East seems to have played a hegemonic role as a donor of religious supremacy and 'authentic' culture as exemplified in a domineering orthodox discourse, while Southeast Asians remain cast as its syncretistic recipients." Whereas there is a tendency amongst Southeast Asian Muslims to view the West and the Middle East as diametrically opposed to each other and epistemologically in conflict, Abaza highlights a stream of thought among Middle Eastern intellectuals that is greatly admiring of the Western enlightenment and its liberal tradition, and whose views of "the Orient" are blurry and replete with "cultural biases" and a "lack of respect". This situation is only recently being addressed with the establishment of research institutes and teaching programs in Middle Eastern universities that focus on the Asian region.

Seeking knowledge has long been a fundamental part of the Southeast Asia Islamic tradition. Traditionally young Muslims left their villages and even their homelands for the purposes of obtaining an education in Islam. Upon their return they were highly regarded. Many would establish *pondoks* or *madrasahs* and become respected as learned people in their communities. The education that the young Muslims who attended these *pondoks* and *madrasahs* received was highly valued by society. Centres of Islamic learning like Kelantan, Patani, and Aceh were known as the "Verandah of Mecca" for the quality of their *'ulama*, their Islamic education, and the religiosity of the community. This traditional model of education for Muslims began to be challenged in the late colonial era with the intrusions of colonial rule and Western educational models on the one hand, and the influence of Islamic modernism on the other. It suffered a further blow following independence and the

establishment of nation-states. With the rise of bureaucratic polities across Southeast Asia seekers of knowledge found new roles as functionaries in government bureaucracies. The meaning of the search for knowledge also changed. Education was geared to serving the ends of the state, in particular its objectives of national integration and economic development. From its former status as a thing of value traditional Islamic education now came to be seen more and more as a backwater and problem for national development. This crisis in Islamic education has affected every Muslim community in Southeast Asia, and, as the essays contained in this volume attempt to show, each community has attempted to solve the problem in its own way and according to its own circumstances.

The crisis in traditional Islamic educaation in Southeast Asia is felt not only in the sphere of education but also in the way that Islam is understood. The decline of *pesantren* and *pondok* education is related to the eclipse of the Sufi traditions that were nurtured by traditional Islamic education.[18] This is turn has contributed to a decline of the Sufi element in formal expressions of Islam in Southeast Asia - the personal, emotional, spiritual relationship with God - which, together with the *shariah*, theology, and philosophy, make Islam whole. The result in many cases tends to be the dominance of the literalist, formalistic, and legalistic aspects of Islam – particularly when reinforced by the strong arm of the state.

It might be said, then, that Islamic education in Southeast Asia remains an unfinished project. Within each state there have been intense struggles over what an education in Islam should mean. At the international level there are diverse forces each seeking to influence the paradigm of Islam in its own way. Many Muslims in Southeast Asia wish to return to their own tradition of education, yet the old template has already been broken. The new templates that are currently being formed are the subject of this book.

Editors

Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad
Patrick Jory

Endnotes

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CHAPTER ONE

ASIA IMAGINED BY THE ARABS

Mona Abaza[1]

> I was raised to love the West and to admire its civilization. I have
> spent my most significant formative years in Europe which rein-
> forced my love and the pillars of my admiration. When I went to
> the East and returned to my country, my love and admiration of
> the West was transformed into a certitude.[2]

In 1938, Taha Husayn, the then Dean of Arabic culture and considered to be one of the most significant intellectuals of Egypt's renaissance and liberal age, pub-lished a posthumous work, 'The Future of Culture in Egypt'.[3] It was written dur-ing the period of the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty which officially ended the occupation. It marked a new epoch in national life. There were serious hopes among nationalists that the world would change. The opening chapters start with an intriguing question, namely: did Egypt belong to the East or the Orient (the Arabic word *al-sharq* entails the two meanings), or to the West (*al-gharb*)? Was the Egyptian mind oriental in its perception and judgement over matters? Briefly said, which was easier for an Egyptian, to understand a Japanese and a Chinese, or a Frenchman and an Englishman?[4] In raising such a question Husayn wanted to convey the message that at that time Egypt indeed belonged to the West, rather than to the East. Egypt was part of the culture and civilisation of the Greek-Roman Mediterranean world. For Husayn, there were two fundamentally different civilisations: that which derived from Greek philosophy and art, Roman law, and the morals of Christianity, and that which derived from India. Egypt, according to Husayn, belonged to Greek-Roman civilisation.[5]

This chapter will look at how 'Asia' is imagined by Arab intellectuals. It will look at travel accounts, specifically Anees Mansur and Husayn Fawzi's two journeys to India. It will also survey the Southeast Asian research Institutes in the Middle East and the production of knowledge by Arabs on Asia - including Iran, India, Japan and Southeast Asia.

BETWEEN THE ORIENT AND THE WEST

For Husayn, since Egypt was part of Europe and of the Greek-Roman realm the ancient Egyptian mind was not 'oriental', if one understands the 'Orient' as meaning China, Japan, and India and that which is related to these regions.[6] For Husayn, the confines of 'near' Asia were Palestine, greater Syria, and Mesopotamia. But Persia is described as an Oriental nation, located in far-away lands. Persia seemed to be remote and have little to share with Egypt. Egypt did not really have much contact with the Persian Empire. In fact, in the past the Persians had attacked Egypt and destroyed the empire. Persia, then, seemed to Husayn to have been an invader. Its relations with Egypt were characterized by war and mutual disdain.[7] Egypt had fought this new conqueror with all its strength, and had sometimes even relied on the assistance of Greece. Husayn then tells us that Egypt had little contact with Asia and much less with the far East in comparison with its ties to the Mediterranean world. Indeed, Husayn laments that he never understood the aims of the Society of the Oriental League in Egypt, which emphasized solidarity with the Far East instead of the near West.

Within a year of the publication of Husayn´s book Husayn Fawzi, a French-trained medical doctor who would later become one of the most significant modern historians of Egypt and a pioneer in the genre of modern travel accounts, published a book on his voyage to the Indian Ocean which he called 'A Modern Sindbad: a Tour of the Indian Ocean 1938'.[8] Fawzi had sailed out on a collaborative mission consisting of forty British and Egyptians sailors and scientists. He was then appointed by the Egyptian government as the medical doctor responsible for the crew. The account is written in an anecdotal style and is full of details about the interaction between the British crew and the Egyptians. Fawzi provides detailed description of the places he visits, but his style reflects a feeling of astonishment and bewilderment towards these 'exotic' cultures. Fawzi's nine-month voyage departed from Alexandria, passing Aden, the Hadramawt and Sri Lanka on route to the subcontinent. He

also visited Colombo, Kandy, Bombay, and Karachi. What interests us here is both Fawzi´s fascination at the Indian civilisation but at the same time his fear and horror of the Hindu temples. Fawzi describes at some length the temples he visits in India and shares with the reader his thoughts on an ancient and great civilization. Fawzi is indeed fascinated by its aesthetics. However, his narrative of India and Hinduism is paradoxical because it simultaneously reflects both his fascination and distaste. He conveys an image of an oppressive Orient, dwelling on such local horrors as widow burning. To Fawzi, Malabar's temples evoked only nightmares and the fear of death. Having thus been led to ponder where the 'East' began and where Egyptian civilization should locate itself vis-à-vis the East, he concluded that Egypt, its civiliza-tion, and even he himself, all belong to the Western European world. Like Husayn, Fawzi was a firm believer in Western enlightenment and progress. Both believed that Western civilization represented the highest level of independent thinking and self-critique. Fawzi concluded his account by contrasting Western civilization with Hinduism, which to him represented an Oriental and above all alien, despotic cul-ture. The chapter entitled, 'The East and the West' *(al-sharq wal-gharb)*, epitomizes the core of this argument. Like Husayn, Fawzi wanted to distance himself from the 'East' by showing that Egypt belonged to the Mediterranean basin. At the same time, however, Fawzi was certainly fascinated by Gandhi's peaceful resistance to British co-lonialism. He reminds us that Gandhi's spiritualism was important in pointing to the injustice of the Brahman caste system. However, Fawzi insists that the British were not entirely harmful in advancing their civilizing mission ideology. Their doctors, for example, had introduced vaccination, their engineers the irrigation system.

The respective stances of these two liberal intellectuals tell us much about the perceptions of Egyptians towards the vague notion of the 'Orient', and their even more vague, self-reflexive positions. Asia played a crucial role in the on-going project of identity construction. They unconsciously reproduced inherited notions of a despotic Orient, which itself was part and parcel of their naive attitude towards enlightenment and rationalism. Again, this was not a novel argument. The writings of both Husayn and Fawzi were extremely inspiring when they concerned issues of self-perception and the Other at the level of South-South intellectualism. These two intellectuals constructed a vision of an Orient that was much tainted by the spirit of the time. Taha Husayn and Husayn Fawzi were both fervent advocates of the be-lief that Egypt belonged to the Greco-Roman Mediterranean culture. By taking this stance they perpetuated a Western Orientalist perception of an antithetical Orient. Both Husayn and Fawzi adopted an uncritical position with respect to the West. However it would be unfair to reproach them for such a stance, as some Islamists

do today when they attack the advocates of 'Mediterraneanism' as 'unauthentic' and 'Westernized' intellectuals. That Husayn and Fawzi were naive believers in enlightenment is evident, but perhaps also inevitable, given that many anti-colonial thinkers adopted this stance as the only path available for generating social criticism within the confines of a reform.

Fawzi and Hussayn were both firm believers in Western enlightenment and progress. Both believed that Western civilisation represented the highest level of free thinking and inner self-critique. Fawzi concludes his account by counter-posing Western civilisation to Hinduism, which he saw as representing an oriental despotic culture impossible to identify with. This position, however, changes with Fawzi's second trip to India in 1978.[9] In his second account Fawzi re-thinks many of the assumptions and biases which he expressed against Hinduism in his earlier work. In his introduction Fawzi apologises for his previous, intransigent approach to Hinduism that stemmed from ignorance. He reminds us that it was a stand typical of careless youth. India was a dear and beloved neighbour to Egypt. The second travel account is an apology towards the Indians for his previous stand. It was, of course, written during the era of independence, and since writing his first account Fawzi had certainly read extensively the works of Indian intellectuals, philosophers and post-colonial politicians. He also certainly read the British Orientalists who had covered India's cultural heritage. Most importantly, he had been invited to participate in a UNESCO conference. In other words, the times had changed. His return to India 37 years later is interesting because he asks the same question he had raised three decades earlier: was not Egypt part of the Orient? His answer this time is that Egypt is located at the crossroads of the East and West, North and South. By virtue of its geography and history and through its future, it is to remain open to the four directions. It is at once African, Asiatic and Mediterranean.[10]

The stance of these two liberal intellectuals tells us a lot about the perceptions of the Arabs towards the vague notion of the 'Orient', and their even vaguer self-reflexive position towards their understanding of Asia and the East. They unconsciously reproduced inherited notions of the despotic Orient as part and parcel of an enlightened rationalism. However, the notion of Asia changes in the 1950s and 1960s sixties with the rise of the non-aligned movement and the Bandung conference.

It would not be wrong to say that contemporary Arabs are inclined to be rather parochial in their views of non-Arabs. In marked contrast to the Arab-centrism of their co-religionists in the Middle East, however, Southeast Asian Muslims have developed an intense curiosity about the Middle East and in particular its educational centres. There is a whole industry involved in producing translations from Arabic

into Indonesian and Malay, as well as distributing Arabic music and films among Southeast Asian Muslims.

In comparing the Islam of the so-called periphery and that of the centre in the Middle East one gains the impression that the dissemination of knowledge, whether religious or secular, has been rather a one–way relationship. The Middle East seems to have played a hegemonic role as a donor of religious supremacy and 'authentic' culture as exemplified in a domineering orthodox discourse, while Southeast Asians remain cast as its syncretistic recipients. In fact, there exists a contemporary Middle Eastern gaze towards Southeast Asia, which is deserving of further attention.

Would it be possible to interpret this one-way relationship as a natural outcome of the privileged location of the Middle East as the cradle of Islamic scholarship and religious faith? Is it because the Islamic centres perpetuate an Arab-centric vision of the periphery? This is manifested in the fact that the poles of attraction as exemplified in scholarship and centres of religious learning are located in the Middle East. Very little would impress us if we look at the reverse transfer of knowledge. The Arabic language is much admired by Southeast Asian Muslims and Arabic intellectual production is very much esteemed there, but could one pass similar value judgements about the Arabs today and their views of non-Western cultures in general? It is true that Indian films have gained a certain popularity in the Middle East, but there is no such appreciation of Southeast Asian culture, whether popular or otherwise. In fact, 'Southeast Asia' has appeared only recently as a region in Egyptian political jargon, and it has been interchangeably used with a blurred and vague notion of 'Asia'.

Until today, for many Middle Eastern scholars the only "Other" that has been worthy of study and with which a dialogical and yet paradoxical discourse has been perpetuated, is the West. Certainly, the encounter with the West in the last two centuries and the cross-cultural interaction is best exemplified in travel accounts of Arabs to Europe and the United States. The archetype of such a genre was Tahtawi´s sojourn in France. Rifa 'a al Tahtawi (1801-1873) was one of the first Egyptian Azharites to study abroad. He is today referred to in the discourse of Egyptian modernity as a founding father of enlightenment. Tahtawi´s five-year of sojourn in Paris (1826-1831) and his description of the manners and customs of the French epitomizes the crossing of boundaries and bridging tradition and modernity. It is possible to argue that his work is pioneering in the genre of travel literature

As far as Southeast Asia is concerned a twentieth-century parallel may be found in Anees Mansur's *Around the World in 200 Days*. This remains one of the most popular Egyptian travel accounts, having been reprinted some twenty times. It first

appeared in 1962 and the third edition was introduced by the then Dean of Arabic culture of Cairo University, Taha Hussayn, whilst the fourth was given a foreword by Mahmud Taymur.

We have to be reminded that Mansur travelled during the effervescent period of the Bandung conference when Third Worldism was flourishing. It is an account embedded in the 1960s middle class Cairene constructions of an imagined and perhaps anecdotal and distorted 'Far East'. Mansur, who was sent as journalist by the government, tells us that he has been dispatched to report on the Indian state of Kerala, where the Communist Party had won local elections. Mansur started his trip in India (Bombay) before going to Tibet to interview the Dalai Lama, to the Maldives, Singapore, Indonesia (Jakarta and Bali), Australia, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Japan, Hawaii, and ending with the United States.

Mansur's style shifts between a spoken, colloquial Egyptian which could quite often turn to vulgar slang. It is filled with catchy jokes that could be easily interpreted as racist and distasteful.[11] It is often lacking in respect for the local population and their customs. Although Mansur originates from the South, he is clearly overloaded with cultural biases and he reproduces the same stereotypes about 'Asians' that he must have borrowed from colonial accounts. His passages on Bali could be read as indeed revealing a 'macho', misogynist and quite biased Middle Eastern perspective, where he is constantly chasing women and trying to seduce them. The chapter on Bali is titled: 'I am in the Island of Breasts'. Mansur, no different from Western colonial travellers, seems in his accounts to be fascinated by the strange and the fantastic. But he is constantly mocking the countries he is visiting. He, for example, remarks that the Indians speak an esoteric English and their accent is awful. He is proud as an Egyptian to speak it better than them (which is actually doubtful). But it seems that what made this work popular is that he was among the first modern travellers to describe Asia in the period of post-colonialism. The paradox of this book is that, while overflowing with non-alignment jargon it is also replete with personal observations about the 'indigenous' populations which could have been uttered by a former colonial administrator. The book is illustrated with photos of women in 'exotic' dresses, i.e. Balinese and Hawaiian women dancing, indeed very similar to colonial Western travellers' representations or Hollywood productions.

While Mansur´s travel account could be understood as a landmark of 'popular' literature produced in the time of South-South Third Worldist interaction, whereby he was sent as a journalist to cover Third World revolutions and progressive movements, reading it produces paradoxical effects. Mansur is full of biases and disrespect towards non-Western cultures. For example he displays a total lack of respect during

his encounter with the Dalai Lama. As far as Third World solidarity goes there is much to be desired in his observations.

Not much has been published on Asia in literary Egyptian circles since Mansur's travel account. The so-called 'revolutionary' journalist and the 'Bandung effect' have been replaced by short-term official, state-sponsored journalist missions which I will mention later.

INSTITUTIONS AND RESEARCH ON 'ASIA'

Until recently, research conducted by Middle Eastern scholars and their interest in studying overseas have been tainted by their consciousness of the North-South dimension, be it Europe or the United States. Although enjoying a privileged position the North is still under-researched by the South. The institutionalisation of research programs for the Middle East is very much tied to a North-South dynamics whereby funding is largely dependent on either American or European aid or bilateral regional interaction. The weak structural institutions and research bodies which are subject to either authoritarian state control or private funding seems to be one reason why research in the field of Southeast Asian area studies is suffering in the Middle East. In what follows, I describe new research centres in the Middle East which are still considered embryonic and new.

If there has been no institutional backing that has led to the enhancement of Southeast Asian 'area studies' in the Middle East, this does not mean that there is no indigenous production of knowledge by Third World intellectuals on other regions, or more precisely about the Third World. In fact, area studies should draw attention towards South-South longue durée interactions between the Middle East and 'Asia'. If the academic field did not lead to a significant accumulation of knowledge it is in other domains such as journalism or what is to be classified under the domain of travel literature *(adab al-rihla)* that a fascinating body of knowledge is manifested. Contrary to the prevalent argument that Muslims or Arabs are introverted or parochial, this genre of literature has produced a wide range of accounts of contemporary Arabs who have travelled to India, China, Japan and Southeast Asia. Equally, post-colonialism and the national liberation movements did stimulate a Third World internationalism that is well portrayed in Middle Eastern press coverage.

However, when we speak of Southeast Asian area studies today in the Middle East the weakness and discontinuity of institutional support, the strong legacy of

authoritarianism and the growing interference of governments in the management of science, and the crisis in higher educational national systems are significant problems.

The Arab Emirates and Jordan are two other centres in the Middle East that have developed a gaze towards Asia. The term 'Southeast Asia' is, in fact, hardly ever utilised by Middle Eastern scholars. Southeast Asia is simply included under the rubric of 'Asia'. Even though the notion of 'Southeast Asia' came into existence during World War II for Middle Easterners today the notion of Southeast Asia is still quite blurred. Egyptians have most probably inherited and perpetuated an orientalist legacy about Asia, which would encompass Iran, central Asia, the whole of the Indian subcontinent, Southeast, Japan and China. In other words, anything eastwards of the Middle East, non-Arabic speaking and located in the Asian landmass is considered to be 'Asia'. The Arabs perpetuate similar notions about Asia and the Far East as Europeans did for the 'Orient' as a blurred category. Apart from Egypt, for the remainder of the Arab world, with the exception of the Arab Emirates and Jordan, it is hard to see where there has developed any deep interest in Asia. If we look at the indigenous production of North African scholars in their gaze towards the other regions of the Middle East very little indeed could be recorded. Most Moroccan or Tunisian scholars, for instance, have produced knowledge only about Morocco or Tunisia. Very few, if any, Tunisians or Libyans have written anything on Egypt or the Levant.

Certainly, for the majority of the Middle East and Middle Eastern research institutes and universities, the world of Asia and Southeast Asia are still a *terra incognita*. One wonders if it is even worth talking of Middle East area studies on Southeast Asia. There are no well-established institutes, schools or faculties teaching 'oriental' languages, and in depth research is acutely lacking. Yet there are dialogues and interactions taking place and exchanges worth mentioning.

During colonial times it was possible to trace specific networks thanks to international communism, which disseminated information about liberation movements in different parts of the world. During the post-colonial era Afro-Asiatism and the non-alignment movement were prominent ideologies which triggered an interest in development models and liberation movements in Africa and Asia. Egypt created in the 1960s the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organisation. Cairo was in the 1960s a centre for many liberation movements. 1963 the Organisation of African Unity was created. The Centre for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo published an essay by Ahmed Taha Mohammed on Egypt and South-South co-operation.[12] Ahmed Taha Mohammed limited the existent areas of co-operation to three regions, namely Af-

rica, Asia and Latin America. Today the Afro-Asian Peoples´ Solidarity Organisation has launched a series of dialogues with Japanese and Chinese scholars resulting in exchanges of scholars and sojourns of Egyptians to China and Japan.

The Middle East witnessed the creation of various centres of African studies in Rabat, Cairo and Khartoum. The non-aligned movement created a 'rapprochement' in ideologies and struggles against the colonisers.

With the economic take-off in the 1970s and 1980s, 'Asia' for the Arab World, in particular Japan, China and Southeast Asia, started to gain prominence as an example of non-Western models of development. This fascinated Egyptian intellectuals. The economic success of the Asian tigers triggered a curiosity to study their success story. The Asian tigers became an issue of heated debate among Arab intellectuals interested in the possibility of emulating the Asian experience.

Certainly, there was also a close affinity between Indian and Egyptian nationalism reflected in the writings of Egyptian Nasserites and nationalists. Historically, the Egyptian Wafd nationalist party maintained contact with Indian nationalists. Jawaharlal Nehru´s letters to his daughter were translated into Arabic by the late journalist Ahmed Bahaa al-Din. The book became very popular and was reprinted four times. Malek ben Nabi´s writings on the concept of Afro-Asiatism demonstrated a great admiration for Gandhi's non-violent resistance. There are several interesting reports on India by Nasserite journalists in the 1960s. We have to be reminded that Nasser and Nehru were important symbols as leaders of the first Bandung Conference in April 1955. This led to successive conferences on Afro-Asiatic peoples' solidarity. Also, Egypt coordinated with the former Yugoslavia and India to push for Afro-Asian solidarity. This period produced on the level of press coverage interesting South-South connections. But also the Soviet and Chinese communist experiences attracted a large number of intellectuals who followed the events in these countries and reported about them in the Egyptian left-oriented journal, *al-Tali`a*. On the other hand, Gandhi's philosophy strongly influenced Egyptian nationalists and a prominent Egyptian feminist, Doria Shafiq, who went on a hunger strike against the Nasserite regime.[13] Also, Sukarno was recognised by many as having played a considerable role in shaping the nationalist ideology of Nasser.

It was in the spirit of non-alignment and the Bandung conference that the Paris-based Egyptian intellectual, Anouar Abdel Malek, who was among the first to direct a harsh critique of orientalism, wrote a influential book titled, *The Wind from the East*,[14] to remind the Arabs of the significance of 'looking East' and encourage them to direct their gaze towards the Asian civilisations of China and Japan. Abdel Malek argued that these ancient non-Western civilisations shared a lot in common

with the Arabs and could be strategic allies against the hegemonic West. Samuel Huntington's thesis on the "Clash of Civilisations", which divided the world's civilisations into broad cultural entities was greatly inspired by Abdel Malek's divisions, and he quotes him extensively.

In the academic field it is important to mention the valuable work of Ahmed Shalabi, a Cambridge-trained Egyptian who spent many years in Southeast Asia during the Nasser period as a preacher and academic in Indonesian and Malaysian universities. Shalabi was sent to Indonesia in 1955 as a representative of the Islamic conference.[15] The long years he spent in Southeast Asia led him to write a valuable encyclopaedia of the Muslim world consisting of 19 volumes. He dedicated a whole volume to the non-Arabic-speaking Muslim world. His work is particularly significant for its emphasis on the importance of the field of comparative religion. Shalabi's analysis of Southeast Asian Islam provides a rich insight into and a deep knowledge of the history and politics of the region. He also reveals an interesting approach to the study of Hindu-Buddhist influences and details about religious education and institutions. His work is indeed one of the few valuable historical monographs available in the Arabic language. The non-Arabic-speaking Muslim countries included in his work are Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Muslim minorities in India, China, Russia and the Philippines.[16]

To argue that there is no Middle Eastern gaze towards Asia and Southeast Asia would therefore be erroneous. Historically, these two parts of the Worlds have had a long history of religious and cultural exchange through trade routes and the spread of the Islamic faith.

Recently a new trend that differentiates Southeast Asia from the rest of Asia is to be noticed in the political writings, press coverage, and research institutes of the Middle East. The phenomenon of the creation of research centres in the Middle East is quite recent. The most prominent is the Centre for Asian Studies at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University. It was founded in 1994 as a policy-oriented research organisation. It reflects Egyptian interest in Asia and is devoted to the implementation of multidisciplinary work on the Asian continent. It was also founded in response to the awareness that Asia provided the Egyptian academic community with opportunities to widen the scope of its social science research by testing its theories in the Asian domain and by generating new social science research that investigated Asia's rich cultural diversity. The Centre's main research is in international studies, economic studies, Korean studies and Japanese studies. Its publications are in both Arabic and the English language. The publications cover India, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Japan and China. Some of the

titles of the books and working papers include, 'The Impact of Religious Revivalism and Islamic Fundamentalism Compared'; 'Egypt and India in the Post-Cold War'; 'The Islamic Movement in Asia'; 'Democracy and Development in Asia'; 'The Afghan Question: Regional and International Implication; 'Democratic Transformations in Asia'; 'Korean Investment in Egypt'; 'The Chechen Problem'; 'The Image of India in Egypt'; 'Egyptian-Asian Cultural Relations'; 'The Resurgence of Political Islam in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, a Comparative Study'; and 'Japanese Political Culture'. In June 2000 Mahathir Mohamad gave a speech at the centre entitled, "Malaysia and the Asian Financial Crisis", which was later published with responses to the lecture by Egyptian intellectuals. An edited book by Mohammed el Sayyed Selim and Ibrahim Arafat on Egyptian-Asian relations discusses the bilateral relations between Egypt and Japan, China, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Korea, Central Asia and Iran. The Cairo University-Sorbonne-trained philosopher Hasan Hanafi wrote a paper on Islam in Asia. The centre also publishes a Biannual Bulletin titled *Asiana* which includes political and economic news on Asia and Southeast Asia and advertises recent books on Asia.

There exists a second Centre for Asian Studies at Zaqaziq University which offers Masters degrees and PhDs in Asian Studies. Chinese, Indian, Persian, Turkish and Japanese civilisations are classified under the rubric of Asian civilisations. However, these centres are embryonic and lack institutional backing. A glance at these writings tells us that the quality of the writing could hardly compete with Cornell or Leiden Universities or the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales. It is hard to claim that Egyptian expertise would constitute genuine and valuable knowledge on Asia and Southeast Asia. But these centres are important for networking and exchanging scholars. Egyptian academics are then sent to various regions in central Asia, Japan, or Malaysia and the centres equally host scholars who would like to pursue research in Egypt.

With the exception of Japanese language there is no tradition at Egyptian universities of specialising in the teaching of Southeast Asian languages. Japanese seems to be the most established. It has been taught at the Faculty of Letters, Cairo University, for nearly 26 years. The initiative was sponsored by The Japan Foundation. Cairo, and Ain Shams Universities have Departments of Oriental languages. The Department of Oriental Languages at Cairo University is divided into two sections: Islamic and Semitic languages. Pehlewi and Persian, modern Turkish and Ottoman, Urdu and Pakistani, are the languages included under the rubric 'Islamic'. Semitic languages include ancient and modern Hebrew, Syrianic and Aramaic and Abyssinian (the Gueze). There has recently been an initiative to introduce Malay language.

Al-Azhar University, the oldest university-mosque in Egypt if not in the entire Middle East, has a department of Islamic civilisations where Turkish, Persian and Urdu languages are taught as Islamic cultures and civilisations. Hebrew is also taught at various Egyptian universities. The various faculties of languages, including Persian, Turkish, Urdu and Hebrew, have gained a favourable reputation in recent years for teaching these languages. Due to the Arab-Israeli conflict greater attention has been given to teaching Hebrew than any other 'oriental' language.

In 1987, the Arab Thought Forum, a think-tank similar to the Club of Rome based in Amman and sponsored by the then Crown Prince Hassan, launched a project with the Egyptian sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrahim, founder of the Ibn Khaldun Centre in Cairo, on "The Arabs and the World". It was an initiative by scholars and decision-makers to establish an intellectual discourse with other parts of the world. This led to a series of dialogues, conferences, mutual travel and exchanges with different regions that were of interest to the Forum. As a start the forum divided the regions into the following: Asia, Africa and Latin America. Asia was later subdivided into Japan, China, Southeast Asia and the Indian sub-continent. The outcome was two monographs published in the late 1980s titled, 'The Arabs and Japan' and 'The Arabs and China'.

Al-Sayâsa al-Dawliyya (International Politics) which first appeared in 1965 is one of the main Arabic international politics journals. Its outlook started as an anti-imperialist Third Worldist journal disseminating information about liberation movements. In the first issue the topics covered ranged from the crisis of Vietnam in the 1960s to American imperialism in Latin America to the Chinese Communist Party. Afro-Asiatism, Indonesia's problems with Malaysia, and the Chinese presence in Southeast Asia, were among the topics of concern. The journal continues to appear until today, though its Third Worldist outlook has vanished. It has become a mere summary of international events derived heavily from Western sources.

The al-Ahram Centre for Strategic Studies recently published two important works. An edited volume titled, *The Asian Tigers, Experiences in Conquering Underdevelopment*, in 1995. In the introduction Abdel Mon'em Said states that the book is the result of a program that attempted to fill the gap and serious lack of information about Asia and Southeast Asia. The research was launched in 1993. The articles dealt with the following topics, 'South Korea and Transformations from Authoritarianism to Democracy'; 'The Indonesian Political System: From Authoritarianism to Democracy'; 'Thailand, the Process of Democratisation'; 'The Cultural and Religious Dimensions of the Asian Experience; 'The Cultural Identities of ASEAN'; 'Economic Dimensions of the Asian Experience; 'Lessons to be Learned from the

Asian Experience'; and 'Security and the Military in Southeast Asia'. It is clear that the sources used in all these articles are heavily secondary and basically Anglo-Saxon. For any American or European specialist in the field the work would hardly count as original, but for the Arab reader it could be considered as an extensive review of English literature on the region.

The other book was published by the chief editor of al-Ahram semi-official newspaper, Ibrahim Nafe`, with the title, *What is Happening in Asia?*[17] This book was a result of a trip undertaken by a team of al-Ahram journalists in July 1998 to 'Asia' starting with Islamabad, New Delhi, Singapore, Jakarta and Peking, in which interviews with officials were conducted. Nafe` also published a book on China which provides a panorama of its current financial situation and discusses the problems which Chinese women face concerning domestic violence and divorce. He also discusses the Muslims of China and relations between the Arabs and China. It is again written in a journalistic style and heavily based on Anglo-Saxon and French sources.[18]

The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research established in 1994 Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, fosters research and conferences in which Asia is given a significant space. Iran seems to occupy a large concern as a strategically important neighbour. Some of the lectures offered include, 'The Tajik Conflict: the Dialectics of Internal Fragmentation and External Vulnerability, 1991-1994', 'Ethno-nationalism in Pakistan', 'China's Economic Reforms and their Political Implications', 'International Politics in North East Asia: The China-Japan-United States Strategic Triangle', 'The East Asian Security Environment', 'Iranian Military Capabilities and Dual Containment', 'The Changing Balance of Power in Asia', 'The GCC and the Development of ASEAN', and 'Enhancing Peace and Co-operation in West Asia: An Indian Perspective'. The Centre has translated two works into Arabic, namely: Lester Thurow's *Head to Head: The Coming Economic Battle among Japan, Europe and America*, and Richard Hall's *Empires of Monsoons: A History of the Indian Ocean and its Invaders: the Balance of Power in South Asia*.

INTEREST IN THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

The Iranian revolution triggered strong interest among Arab intellectuals. The works of Ayatollah Khomeini and Ali Shari`ati were first disseminated in Egypt by the Sorbonne-trained philosopher, Hasan Hanafi. Inspired by the Iranian revolution Hanafi attempted to promote the idea of an Islamic left (*al-yassar al-islami)* in which-

Islam would play a progressive role similar to the theology of liberation movement in Latin America. Hanafi published the first issue of *Left Islam, al-yassar al-islami,* in 1981, in which he introduced the ideas of the Iranian ideologue, Ali Shari`ati. In the same issue he wrote an article on Muslims in Asia which is interesting in terms of how the regions are perceived. Written in a sweeping, generalising mood and in a journalistic rather than an academic style, the article consists of 64 pages and includes all Asia's Muslims. For Hanafi, the term 'Asian Muslims' encompasses an area starting from Iran, central Asia, Afghanistan, the former Soviet Union, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and of course Turkey. Two pages only are dedicated to the Muslims of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, and the subtitle is that in this region the Muslims are facing the threat of Christian missionaries.

In 1979, Ibrahim al-Dessouqi Shetta, a professor of Oriental languages at Cairo University, published one of the first works on the Iranian revolution in Arabic language which traced the roots of the revolution. He translated texts by 'Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Khomeini.[19] Al-Dessouqui Shetta's innovative perspective lies in the fact that he relied extensively on Persian sources and was among the first scholars to translate the Shari`ati text, "The Construction of the Revolutionary Self", into the Arabic language. Equally, the Egyptian reporter, Fahmy Huwaydi, published a book on the Iranian revolution which he named, "The Iranian Revolution from the Inside" (1987, 1991, Cairo al-Ahram). In the 1970s Huwaydi, who was a reporter for al-'Arabi magazine in Kuwait, was given a chance through pro-Khomeini Iranians in exile to travel to Iran six times between 1979 and 1986. The book could be read as one of the most fascinating anthropological studies undertaken by an Egyptian about the Iranian religious clergy. It is catchy in describing the material life of centres of learning like Qom. He dwells on interesting details and descriptions of houses, the lifestyles of the mullahs and the schools. Huwaydi´s observations are indeed rich in depicting Sunni-Shi'a differences and tracing the networks between the Iranian mullah and the Palestinians, for instance. Huwaydi has earned the reputation of having established extended networks with several Islamic movements ranging from Iran to Malaysia, Indonesia and central Asia. This is reflected in his journalistic writings in al-Ahram daily semi-official newspaper, which provide an interesting perspective from an Islamic sympathiser's perspective. The book on Iran became very popular in Egypt and was reprinted four times. It reveals a clear sympathy towards the Iranian revolution and provides a rich insight into the events. Huwaydi travelled widely in Iran and conducted extensive interviews with the religious clergy. The well-travelled journalist, Hasanayn Haykal, who is considered one of the major

ideologues of the Nasser regime, published in 1982 a book titled, *The Canons of the Ayatollah*, a work that appeared first in the UK in the English language and was later translated into Arabic. Hasanayn Haykal was among the first Arab reporters to cover the Korean War, and in the 1960s he published on Korea, Japan and China. He has also published in Arabic a collection of articles that he wrote for Japanese newspapers which appeared simultaneously in the Los Angeles Times.[20] The Centre for Strategic Studies has issued a new publication titled, *'Persian selections'*. These are translations of recent political and socio-economic scholarly works from Persian into Arabic. The selections consist of interesting political and strategic analyses of Iranian and regional politics. They also include portraits of Iranian intellectuals and politicians.

JAPAN IMAGINED[21]

With the advent of colonialism and the foundation of modern nation-states in the Middle East Japan attracted special attention among late nineteenth-century Arab reformists. The victory of Imperial Japan over Tsarist Russia in 1905 gave rise to serious thought among many new nations about the West's hegemony. Japan was and still is a fascinating model. It is the success story of a non-Western culture that has maintained its traditions and yet has been able to resist the West. Japan was thus used as a mirror for Arab intellectuals to review critically various aspects of Arab culture and Muslim nations. The Japanese showed that they could master Western technology and challenge Western power. Why was Japan successful but not the Muslim nations? This is a major question still posed by modern economic historians. Japan is thus used as a mirror for Arab intellectuals to review critically various aspects of Arab culture and Muslim nations.

The image of Japan for the Arabs can be divided into four types. First, early Egyptian reformists expressed a sort of an admiration for Japan in explaining their own 'retardation' and 'underdevelopment'. It is no coincidence that the Egyptian intellectual, Rifa'a al-Tahtawi (1801-1873), is repeatedly compared to Japanese reformists. Professor Nasr Abu Zayd compared Tahtawi to Dr. Nitobe Inazo, the writer of the *Bushido*, while the Egyptian historian Ra´uf Abbas compared him to Fukuzawa Yukishi (1835-1901). Abbas drew similarities and differences between them as pioneers of enlightenment, progress and education.[22] Second, the explanation of the success of Japan versus the failure of Egypt extends to pointing out the 'factors' and conditions which were lacking and thus hampered industrialisation in the Mid-

dle East. This discourse of alterity manifested itself prominently among economic historians and political scientists in the sixties. Third, it is important to highlight the significance of Egyptian travel accounts to Japan. Alain Roussillon has looked into two of the first Egyptian travel accounts. The first is by Prince Mohammed Ali Pasha, the son of Khedive Abbas Helmi II, who travelled as a tourist to Japan in 1910 starting from Moscow. The second account is by Muhammed Thabit, a professor in social science in a secondary school, who undertook a voyage in 1930. Roussillon reads these accounts as raising issues of identity, reformism, strangeness and fascination for Japanese culture, nature and landscapes. Yet in judging Japan paradoxically these Egyptian travellers were strongly influenced by European frames of reference. Prince Mohammed Ali Pasha lamented the fact that despite the high level of civilization that Japan had reached the Japanese remained unrefined when they dealt with foreigners. The Egyptian prince still displays his preference for Europe, its commodities, and its distractions compared to the 'far away' Japanese exoticism.[23] Finally, it is important to highlight the historical comparative studies of Egypt and Japan, in which the values of enlightenment, progress and education are introduced by pioneer intellectuals. The Meiji renovation period inspired the early nationalist Mustafa Kamel at the beginning of the twentieth century to write his book (see below), and it continues to fascinate contemporary Arab historians.

THE EARLY REFORMISTS

Admiration in the Middle East for Japan was already expressed by the end of the nineteenth century in reformist writings. This is clearly manifested in the writings of the reformist and pan-Islamic thinker, Jamal ad Din al-Afghani. In discussing the issue of the decadence of education and the role of religion in the Ottoman empire and Egypt al-Afghani raises the example of Japan's emphasis on education reform and its programme of sending students abroad. Al-Afghani juxtaposes Japan's scheme to the useless missions that were sent from the Middle East. The passages on Japan are most interesting in that al-Afghani, one of the first modern religious reformists of the nineteenth century, seems to tell us that religion alone was not a sufficient element for the elevation of nations. His text on Japan conveys the message that the lesson of Japan's success was that religion had been neutralised. Al-Afghani's fascination with Japan was perpetuated by his follower, Rashid Rida, and further elaborated with notions of Egyptian nationalism by Mustafa Kamel.

In discussing the role of religion in the development and progress of modern nations al-Afghani argues that for the Arab nation the coming of religion did certainly unify, civilise and enlighten people. It developed a more just system of government and the arts and sciences proliferated. But if someone were to ask whether Japan had elevated itself by imitating the Westerners and without the intermediary of religion the answer would be yes. The Japanese Oriental nation, which did not differ greatly from the Chinese in doctrine and religion and in its norms, ethics and language, had grown and progressed. It had done so through imitating the elevated elements in civilization and taking what is best.

Briefly al-Afghani argues that the refinement and elevation of this oriental nation took place or was possible because religion did not intervene. The Japanese, we are told, left behind pagan traditions and aspired towards scientific knowledge, imitating the greatest nations. They introduced in their countries sound civic rules. They despised or discarded Western customs that did not suit their habits in the East.

Yes, the refinement of the Oriental nations had taken place without the intervention of religion. These nations did not benefit from their pagan religions even though they entailed morals and ethical values. In their origins they do not contain much that concerned the ordering of mundane life and what was needed in the civil sphere. Religion in principle aspires to happiness. If it remains a doctrine alienated from practice it loses any influence and becomes useless. By ignoring the practices of the origins these nations deteriorate to the worst level.[24] What had helped the Japanese nation was its geographic remoteness which rescued it from the attentions of the West, and the willingness of its emperor to adopt the constitution.

For the reformist Rashid Rida who founded the *al-Manar* (The Lighthouse) magazine in Cairo (from 1886 to 1936), Japan was an example to be emulated. When Rashid Rida founded the magazine, he did so in order to spread the ideas of his teacher, the Islamic reformer, Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), and al-Afghani. The journal originated with 'Abduh´s interpretation of the Qur´an. Rida was concerned with two major problems, the decadence of the Muslim world and the danger of Western domination.[25] According to Emad Eldin Shahin, Rida's main concern was to reconcile the desire to preserve old customs and traditions with a modern education based on free thinking. Rida's main zeal with *al-Manar* was to promote the idea that Islam was not in contradiction with modernity, science, reason and civilization.[26] In fact, Rida was rather accommodative in reconciling modernity and Islam. Rida's novelty was his great admiration for the Japanese model because it could blend solutions between old and new.[27] His main concern was how to enter

the age of modernity. Of the same generation of Rida was the Egyptian nationalist Mustafa Kamel, who again referred to the example of modern Japan and wrote *The Rising Sun* (*al-shams al-mushriqa*, Cairo, 1904). We are told that this work was later translated into Malay by the reformer, Enche Abdullah Abdul-Rahman, under the title, *Matahari memencar: tarikh kerajaan Jepun* (T*he Radiant Sun: a History of the Kingdom of Japan*, Singapore, 1906).[28]

THE DISCOURSE OF ECONOMIC HISTORIANS

When modernization is spoken of and the question is asked why the Arabs failed to modernise or industrialize, Japan comes to the forefront as a counter mirror. When discussing the 'failure' of the Middle East the late Algerian intellectual, Malek ben Nabi, the British historian, Roger Owen, the Egyptian economist, Galal Amin, the late Charles Issawi[29] from Princeton University, the Lebanese political scientist, Ghassan Salame, and many others, all bring up the example of Japan. The figures of Mohammed Ali in Egypt and Meiji in Japan are frequently compared. In fact, many believed that during the first half of the nineteenth century Egypt was doing better than Japan. However, to explain the 'failure' of Egypt to modernise there is a long list of factors which show that Egypt lacked the preconditions for 'modern economic growth'. One common denominator highlighted by economic historians and developmentalists and all those who have compared the two cultures is the geographical remoteness of Japan which gave it the advantage of being able to better avoid the encroachment of Western interests. It is interesting to note Roger Owen's significant study, *Cotton and the Egyptian Economy*,[30] which shaped a whole generation of economic historians in Egypt and concludes with a comparison of Egypt and Japan. He lists the following conditions for Japan's success: the attitude of the Japanese government, which in the years after 1868 made economic development a primary national objective; a far-reaching program of modernization; a longer industrial tradition; and a remarkably large number of educated people. Japan benefited not only from an increase in agricultural productivity in the second half of the nineteenth century but also from the way it increased. The Japanese attitude to both industry and land varied considerably from the Egyptians. One of the vital factors underlying Meiji development was the appearance of entrepreneurs who were able and willing to perform the key functions of innovation, risk-taking, and management.[31]

In discussing the role and anatomy of the state in the Middle East[32] Ghassan Salame provides a brilliant summary that epitomizes the fascination of Arab intellec-

tuals for Japan. He highlights the argument of the Egyptian economist, Galal Amin, that the failure of Muhammad 'Ali´s Egypt and the relative success of a state such as Japan in modernisation was due to the centrality of Egypt versus the geographic exclusion of Japan.[33] Why did Japan, alone among other the countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America, 'make it' in the nineteenth and early twentieth century? Why not the Arabs? Why not, for instance, Iraq, whose potential was and still is, so great? Or why not Egypt, with its homogeneous population, centralised government, substantial agricultural surplus, excellent internal waterways, long-established fiscal tradition and, by contemporary standards, urbanised society?"[34]

The question of the influence of the Enlightenment in non-Western societies seems to fill a significant space in comparative Egyptian-Japanese studies. Two eminent scholars became interested is the issue, namely the Egyptian historian Ra'uf Abbas and the professor of philosophy, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (1943–2010). To start with, Ra'uf Abbas was first invited as a fellow to the Institute of Developing Countries between 1972 and 1973, and then as a visiting professor to Tokyo University from 1989 to 1990. Abbas had previously published in 1980 a work in Arabic titled, *Japanese Society during the Meiji Period*. It was reprinted in 1996 and 1999. This work is considered to be the first scientific study in Arabic language based on primary sources. The result of this first study led Abbas to undertake a comparative work titled, *The Japanese and Egyptian Enlightenment, A Comparative Study of the Biographies of Fukuzawa Yukichi and Rifa 'a al-Tahtawi*.[35] These two intellectuals, the Japanese Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901) and the Egyptian Rifa 'a al-Tahtawi (1801-1874), had lived in the same century. Abbas says in the introduction that he checked the English sources with the grandson of Fukuzawa Yukishi. The Arabic translation appeared a decade later. Ra'uf Abbas's main question was how the birth of the modern state and related questions of development became the main concern of these two pioneers of enlightenment. These two intellectuals had futuristic visions about a new society. Both produced interesting travel accounts and translated Western culture to their own societies. Both are considered great educators of their time and founded schools. Both encouraged women's education and both created important newspapers which shaped the public opinion of that time. Both believed in the movement of history and in the evolutionary aspect of civilisations. Both were influenced by historians like Guizot and Buckle and had great admiration for Western history. Both also wrote about the condition of women and wanted to change it. They created schools for educating both women and men. In spite of their difference, both were influenced by the Western model and tried to search for a pattern that fused tradition with acquired Western ideas. But what interests us is

Abbas's conclusions from his comparison of the two intellectuals that were deeply influenced by the development of modern thought, Western enlightenment, ideas of progress and evolution. They also inspired a second generation of intellectuals. Being influenced by Western liberal thought, they shared the same source and terms of reference. Though they openly admired Western ideas and civilisation, they were both selective in their approach. Both had an authentic vision of civilisation based on the fundamental characteristics of their respective countries.[36]

Both also shared the same ideas on the issues of equality, human rights, and family relationships. Fukuzawa's merit, however, according to Abbas, was that he was more aggressive in his criticism of traditional customs and morals on certain issues pertaining to gender and family status and his harsh denunciation of the traditional moral system and traditional learning. Fukuzawa clearly attacked Confucianism and traditional Chinese learning, in contrast to Tahtawi who was more accommodating of Islamic values. In Egypt traditional ethics were correlated to religion and their precepts were deeply rooted in Islamic *shari`ah* due to early training and religious consciousness.[37] But most significantly Fukuzawa seems to have been much more conscious than Tahtawi of the dangers of Western imperialist interests. He therefore stressed the need for independence and self-reliance.[38] For Abbas, Tahtawi is someone who had underestimated the West's aggression. Here again the Egyptian intellectual is depicted as having 'lacked clairvoyance' and thus having missed the bandwagon of modernisation.

NASR HAMID ABU ZAYD AND THE BUSHIDO

From 1985 to 1989 during the period of the foundation of the Department of Japanese languages at Cairo University the Leiden-based professor Abu Zayd was invited to Japan on a grant funded by the Japanese Foundation. Abu Zayd had been invited on an exchange program to Osaka University to teach at the Department of Foreign languages. There he taught Arabic language, literature and *fiqh* in Arabic. Japan gave him the opportunity to write two major controversial works which resulted in his being accused of apostasy: the *Mafhum al-Nass* (The Meaning of the Text) and *Naqd al-Khitab al-Dini* (The Critique of the Religious Discourse). While in Japan he discovered the significance of the Bushido through the celebrated work of Nitobe Inazo (1862-1933).[39] Nitobe Inazo had been an educator, cultural interpreter and a civil servant. He had studied agricultural economics at the University of Sapporo Agricultural College. He later became a Christian and is acknowledged today for

having bridged cultures. He described himself as 'a bridge across the Pacific'.[40] Inazo studied in the United States for three years and in Germany for another three years. He married an American. It was in the United States where he had retired because of his poor health that he wrote his famous work, *The Bushido*. Nasr Abu Zayd became fascinated by Nitobe's endeavour to explain Japanese culture to a Western audience. His life and work teaches us a tremendous amount about cross-cultural encounters. Abu Zayd decided to translate it and introduce the work to the Arab reader. Japan, for Abu Zayd, offered him the opportunity to observe Shinto and Buddhist religions. Abu Zayd even lived in a Shinto temple for a month, and he recalls that out of courtesy the monks brought him meat, an unforgettable event in terms of Japanese hospitality.[41]

In the introduction Nasr explains why he translated *The Bushido*. He argues that for so long Arabs have mainly directed their gaze towards Europe. They perpetuate a 'whimsical' and mythical perception of the 'East'. Japan, for many Arabs, is simply reduced to an affluent, consumer society. Arab-Japanese relations from both sides are understood as merely materialistic, although there have been more serious attempts from the Japanese side to understand the Arabs.[42] For him, *The Bushido* was written in a clear and simple style. Inazo lived in the United States and cared enough to translate his knowledge and culture to non-Japanese. According to Abu Zayd the language of the author is honest. For Abu Zayd Arabs have made no effort to understand the Other. The Arabs are ethnocentric and epicentric.

In Japan Abu Zayd also discovered the importance of colour and aesthetics. Nasr was fascinated at how the Japanese excelled in the plastic arts and in landscapes. Since Arabic culture is a culture of language according to Nasr it lacks such qualities. The significance of hair style, dress, and colour, is crucial for the Japanese but is largely overlooked by Arabs. By contrast, Japan was not a culture of story tellers as was the culture of the Arabs. Nasr travelled all over Japan, even up to the far North. He visited Nagasaki and Hiroshima and met eyewitnesses of the war. He recalls wandering and often walking daily to his university located far away from his house in the countryside. Abu Zayd's love-affair with Japan is expressed by his claim that he had never felt homesick – in contrast to his time in the USA when he had spent two years in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he had been sent to study folklore and anthropology between 1978 and 1980. What rescued him in Japan despite his lack of Japanese language was the warmth of the village culture which reminded him of his own past and upbringing.

Abu Zayd's introduction to *The Bushido* consists of 56 pages. It is an incisive text in terms of intercultural exchange between the Arabs and Japan. Abu Zayd expresses

great admiration for Japan and respect for its religions and customs. It could be argued that the Shinto religion is difficult to compare to monotheistic Islam since Shinto does not have a founder nor does it have sacred scriptures like the Bible and the Qur´an. We are also told that preaching and propaganda is not common in Shinto religion. But Abu Zayd´s endeavour is interested. His comparison of Japanese religion, culture, and traditions with the Arab-Muslim world is tactical. In fact, he uses Japan to direct a bitter critique of the misuse of Islamic religious discourse. He praises the family system in Japan in order to devalue Egyptian government propaganda during the Sadat regime which instrumentalised the family to further Sadat's authoritarianism. Abu Zayd admires Japanese architecture and lifestyle because he believed it resisted Americanisation. This is certainly not the case, Abu Zayd tells us, of the Egyptian middle class. He praises the syncretism of Confucianism, Buddhism and Shintoism. He admires the authenticity of Japanese performance of rituals in order to contrast them with the double standards of some practices in the Middle East. He compares the manipulation of contemporary religious discourse in Egypt to the flexibility, sincerity and openness of the Japanese traditions.

Why did Abu Zayd translate such a work? Why highlight the Japanese model? What should we learn from them? Here Abu Zayd tells us that the starting point of any cross-cultural encounter is translation, which is the case with this work. In fact Abu Zayd notes that this book had indeed been previously translated in 1938, but he had only discovered it after having nearly completed his own translation. However, that simply confirmed the importance of such a work.[43]

Abu Zayd informs us that his aim is that 'We' Arabs should have a better and a more objective perspective about ourselves. In fact, 'We' lack any serious effort to know ourselves better. It is not only the economic success of Japan which is worth studying, but also its spiritual success.[44]

Abu Zayd reminds us that such a translation contributes to raising issues that concern the location of contemporary Arabic culture. Translation is not merely an act of copying but is essentially a dialogical endeavour with other cultures. From that perspective this book raises a number of pivotal issues, such as the relationship between the present and the past, and the limits of individual and social behaviour. From that perspective this book interprets modern Japan to the reader, or more precisely nineteenth-century Japan, by referring to the cultural and ethical values of the feudal system in Japan.

In Abu Zayd's commentary on Nitobe's work he constantly compares Japan with the Arab world. He points out that its author emphasises the continuity between the present and the past, while our Arab societies experience a continuous

break between the present and the past. Abu Zayd points to the interesting relationship between European and American culture arguing that what is of interest in this book is that it was written in order to defend Japanese culture against Orientalist attacks and those who were mocking Japanese culture – especially sarcastic Westerners who disparaged Japanese traditions.[45]

Abu Zayd reminds us that Nitobe had married an American and had been a member of missionary groups when he was student in America. Nitobe thus represents the typical nationalist intellectual who protested against Japan's opening to the West after the treaty of 1853-1854. Abu Zayd reminds us that Japan was equally influenced by China, Buddhism and Confucianism, but had been able to efficiently absorb all these elements while it did not lose its identity. Abu Zayd then contrasts Nitobe to al-Tahtawi who felt an inferiority complex towards the West, that he believed had begun with Napoleon's conquest of Egypt and which continued up until the defeat in the 1967 war.

For Abu Zayd the Arabs are today infatuated with the West. This has led to a total dependency. Since the reign of Khedive Ismail elements of Westernization are evident. This is not the case for Japan. The foreigner has to adapt to the Japanese lifestyle and their food habits. While many Egyptians would qualify them as underdeveloped this is problematic, Abu Zayd argues. If one compares the Egyptian to the American household, there would hardly be any difference between middle-class American and Egyptian lifestyles. Modernisation in Egypt through migration to the oil-producing countries has led to the transformation of architecture in the countryside. However what has occurred is a mere emulation of European and American architecture. This is not the case for the Japanese, who continue to sleep on futon beds, eat on the floor and dress in the Kimono. Yet these same people also deal with the most complicated technology.[46]

CONCLUSION

These are fresh attempts that hint at a burgeoning Middle Eastern gaze towards Asia. To be sure, it is an imagined Asia tainted by Middle East-centric visions, but it is nevertheless compelling in terms of its alterity. This article has attempted to dwell on the field of South-South relations by pondering upon the question of how Arabs - or rather more specifically, Egyptians – have perceived "Asia". What these Egyptian travel accounts to the East reveal is that the encounter with the Western world and its attendant ideas of progress and enlightenment forced a comparison between an

imagined "East" and the European, Greco-Roman world. For clear historical reasons Western scholarship has tended to focus on the colonial encounter, leading to a departmentalization and narrowing of area studies. Such studies typically are informed by a North-South perspective, or vice versa. I have also attempted to argue that the colonial encounter created bodies and institutions of knowledge production which have been precisely lacking on the South-South level. Journalism and travel accounts are a rich source for documenting these encounters. What requires further attention is the post-colonial, nationalist impact on South-South encounters. Here the "Bandung effect", and how a Nehru, a Gandhi, or a Sukarno, might have impacted on nationalist movements in the Middle East, awaits further research.

Endnotes

1   Parts of this article have been published as short articles in the IIAS Newsletters: "Japan as Imagined by the Arabs", IIAS Newsletter, 27, Leiden, March, 2002, p. 19; "South East Asia in the Eyes of the Egyptians", IIAS Newsletter, 28, August Leiden 2002, pp. 19-20; and "East is East: Where does the East Begin for Egyptian Liberal Intellectuals", IIAS Newsletter, 29, 2003, p. 20. I am thankful to Wim Stokhof for the generous scholarship I obtained in year 2001-2002 and the hospitality in Leiden which allowed me to develop the ideas there.

2   Husayn Fawzi, *Sindbad 'Asri, Gawlat fi al-Muhit al-Hindi* [A Contemporary Sindbad: a Tour of the Indian Ocean] (Cairo: Matba'at al-I'timad, 1938), p. 1. I am thankful to Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and Samia Mehrez for helping me translate this quotation. Fawzi uses ambiguously the verb "*itstahal*" in the sense of "transforming", lending the possibility of opposite meanings. This is a typical sophistication of the Arabic language, which I would have not been able to grasp without their enlightening advice.

3   Taha Husayn, *Mustaqbal al-Thaqafa fi-Mashr.* [The Future of Civilization in Egypt] (Cairo: Matba 'at al-Ma'ârif wa Maktabat Mashr, 1938).

4   *Ibid.,* p. 7.

5   Albert H. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 330-331.

6   Husayn, *Mustaqbal al-Thaqafa fi-Masr,* p. 14.

7   *Ibid.,* p. 10.

8   Husayn Fawzi, *Sindbad 'Asri, Gawla fi al-Muhit al-Hindi.*

9   Husayn Fawzi, *Sindbad 'Asri Ya'ûdu ilâ al-Hind* [The Contemporary Sinbad Returns to India] (Cairo: Dar al-Maʿarif, 1978).

10   *Ibid.*, p. 10.

11   In fact, Mansur's travel account has been also analysed by Alain Roussillon who concludes the following: « Ainsi, un voyageur 'individuel' comme Anis Mansur, journaliste et essayiste egyptien qui se presente comme le type même de lʹaventurier affranchi de toutes les conventions, peut-il donner l'impression de passer completement 'à coteʹ de ses multiples voyages - sans dʹailleurs que cela diminue en rien son succe public. Dans son écriture qu'on pourrait qualifier d'erratique - au fil de la plume et de deplacements meme quʹils ont pour pretexte des enqutes journalistiques-, on assiste à une sorte de passage a la limite de la posture de personalisation/insividualisation du voyage. » Alain Roussillon, L"Univers en partages: altérité et voyage". Unpublished paper, 2001.

12   Ahmed Mohammad Taha, *Misr was ta'awun al-janub al-janub* [Egypt and the South-South Co-operation], Strategic Papers, Centre for Political and Strategic Studies (Cairo: al-Ahram, 1997).

13   Cynthia Nelson, "Satyagraha: Gandhi's Influence on an Egyptian Feminist", *Yearbook of Sociology of Islam, Investigating the South-South Dimension of Modernity and Islam* (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 2000).

14   Anouar Abdel Malek, *Rih al-Sharq* [The Wind from the East] (Beirut: Dar al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabi, 1983.

15   See his autobiography Ahmed Shalabi, *'Rihlat Hayat'* [A Life's Voyage] (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1973).

16   Ahmad Shalabi, *The Encyclopaedia of Islamic History. Islam and non-Arabic Speaking Muslim Countries* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1983).

17   Ibrahim Nafe', *What is Happening in Asia?* (Cairo: al-Ahram, 1998).

18   Ibrahim Nafe', *China* (Cairo: al-Ahram, 1999).

19   Ibrahim al-Dessuqi Shehata, *The Iranian Revolution: The Roots and the Ideology* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr al 'Arabi, Beirut, 1979).

20   Mohammad Hassanayan Haykal, *The Japanese Articles*, 5 ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1999).

21   This article was completed before the appearance of Alain Roussillonʹs comprehensive work on Japan titled: *Identité et modernité, Les voyageurs égyptiens au Japon (XIX-XX siècle)* (Paris-Arles: Sindbad Actes-Sud, 2005). The late Alain Roussillon, was not only an inspiring stirrer of ideas, but also a faithful friend who always raised controversies and challenged mainstream thinking.

22   Ra`uf Abbas, *Al-Tanwîr Bayn Misr Wal-Yabân, Dirâsa Muqarana Fi Fikr Al-Tahtawi Wa Fukuzawa Youkitshi* [Enlightenment in Egypt and Japan: A Comparative Study of the Thought of al-Tahtawi and Fukuzawa Youkishi] (Cairo: Merit, 2001).

23   Alain Roussillon, "Voyage du Japon vs. Voyages d´ Europe: récits de modernisation identitaire en Egypte", Unpublished Paper. Mimeo., 2001.

24   Jamal Uddin al-Afghani, *The Complete Works*. ed. By Mohammad 'Immara, (Cairo: Dar al-kitab al-'arabi lil tiba'a wal nashr, 1968).

25   Emad Eldin Shahin, *Through Muslim Eyes: M. Rashid Rida and the West* (Herndon, Virginia: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993), p. 9.

26   *Ibid.*, p. 10.

27   *Ibid.*, p. 96.

28   Michael F. Laffan, "Watan and Negeri, Mustafa Kamil's 'Rising Sun' in the Malay World", *Indonesia Circle* no. 69, (1996): 156.

29   Charles Issawi, "Why Japan ?", in *Arab Resources, The Transformation of a Society*, edited by I. Ibrahim, Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University (London: Croom and Helm, 1983), pp. 283- 300.

30   E.R. Owen, *Cotton and the Egyptian Economy: a Study in Trade and Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

31   *Ibid.*, pp. 362-363.

32   Ghassan Salame, "'Strong' and 'Weak' States: a Qualified Return to the Muqaddimah", in *The Foundations of the Arab State* (London: Croom and Helm, 1987).

33   *Ibid.*, pp. 216-217.

34   *Ibid.*, pp. 237-238.

35   Ra'uf Abbas, *The Japanese and Egyptian Enlightenment, A Comparative Study of the Biographies of Fukuzawa Yukichi and Rifa 'a al-Tahtawi* (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 1990).

36   *Ibid.* p. 149.

37   *Ibid.* p. 150.

38   *Ibid*, p. 151.

39   Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, *'al-Bushidu al-Makawinat al-Taqlidiyya lil Thaqafa al-Yabaniyya'* [The Bushido in Japanese Civilization] (Kuwait: dar Suʿad al-Sabbah, 1993).

40   John F. Howes, 'Japanʹs New Internationalism and the Legacy and Nitobe Inazo: Sixty Years Later', Obirin University, Tokyo, Lecture Presented for Annual Dorothy and David Lam Lecture Series, October 21, 1993. p.2

41   Interview with Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, Leiden, 24th October 2002.

42   Abu Zayd, "Introduction", *'al-Bushidu al-Makawinat al-Taqlidiyya lil Thaqafa al-Yabaniyya'*, p. 9

43   *Ibid.*, p. 10.

44   *Ibid.*, p. 51.

45   *Ibid.*, p. 14.

46   *Ibid.*, p. 35.

CHAPTER TWO

EGYPT'S INFLUENCE ON THE EDUCATION OF THAI MUSLIMS FROM THE NASSER ERA TO THE PRESENT

Hasan Mardman

On January 4 1965, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser addressed the crowd gathered to attend the "Celebration of Knowledge Day":

> Dear brothers!
> Every time in this Hall (*Qaʿah*) when I am here with you for the "Celebration of Knowledge Day" (*Eid al-ʿIlm*) I bring to you a new message and place upon your shoulders a vital task that is to be carried out by capable cadres on whom their country [Egypt] has bestowed the opportunities of distinction and who in return honor their country with academic excellence (*al-imtiyazât al-ʿilmiyah*).
>
> I stand here from a distance every year to observe a crowd of intellectuals holding up a sacred torchlight of hope. I truly feel as if I were looking at a tide of humanity heading towards dignity and prosperity, with firm foundations, permanently raised up to open horizons with neither boundaries nor walls.[1]

As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, for the Muslim community of southern Thailand the Middle East has had a great impact in the sphere of education and indeed, on thinking about education. Among those Middle Eastern countries in the modern

period which have had the greatest impact Egypt is the most prominent. During the era of the late President, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egypt was a pioneer in providing scholarships to students all over the world to study in its educational institutions. Between 1955 and 1970 students from all over Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, traveled to Egypt for their education.

This chapter focuses on the importance given to education during the Nasser era, and in particular on the educational opportunities given to the *tullab al-wafidin* (foreign students), among them many Thai Muslims, who traveled to study in Cairo under the custodianship of the Egyptian government. It will also discuss the living conditions and facilities provided to the foreign students living in the *Madinat al-Bu'uth al-Islamiyah* (The Islamic Mission City). It assesses the legacy of Thai Muslim graduates from Egypt during the Nasser era, both in terms of their impact on Thailand's government, educational and private sectors as well as their significance for the reform of Islamic education in Thailand today. It concludes by comparing the development of the Islamic education sector in Malaysia with that of Thailand.

EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE OF THE ARAB NATION

In assessing the development of Islamic education in Thailand it is impossible to overlook the importance of the role played by the late Egyptian leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser, who assumed the presidency of Egypt on 23rd June 1956. Nasser's great charisma as an Arab nationalist was such that during visits and rallies he would draw Egyptian people out onto the streets in crowds waving their hands and cheering their leader loudly crying : *ya'iish Nasser*, *ya'iish Nasser*, meaning "Long live Nasser! Long Live Nasser!". The enthusiasm and emotion that Nasser inspired in his people has long since waned with the passing away of their leader. Few traces remain with either of his successors, Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak. Yet Nasser's legacy in the field of education continues to this day.

As part of his revolutionary nationalist agenda Nasser gave considerable attention to the issue of education. In the early hours of the morning before daybreak people everywhere from upper and lower Egypt would hurry to sit around their radios and listen to live broadcasts of their charismatic *Za'im* – especially on the occasion of *Eid al- 'Ilm* or "Celebration of Knowledge Day". In his 1965 address in the great hall of the Auditorium of Cairo University the Egyptian leader explained how knowledge and education were related to his revolutionary goals:

The revolution 'althawrah' is not an expression of feeling. In its
true meaning it is knowledge that can be obtained by all. Society
should not be changed by an emotional reaction, nor should it
be satisfied with the existing situation. Rather, society should be
properly cured by solving the problems of the economy and social
welfare, and to create new structures and new foundations to ben-
efit the nation more broadly.[2]

For Nasser, education was like "a bright beacon (*al-masabih al-kashifah*) which we
carry with us to shine around ourselves in order to seek out our future, to illuminate
our steps in order to reach the future. Our progress to the future and our movement
towards it is, in fact, like crawling and groping our way in a swamp of darkness and
ignorance".[3]

THAI MUSLIMS IN EGYPTIAN UNIVERSITIES
DURING THE NASSER ERA

Nasser's educational vision was not restricted to his countrymen. During the Nasser
era young Muslims from various nationalities all over the world received scholar-
ships to study in Egypt at the *Ma'had al-Bu'ûth al-Islâmiyah* institute. Many Arab stu-
dents from other Arab countries would choose Cairo as their destination for higher
education. Besides al-Azhar University, Cairo University, Ain Shams University, and
Alexandria University were all crowded with Arab students. From the 1960 Thai
students also began flocking to Cairo in increasing numbers. The record book of
the Thai Students' Association in Cairo provides student figures from its establish-
ment in 1955 to the year 1987. It lists a total of about 750 Thai students, of which
three hundred students had studied under scholarship.[4] By the year 1995 the total
number of students studying in Egypt was about 1600. According to the President of
the Thai Students Association in Cairo, by 2005 approximately 1700 persons were
registered with the Association as students in Egypt.

A significant number of Thai students studying in Egypt were on special schol-
arships (*minhat al-dirasah al-islamiah*).[5] The financial assistance was supported by ei-
ther the *Awqaf* charitable organization or the *Idarah al-Azhar* (al-Azhar office). The
main objective of the scholarships was to prepare students in the Arabic language
and Islamic subjects. Very few students were sufficiently qualified to immediately
enter university at first year. Most had to first spend at least two or three years in the

Ma'had al-Bu'ûth al-Islâmiyah school where they attended special classes (*dirasah khas-sah*) on Arabic and Islam. Thai students who had studied at the *pondok* institutions in Thailand were also required to enter this Institute in order to prepare themselves in reading and writing in Arabic and especially in speaking skills. Poor Arabic language skills would be a severe handicap for students in their subsequent university studies.

The *Ma'had al-Bu'ûth al-Islâmiyah* Institute provided a dormitory for men while the female students would live at the *Dâr al-Mallak* guest house in Abbasiah. Most, if not all, of the students had to stay at the dormitory. There they were served free meals three times a day (*Iftar, Ghada', 'Asha'*). The Thai students would normally prepare their own food according to their own tastes on the balcony. Within the Islamic Mission City complex numerous student facilities were provided, such as an immigration service, a dispensary, a police station, a scholarship section, a student affairs section and a *masjid* complex. Every summer after taking their final exams most *wafidin* students (foreign students) would be taken to the Alexandria seashore for a month's vacation. There many activities were arranged for the students to participate in, including football matches, boxing, judo, volley ball, and table tennis. At night academic talks were held given mostly by high-ranking figures in Egypt. For example, at the Mu 'tamar Abi Bakr al-Siddiq, a summer camp in Alexandria, Shaykh Mahmud al-Shaltut (the then Shayk Al Azhar) presented an address to the *wafidin* students in which he pointed out the importance of the foreign students studying in Egypt for the spread of Islam in Africa and Asia:

> My children, every year in July Egyptians travel with their families to relax on the seashore of Alexandria and enjoy the fresh sea breeze. The same thing has been done for you, the *'wafidin'* from Africa and Asia. You have all come here under the care of your big brother, Muhammad Tawfiq Uwaidah [the then Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (*al-Majlis al- A'la' li-Ashshu'un al-Islamiyah*) Cairo, and also the head of the Islamic Mission City], who has himself also come here having been entrusted by the *ummah* to bring you to this place to relax and recover from the hardships you endured during your studies. When you finish your studies and return to your homelands you will take back with you this knowledge and teach it to your people. Islam will thereby be able to spread to every corner of the world, as once used to be the case in these two continents.[6]

Many of the Thai students studying in Cairo in the 1960s came via Saudi Arabia after having performed the *Hajj* or the *Umrah*. Some of them received certificates after studying in Makkah for some years. Many finished secondary school some from Madrasah Dar al-'Ulum, while others graduated from Aziziah or al-Falah schools. Those Thai students who had obtained certificates from these institutions were allowed to enter any university in Egypt, either in the Arts or the Science streams.

It is often believed that Thai graduates from the Middle East return to Thailand to work only in religious fields such as teaching Islam or working as *imams* in their villages. In fact, many graduates find employment in the government, education, or private sector. Thai students who finished their high secondary education in the Science stream from Makkah would continue their studies either at Cairo University or 'Ain Shams University. Among many well-known Thai alumni of Cairo University are Pisut Haji Din (Political Science, Cairo University) and Wirat Samadi (Darul 'Ulum, Cairo University), who formerly worked for many years as diplomats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Hashem Non-Anan (Medicine, Cairo University), devoted himself to a career in managing the Madrasah Ansorussunnah Foundation at Pakphayun, Patthalung province. Kasem Ben Alae (Commerce, Cairo University) was a senior government official and head of Electric Data Processing, and served at the Provincial Electricity Authority, Bemoh, Pattani, until his retirement. Paisal Yingsaman (Arts, Cairo University), a former MP of the New Power Party from Yala Province, was formerly an English teacher at Yala Secondary School and also served as President of the Yala Provincial Administration Committee. His friend, Assistant Professor Anant Okriss (Arts, Cairo University) was an English professor in the Department of Foreign Languages at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Pattani campus of Prince of Songkhla University. Salleh Anas, a graduate from the Faculty of Law, Cairo University, is at present an advisor on Arabic and Islam for Darussalam School, Tanjongmas, Narathiwat.

Other well-known Thai graduates from Egypt during this period worth mentioning include Prasit (Hasbulah) Aminsen (Economics, American University, Cairo), who worked in the Ministry of Education for many years and at the same time was also Imam of Masjid Klongton, Bangkok. Sombat Thatsanaprasert (Engineering, Cairo University) is a businessman. Dr. Boraharn Suwandee, a medical doctor, is a graduate from Al-Azhar University, and now serves at a Bangkok hospital. Olan Suwandee, an engineer specializing in architecture, is a graduate from Al-Azhar University. Kasidit Srisanga, who graduated in medicine from Al-Azhar University, now serves at Bangkok Hospital. He is also the translator of the book "*al-Tibb al-Nabawiy*" (Healing with the Medicine of the Prophet) by the fourteenth-century theologian

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah. Supoj Wangstang and Sakda Sriruengthong graduated from the Faculty of Languages and Translation at Al-Azhar University and worked in the United Arab Emirates Embassy in Germany for almost fourteen years. Supoj Wangstang is now a senior consultant at the Halal Institute of Thailand (HIT), while Sakda Sriruengthong is employed at the United Arab Emirates Embassy in Bangkok.

A significant number of Thai alumni from Al-Azhar have devoted themselves to education, either in the Middle East, Thailand, or in neighbouring Malaysia. One of them is Professor Dr. Ismail Yakob, who is a former lecturer in Islamic Law at Umm al-Qura University in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia. Ustadh Omar Tayyib, an ex-Senator and ex-Datok Yuttitham at the Narathiwat Court in southern Thailand, is the founder and manager of the Ma'had attarqiyah al-Islamiyah Foundation. Ustadh Nikdir Waba, the founder of Islam Witthaya Saiburi Foundation, is president of the Association of Pondok Institutions in the three southern border provinces of Thailand. Abdurrahman Awang, a professor in Comparative Law at the International Islamic University of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, is a well-known professor to the international students, while Professor Dr. Abdul Ghani Yakob, an alumni of Al-Azhar University specializing in history teaches at the same institution. Professor Dr. Mariya Abdullah teaches Chemistry at the National University of Malaysia, Bangi Selangor.

Alumni of Al-Azhar working in Bangkok educational institutions include Professor Dr. Imron Malulim, a graduate in *Shari 'ah*, formerly a professor at Kasetsat University and author of numerous books and articles on Islam, Thai Muslims and the Middle East, and a former Senator. Associate Professor Dr. Anat Man-sanit is a professor in the Faculty of Arts at Chulalongkorn University. Assistant Professor Dr. Samai Jitmuad is a psychology professor at Ramkamhaeng University. Assistant Professor Dr. Abdullah Numsuk, a graduate from the Islamic University of Madinah, Saudi Arabia, is a professor in Arabic at Ramkhamhaeng University. Besides giving lectures in the classroom these academics also play an active role in Bangkok's Muslim community. Bukhari Ben Raman, a senior lecturer in Islamic law at Ramkamhaeng University, is a well-known figure among that university's humanities and political science students. A contemporary of Bukhari is Supon (Shakirin) Boonmalert, another Al-Azhar graduate, who is now active in translating books on Islam in Arabic into Thai language including a translation of a Qur'an interpretation. He now works at The Foundation of Islamic Center of Thailand and frequently gives lectures to the community as a *da'wah* activity. Also at the Islamic Center of Thailand in Bangkok is Shafie Napakorn, a graduate in Usuluddin, who is an Imam involved in organizing numerous Islamic activities, especially for the Friday *khutbah*.

Besides Al-Azhar there are numerous well-known Thai graduates from other Egyptian universities. Alumni from 'Ain Shams University include Abdullatif Arshad Charong (Commerce) who has worked at Radio Broadcasting and Television of Malaysia as an announcer in the Arabic Section since 1970, and Pak Cik Shamsuddin (History) who taught Arabic at Attarqiyah school, Narathiwat. During the 1970s a number of Thai students graduated from al-Shubra University, Shubra Khaymah, in Cairo, and now work in different careers in Bangkok. These include Narong Wongsumit, a businessman and secretary of the Association of Arab Universities Alumni; Suwit Samuthkochorn, a banker; and Assistant Professor Dr. Samai Jitmuad. *Al-Ustadh* Imam Sanan (Farid) Pechthongkam, a history graduate from Cairo University, is a well-known figure in the Muslim community and currently the president of the Association of Arab Universities Alumni in Thailand. One of the most valuable works ever produced by the Association is the translation of the Qur'an into the Thai language. It has become a key reference source for graduate students writing their dissertations.

The influence of Egypt on Islamic education in Thailand does not end with the graduation of students. Since at least the 1970s there have been on-going links with Egyptian educational institutions with the aim of developing Islamic higher education in Thailand. In 1974 Mr. Muhammad Tawfiq 'Uwadah, the then Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Cairo, accompanied by Professor Mohsin Abd al-Rahman Abu Si'da, Faculty of Languages and Translation at Al-Azhar University, visited Prince of Songkhla University (PSU) in Pattani province for discussions with university authorities on how to establish Islamic studies in the University. This was the beginning of an academic relationship between Prince of Songkhla University and Egyptian institutions that eventually led to the founding of the Centre for Islamic Studies at PSU.[7] More recently, in September 2005 Professor Krasae Chanawongse, M.D., President of Princess Narathiwat University, led a delegation of the Thai Higher Education Commission to visit Al-Azhar University to once again hold discussions on educational cooperation. A year earlier, Dr. Surakiat Sathianthai, the then Foreign Minister of Thailand, made a four-day visit to Bahrain to discuss a proposal by Bahrain to provide technical and academic support for the setting up of a university campus in Thailand based on the Azharite system – that is, a university that offers a religious syllabus paying special attention to the Qur'anic sciences and traditions of the Prophet, and which also teaches all the modern scientific fields.

ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN
THAILAND AND MALAYSIA COMPARED

While the Thai Muslim community in general hoped to see the return of a new generation of graduates from Egypt and the Middle East with Arabic competency and a more profound knowledge of Islamic Studies, they also longed to have their own higher educational institutions offering standard Arabic as the medium of instruction in their own country. This would prevent subsequent generations of Thai Muslims having to undergo such a long and costly struggle to be educated abroad, away from their parents and their motherland. In Thailand there are now qualified *madrasah*s officially called 'Islamic Private Schools' (*rongrian ekachon son sasana islam*), whose graduates go on to continue their studies in Islam and Arabic overseas. The demand for the establishment of Islamic higher learning institutions in Thailand therefore remains very high. In this respect it is worth comparing the development of Islamic higher education with that in neighbouring Malaysia, to whom Thailand's ethnic Malay Muslim community in the south often look for example.

Rosnani Hashim has presented a good overview of the process of establishing religious schools in the various states of Malaysia.[8] She emphasizes how complicated this process has been. Religious schools have had to adapt their shape and structure while their curriculums have become more standardized and certified by universities in the Middle East. The process of moving towards the Middle Eastern equivalent has been a gradual one. She demonstrates how essential it is that in the process of establishing a concrete foundation for an Islamic college there must be a basic foundation at the grass-roots level and a deep appreciation of the importance of Islamic education among the people. *Madrasah*s or *sekolah agama rakyat* (state religious schools) began to appear throughout the Malay states in the pre- and post-Second World War period. Although a shortage of money and facilities posed significant challenges at the beginning, donations from the *muhsinin* (benefactors) were a significant factor that enabled the establishment of these *madrasah*s. Later the *madrasah*s in each state were fully supported by the Majlis Zakat dan Fitrah, with monthly salaries also being paid to religious teachers.

Rosnani recounts the origin of the first *madrasah* in Malaysia, the *Madrasah al-Hadi* of Melaka, founded in 1917 by Shaykh Ahmad. Prior to this the first modern religious school, *Madrasah Al-Iqbal*, was founded in Singapore by the same Shaykh. Later he moved to Pulau Pinang where he established the *Madrasah Masyhur Islamiah*, which remains one of the most successful and best-known centers of Islamic education in the country. The *Madrasah Al-Hamidiah* was built in Kedah in the year 1908

in honour of Sultan Abdul Hamid, then ruler of Kedah. This school was expanded in 1935 and later on renamed *Al-Maahad al-Mahmud* after Tunku Mahmud who had laid the foundation stone. In Kelantan, *Madrasah Muhammadiah* was founded in 1915 by *Majlis Agama dan Adat Istiadat Melayu*. The *Madrasah Alwiah Diniah* of Arau, Perlis was established in 1937 through the efforts of Raja Sayyid Alwi. In Terengganu the first *Madrasah* was *Madrasah al-'Arabiah*, founded in 1925. In Perak the *Madrasah Al-Idrisiah* was built in 1922. In all the above mentioned *madrasahs*, Malay language, Arabic and English were taught and used as the medium of instruction.

The success of the establishment of *madrasahs* in Malaysia prompted efforts to set up an Islamic college, the Kolej Islam in Klang, in order to further the education of graduates of the *madrasahs*. This initiative was aimed at providing more opportunities for higher education in Malaysia by providing graduates of *madrasahs* an alternative to going abroad to the Middle East, which could be afforded only by relatively few Malays. Muslims felt the need for such an institution and so a blue-print for an Islamic College was prepared in 1949 and subsequently presented to the Conference of Malay Rulers.[9]

The aims of the Kolej Islam, Klang, were to:

1. Develop a tradition of higher Islamic learning that would be modern;
2. Develop a centre of Islamic education which would serve as a focal point for all the religious and Arabic schools with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and uniting the various systems;
3. Produce qualified religious and Arabic language teachers for the government primary and secondary schools;
4. Increase the number of qualified officers in the departments of religion and the *shari'ah* courts as well as to enlarge their knowledge;
5. Spread the message of Islam by sending graduates to all corners of the country.[10]

The Islamic College in Klang, Malaysia, finally opened in 1955 with fifty-five students. The Sultan of Selangor donated his former palace in Klang as a *waqf* to be converted into the college's premises. The newly-formed College offered English language, science, and mathematics, in addition to the core curriculum of Islamic studies and Arabic language. As the years progressed demand for Islamic higher education exceeded the number of places available in the Islamic College.[11]

As in Thailand, Malaysian alumni of Egyptian universities have played significant roles in Malaysia's education sector. Graduates from the Klang Islamic College went on to Al-Azhar University in Cairo to continue their masters and doctoral degrees in *Shari'ah*, *Usuluddin*, or Arabic language, before returning to Malaysia where they often held important positions in Malaysian higher education and government. Prominent alumni of the College, to name just a few, include Professor Dr. Harun Din (UKM), Professor Ghazali Nawawi (IIUM), Professor Abdul Hamid Othman (Office of Prime Minister), Professor Aziz Hanafi (UKM), Mahmud Abdul (UKM), Associate Professor Dr. Arshad Taib (UTM), Associate Professor Mohd Yusof Mat (UiTM), and Professor Dr. Ismail Hamid (UKM).

Those alumni who graduated from *Madrasah Alwiah Diniah*, Arau, Perlis, Malaysia, and who went on to Cairo to further their studies at Cairo University and Ain Shams University in the late 1950s and early 1960s include Omar Abu (a banker); Ahmad Said (a politician); Omar Ismail (a professional); Abdul Kadir Ismail (a lecturer); Ramli Ismail (a lecturer); Sayed Hassan Sahil and Ali Mat Isa (lecturers). Among the later alumni of the same *Madrasah* from the early 1960s to 1970s who went on to graduate from Al-Azhar University include Professor Dr. Othman Khalid (lecturer, UKM); Professor Dr. Harun Din (lecturer, UKM); Professor Dr. Ismail Hamid (lecturer, Temple University); Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Arshad Taib (lecturer, UTM), Associate Professor Ahmad Yusof Mat (lecturer, UITM); Dr. Muhammad Saad Ali (lecturer); Dr. Aziz Hanafi (lecturer, UKM); Mahmud Abdul (lecturer, UKM); Azimat Yahya (lecturer); Mariam Isa (lecturer); Mrs. Radiah Mahmud (lecturer) and Syarifah Zainab (lecturer). Most of the *Alwiah* graduates became founding lecturers in the Kolej Islam, Klang, and at the Universiti Kebangsaan Bangi, Malaysia, in the early days of its establishment. The development of Islamic higher education in this period has had a significant impact on the Malaysian higher education system as a whole.

In Thailand, the situation of Islamic schooling and *madrasah* institutions is similar, though much less developed, to that in Malaysia. In Thailand many registered *madrasahs*, officially referred to as 'Islamic Private Schools' (*rongrian ekachon son sasana islam*), can be found in the south as well as in other parts of the country. Hundreds of *madrasah* graduates continue their studies in Islam and Arabic in various countries, including Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan and India, not to mention those who have had the opportunity to study in the Middle East. Thus the need for the establishment of Islamic higher learning centers in Thailand is very high.

After the Second World War progressive Muslim elites of the Patani region in southern Thailand began to consider how to adapt their *pondoks* – a loose and

unstructured system of Islamic education – to provide a more systematic method of instruction so as to cope with the demands placed upon them by the government. Later, during the 1960s, the centralizing education policy of the Thai government towards traditional Islamic education institutions caused great concern among Thai Muslims in the south. Religious teachers and the owners of the *pondoks* began to consider how to ensure that their traditional educational institutions survived. The process of institutional change has led Thai Muslims to becoming much more aware of the impact of modern trends on these traditional institutions. Besides being unprepared in the modern fields of education traditional Muslims tend to have a different conception of what Islamic education ought to be compared to that of the secular education authorities.

The predicament of the *pondok* schools in Thailand can be said to resemble that of traditional Islamic education in Indonesia after independence, which similarly had to respond to the demands of a strong, centralizing, secular state. As Lukens-Bull explains, although Indonesia was the world's largest Islamic country, it was not an Islamic state:

> Throughout the Indonesian republic's existence the ongoing question for the Islamic community has been how to create a strong, and faithful Islamic society in the context of a modernizing, globalizing and secular state [...] Through developing a hybrid educational system in *pesantren*, *kyai* [traditional religious leaders] have outwardly supported the national development policies while striving to firmly establish Islamic values as the foundation for public life in Indonesia.[12]

The Indonesian government's attempts to impose a modern system of education onto traditional institutions also concerned sections of Indonesia's Muslim community. Rapid growth of the Indonesian economy from the 1980s was widely perceived to have led to an erosion of traditional values that were once nurtured in the *pesantren*. In this context the study of Islam was seen as a means of reclaiming these lost values. As one *pesantren* teacher lamented,

> Indonesia once had established values, as can be seen in the successful establishment of Republic of Indonesia. These values were the values of 1945. However in the 1980s these values began to be lost and are now completely lost [...] The Qur'an can guarantee

life in the future, the Qur'an can take us back to the values of 1945.[13]

Given similar concerns expressed by Thai Muslims about government pressure to modernize Islamic education the Thai graduates of Egyptian educational institutions have played an important role. Many Cairo alumni who have returned to Thailand with qualifications in Arabic and Islamic subjects have been instrumental in the establishment of new *madrasah* schools providing a systematic curriculum based on that of Al-Azhar. Indeed, some of the early pioneers in the establishment of educational institutions on the *madrasah* model include Imron Makudee (Kongchok Pattani Witthaya) and Na'im Kasem from Bangkok (Khlongsip Islam Witthaya); Haji Ahmad Bandakaseng from Yala (Ma'had Darul 'Ulum), Senator Omar Tayib from Narathiwat (Ma'had Attarkiah Diniyah), Haji Nik Dir Waba (Saiburi Islam Witthaya) and Haji Abdul Wahhab Abdulwahhab from Pattani (Madrasah Aziz Sataan). Students graduating from these schools are qualified in both Thai and religious education. Every year many of the students who graduate from these schools continue their studies in Egypt. Thus the academic relationship between Thailand's Muslim community and Egypt has grown stronger and stronger.

CONCLUSION

Since Muslim communities in Thailand tend to believe that the public school curriculum does not provide enough Islamic content, Islamic educational institutions have a role to play in ensuring that young Muslims learn their innate religious foundations. The Muslim community in Thailand sees the future of religious education beyond the national frame. To become learned people well-versed in Islamic precepts Muslim students need to continue their studies in institutions of higher learning. In order to provide the best opportunities for their children they have attempted to establish Islamic education institutions on the model of the institutions in the Middle East. It is here that the great Islamic higher education institutions of Egypt have played and continue to play a vital role in the development of Islamic higher education in Thailand.

Endnotes

1   *Manbar al-Islam*, al-'adad 9, al-sanah 22, Ramadan 1384/4 January 1965, *Eid al-'Ashir* (the 10th Celebration of Knowledge Day) (Cairo: The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, 1965), p. 5.

2   *Ibid.*, p. 5.

3   *Ibid.*, p. 5.

4   Hasan Madmarn, *Traditional Muslim Institutions in Southern Thailand: A Critical Study of Islamic Education and Arabic Influence in the Pondok and Madrasah Systems of Pattani* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah, 1990), pp. 144-145.

5   Michael Fischer, "Islam and the Revolt of the Petit Bourgeoisie", *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* D111, no. 1 (1982): 109.

6   See *Manbar al-Islam*, al- 'adad 3, al-sanah 21, Rabi 'al-Awwal 1383 (August 1963) (Cairo: The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, 1963): 18.

7   Hasan, *Traditional Muslim Institutions in Southern Thailand*, p. 244.

8   Rosnani Hashim, *Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice* (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti, 1996).

9   *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

10   *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

11   *Ibid.*

12   Ron Lukens-Bull, *A Peaceful Jihad: Negotiating Identity and Modernity in Muslim Java* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 11-12.

13   *Ibid.*, p. 10.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM IAIN TO UIN:
ISLAMIC STUDIES IN INDONESIA

Azyumardi Azra

The transformation in recent years of the five State Institutes for Islamic Studies (IAIN or Institut Agama Islam Negeri) and one State Islamic College (STAIN, or Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri) into fully-fledged universities is an historic phase in the development of Islamic higher education in Indonesia. The conversion of the IAIN to UIN was begun in the late 1970s by a number of high officials of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and rectors of IAINs, particularly Professor Harun Nasution of the IAIN in Jakarta. But political and legal constraints during the Soeharto period, as well as purely academic reasons, made the conversion very difficult, if not unlikely.

The sudden fall of President Soeharto in May 1998 brought liberalization to Indonesia, not only in the political arena, but also in the educational field. Efforts within IAIN circles to convert the IAIN to UIN that had intensified since 1997 gained a stronger impetus. The new paradigm in the higher education introduced in 1998 by the Ministry of National Education (MONE) that includes greater autonomy, greater accountability and greater quality assurance for Indonesian state universities, also made the IAIN transformation possible.[1]

It should be acknowledged that the appointment of A Malik Fadjar, professor of Islamic education at IAIN Jakarta, as Minister of National Education in the Megawati Presidency (2001-04), accelerated the transformation. It was during his tenure that IAIN Jakarta was converted to UIN (May 20, 2002), followed by IAIN Yogyakarta and STAIN Malang (July 21, 2004). Three other IAINs have also been converted into UINs during the Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono Presidency. They are

now UIN Pekanbaru, UIN Bandung, and UIN Makasar. As a result of the transformation of Islamic higher learning, there are now six UINs, 14 IAINs and 32 STAINs throughout Indonesia.

REINTEGRATION OF THE SCIENCES

The creation of the UINs is the end product of a long struggle within IAIN and MORA circles. One of the most important hurdles was legal constraints. According to various regulations concerning higher education and particularly the Indonesian law of education of 1989, an '*institut*' (institute) such as IAIN had a limited mandate compared to a '*universitas*' (university). The law states that an '*institut*' is a higher educational institution that is allowed to teach only in a certain field of knowledge, while a '*universitas*' can provide education in virtually all branches of knowledge. For this reason the mandate of the IAINs as Islamic higher education institutions since the time of their foundation was limited to the so-called 'Islamic religious sciences'. It would consequently be against the law if an IAIN offered academic programs outside of the boundaries of the so-called Islamic religious sciences.

However it is important to make clear that even though an IAIN is an institute of Islamic religious sciences, it is not a 'seminary'. It is basically a liberal institute that prepares Muslim youths to work as teachers of not only Islamic instruction at *madrasahs*, *pesantrens* and public schools, but also of English, for instance. Many IAIN graduates also work as social and NGO activists, journalists, political activists, leaders of socio-religious organizations, as well as *kyai* at *pesantren*. With the liberalization of Indonesian politics following the fall of President Soeharto an ever increasing number of IAIN graduates have become leaders of political parties and members of legislative bodies at national and local levels.[2]

In this respect, there is little doubt that the IAIN has played a crucial role in the modernization of Indonesian Muslim society. First of all, IAIN has made it possible for the children of *santri* (practising Muslim) families to obtain 'modern' Islamic higher education that allows them to achieve not only educational mobility but also social and economic mobility. IAIN, no doubt, has contributed significantly to the so-called 'intellectual boom' that has been taking place in Indonesia since the late 1970s. Furthermore, one can not ignore the role of IAIN graduates in the modernization of Islamic educational institutions, such as *madrasahs*, *pesantrens*, and *sekolah Islam* (Islamic schools), as well as in the development of other Islamic institutions such as Islamic courts, Islamic banking and others.

Despite their important role within IAIN circles there is a great deal of dissatisfaction with their limited academic mandate that allows them to deal with only the so-called Islamic religious sciences. There are a number of important reasons behind the efforts to convert IAIN to UIN. First, more and more Muslims have realized that the long-standing dichotomy between the Islamic religious sciences and 'secular', or better, 'general' sciences, can no longer be maintained, since essentially there is no separation in Islam between the sacred and the profane. The dichotomy—if not separation—has created negative consequences for the lives of Muslims as a whole.

Second, the development program that was launched in Indonesia from the early 1970s onwards has produced an increasing need for Muslims to play a greater role in almost all walks of life. In the popular discourse since the 1970s Muslims should not become the 'objects' of development; they should become the 'subject' of national development. But it is clear that they can not fulfill that role satisfactorily unless they are better prepared in all branches of knowledge.

Third, the transformation of most of *madrasahs* into 'public schools' with an Islamic character as stated by the national education law of 1989 has had far-reaching consequences for the IAIN and STAIN. Now, if the graduates of secondary madrasah (Madrasah Aliyah/MA), particularly in the fields of the natural sciences and social science, wish to continue their studies in the IAIN, then the IAIN itself must provide similar academic programs. But this is of course beyond the traditional mandate of the IAIN. As a result, since 1997 the number of prospective students and, therefore, students admitted, at the IAIN and STAIN has been decreasing continuously.

At a more philosophical level, at least in UIN Jakarta, the conversion of a IAIN to a UIN is based on the idea of the reintegration of the so-called Islamic religious sciences and 'secular' sciences. There is no need here to discuss again the origins of this dichotomy in the history of knowledge in Islam.[3] What is important is that from the UIN Jakarta perspective all sciences epistemologically come from God, the All-Knowledgeable, through the '*ayat Qur'aniyyah*' (Qur'anic verses) and the '*ayat kawniyyah*', the signs of God that are spread all over the universe. Muslims need to learn the '*ayat Qur'aniyyah*' and the '*ayat kawniyyah*' at the same time, since through the study of the two *ayats*, Muslims will be able to acquire the various kinds of knowledge and sciences that are necessary for their lives.

The concept of the reintegration of sciences at the UIN Jakarta is conducted at three levels: first, at the philosophical and epistemological levels mentioned above; second, at the level of the curriculum; third, at the level of faculty and academic programs.

It should be clear, therefore, that the conversion is not based on the idea of the 'Islamization of knowledge' that has been the subject of discussion and debate among certain Muslim scholars since the early 1980s. Again, from the UIN Jakarta perspective, the idea of the 'Islamization of knowledge' is to a large extent questionable, since all knowledge and sciences are already Islamic. Natural sciences are of course already based on universal principles. If certain theories in the social sciences and humanities are Western-based, then the need is not to 'Islamize' them, but to develop theories that are based on Muslim social and cultural realities.

Based on all of the above-mentioned reasons, the idea of conversion of the IAIN to UIN has a strong basis. Maintaining the existing form or mandate of IAIN will make it very difficult for it to survive. Therefore, the mandate of the IAIN needs to be expanded. If direct conversion to UIN is not possible, then the IAIN should be given a wider mandate, meaning it maintains its institute status, but at the same time is officially allowed by the Ministry of National Education (MONE) to open 'non-religious' academic programs.[4] The wider mandate concept was in fact adopted by MORA and MONE as 'bridging' stages in the transformation of IAIN Jakarta, IAIN Yogyakarta, and STAIN Malang to UIN.

The result of the transformation is clear. Taking UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, the earliest institute to have been converted (May 20th 2002) as an example, at present the UIN Jakarta consists of not only religious faculties, but also 'non-religious', or, better, natural and social sciences and humanities faculties. More than that, even the traditional religious faculties are a combination of religious and non-religious departments or programs.

The complete faculties of UIN Jakarta are the following: the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teaching Sciences; the Faculty of Syariah and Law; the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Philosophy; the Faculty of Adab and Humanities; the Faculty of Dakwah and Communication; the Faculty of Islamic Studies (Dirasat Islamiyyah); the Faculty of Psychology; the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences; the Faculty of Science and Technology; the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences; and the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

With its new status since 2003 UIN Jakarta has participated in the national entrance examination (SPMB/Seleksi Penerimaan Mahasiswa Baru) which is carried out by the Indonesian association of state universities, in addition to the local entrance examination conducted internally at the UIN Campus. This participation allows UIN Jakarta to recruit students more widely, or more precisely, both nationally and internationally. And according to statistics released by the national committee of SPMB, based on scores achieved by its prospective students, UIN Jakarta in

the 2003 SPMB was ranked 14th in natural sciences and 16th in social sciences out of 48 participating universities. In 2004, UIN Jakarta was the 5th most competitive university among 49 state universities participating in the SPMB in such programs as Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Management, Accountancy, and Psychology.

Again, a number of consequences of this transformation are clear. The most important among them is that these UIN have included the opening of new academic programs that go beyond the religious sciences that are traditionally taught at IAINs and STAINs. These new programs include, for instance, mathematics, biology, computer sciences, medical and health sciences, and other natural and basic sciences.

The decision of the Indonesian government to carry out this crucial transformation reflects the long-standing aspiration within both government circles and Muslim society generally to have modern Islamic universities that will in turn make a greater contribution to the creation of a modern and democratic Indonesia. Greater opportunities for Islamic higher education institutions, no doubt, will be possible only if the mandate of these institutions is not confined to the religious sciences, but includes also other sciences that are necessary for Indonesians to improve their lives.

THE TRADITION OF ISLAMIC LEARNING

The appearance of the UIN within the Islamic educational system and institutions in Indonesia is also a sign of the emergence of a new view of Islamic studies in the country. As far as Islamic studies in Indonesia is concerned, generally speaking there are two main traditions: the tradition that originates with the Middle Eastern universities and the tradition developed at Western universities. Each of these traditions has had its influence on the direction and approach of this field of study in Indonesia, as reflected at the IAIN. Numerous studies have shown – among them Dhofier (1980; 1982), Azra (2004), and Abaza (1994) – that there has been an intense interaction between the *'ulamâ* of Indonesia and their counterparts in the Middle East, especially in Mecca, Medina, and later in Cairo.

Consequently, what has been developed in Indonesian Islamic studies cannot be separated from the tradition of Islamic learning in the Middle East. More recently, with the return of IAIN graduates from their studies at Western universities, such as those in the Netherlands, Canada, the United States, England, Germany, France, and Australia, the development of Islamic studies has advanced to an important stage.

The tradition of Islamic learning in Indonesia has a long and rich history. My study of the intellectual networks of the Indonesian-Malay *'ulamâ* has shown that, from its early period, the development of Islam and the tradition of Islamic learning in Indonesia at both the socio-cultural and intellectual levels cannot be separated from the religio-intellectual traditions developed in Mecca and Medina.[5] This finding suggests that, in many ways, traditions of Islamic learning in Indonesia have developed in almost the same way as they have in its land of origin.

Nevertheless, while it is true that Indonesian Islam has close links with the intellectual traditions in Mecca and Medina, Islam in Indonesia has not simply duplicated them. In the process of its transmission to Indonesia from the holy land and later from Cairo, Indonesian Islam has developed a distinctive intellectual tradition. Dhofier's study (1980, 1982) on the network of Javanese *kyai* in the early nineteenth century shows that the *kyai* of the *pesantren* in Java developed their own networks, which were built in two ways: through intellectual chains of Islamic knowledge and learning and through endogamous marriages among their families and relatives. The first seems to have been inspired by *hadîth* transmission, by using *isnâd* (chains of transmitters or authority), which was later also adopted in the *silsilah* of *tariqah*. Both *isnâd* and *silsilah* are, of course, used to prove the legitimacy, validity, and authority of the teaching and learning respectively in the *hadîth* and Sufism one has received. The *'ulamâ* network, on the other hand, aimed mostly at preserving the *pesantren* tradition.

Pesantren in Java, as may also be the case with the many other Islamic institutions in the Islamic world, represented a distinctive tradition of Islamic learning in Indonesia. A simple example of this is that *pesantren* used a certain religious language that combined Arabic words with local language. The use of Arab-Jawi (Javanese or Malay language written in Arabic characters) in *pesantren* is even considered a unique phenomenon.[6] Unlike many parts of the Muslim world, especially the Middle East, that use Arabic as their main language, Java developed its own intellectual and linguistic traditions while maintaining Arabic as an important language for religious studies.

Pesantren education was designed to preserve the conventions of traditional Islamic learning. Therefore, the books used to teach *santri* (students of *pesantren*), referred to in Indonesia as *kitab kuning* (literally "yellow books"), were those produced by *'ulamâ* in the past.[7] Furthermore, traditional Islamic rituals practiced in *pesantren* reflect the religious practices of Muslims and are often categorized as belonging to traditional Islam. Therefore, it is not suprising that *pesantren* have been preserved by traditional Islam as now represented by the Nahdlatul 'Ulamâ (NU), the largest Muslim organization in Indonesia, established in 1926.

However, the influence of modern education in Indonesia, which was initially introduced by the Dutch, also had an impact on *pesantren*, significantly changing the intellectual tradition of Islam in Java. The *pesantren* not only began to lose some of their specific intellectual language, but to some extent they also lost their distinctive educational character. Nevertheless, the adaptations made by *pesantren* were a necessary condition for their adjustment to social changes, and enabled them to continue to play a major role in Islamic studies in Indonesia. The new tradition of *pesantren* adopted over the last two decades is also partly characterized and influenced by contemporary social conditions, and in turn is shaping the tradition of Islamic studies in Indonesia as a whole.

APPROACHES TO ISLAMIC STUDIES

In order to have a better grasp of recent tendencies in Islamic studies in Indonesia it is important to elucidate briefly the history of the development of the IAIN and the recent transformation two of them, in Jakarta (2002) and Yogyakarta (2004), into fully-fledged universities (State Islamic University or Universitas Islam Negeri/UIN). In addition, one State Islamic College (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Negeri/STAIN) in Malang was also transformed into a UIN in 2004.

There is no doubt that the IAIN have played a major role in advancing Islamic studies through higher education. In fact, the IAIN can fairly be regarded as a barometer of the development of Islamic studies in the Indonesian academic world.[8] The IAIN is undoubtedly an end-product of Indonesian Muslims' efforts to establish a modern religious institution of higher education. They were officially granted state-institution status in the late 1950s through the process of merging the two main institutions of Islamic higher education: the PTAIN (Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri, or State Islamic Higher Institute) in Yogyakarta and the ADIA (Akademi Dinas Ilmu Agama, or Academy of Religious Sciences) in Jakarta. The PTAIN had originated in the Faculty of Religious Studies at Indonesia Islamic University (UII), the oldest private university in Indonesia, while the ADIA had been designed as an academy to provide training for candidates for the civil service with the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

After the establishment of IAIN Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta and IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta in the early 1960s, the Ministry of Religious Affairs also established other IAINs in a number of capital cities of Indonesian provinces. As a result the peak number of IAINs was 14. The number has been reduced recently to

12 when IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and IAIN Sunan Kalijaga were converted into universities. Now there are three UINs, 12 IAINs and 32 STAIN operating under the supervision of Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). It is important to mention in passing that STAINs were founded in 1997 as a conversion of IAINs' faculties located in certain towns. Again, all of these Islamic institutions of higher learning are responsible to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, while their academic supervision is carried out together by the Ministry of National Education.

It is important to understand that the establishment and development of the UINs, the IAINs and the STAINs, cannot be separated from the struggle of Indonesian Muslims to advance and spread Islamic teaching in Indonesia. Among Indonesian Muslims there are numerous differences in the practice and understanding of Islam. Sometimes conflicts occur over trivial differences, such as the use of intention (*niyat*) before prayer. This particular conflict occurred not only because of a lack of proper understanding of Islam, but also because of each school's fanatic loyalty to its respective mode of interpretation (*madhhab*). So on issues such as these Muslims expected that their institutions of higher education would improve Muslims' understanding and practice of Islam.

Since their establishment, therefore, the IAINs have carried on their shoulders two fundamental tasks: the advancement of Muslim intellectual discourse and the betterment of Muslims' understanding of their religious practices. In other words, the IAIN have undertaken both an academic role (as education institutions aiming to improve the quality of Muslim intellectual discourse) and a social role (as religious institutions for *dakwah*).[9] However, these two expected roles have not always gone hand in hand, and have sometimes even come into conflict. On the one hand, as an academic institution, the IAIN should treat the study of religion as it does other studies, applying to it the same academic and scientific principles. On the other hand, the IAIN is expected to act as a *dakwah* institution, which is more concerned with how its people practice Islam.[10]

Therefore, in the first decades of its development, Islamic Studies at the IAIN was dominated by a substantive and normative approach stemming mainly from Islam's doctrinal aspects. This approach to Islamic studies emphasized the legal and formal aspects of Islam which focus on *sharî'ah* (Islamic law) and *aqîdah* (Islamic faith). The result of this kind of endeavor has been the emergence of a tendency in Islamic studies to associate Islam mainly with practices and rituals, which means studying Islam in order to better practice Islam.

Furthermore, in the IAINs' early decades, Islamic studies tended to be focused on a particular religious school (*madhhab*). As a result, Islamic studies at the IAINs'

did not form part of a wider scientific discourse. The model for Islamic studies in the IAIN was the tradition of universities in the Middle East, particularly Al-Azhar University, which put more emphasis on a normative-idealistic approach than on anything else.

However, social development and changes that have occurred since the early 1970s have propelled changes in the IAIN. The national development program that tended to take modernization as the national goal has led Muslim intellectuals such as Nurcholish Madjid, Harun Nasution, and Mukti Ali to reorient the direction of Islamic studies in Indonesia. This endeavor was made easier when Harun Nasution, a PhD graduate of McGill University, became rector at IAIN Jakarta and Mukti Ali, also a graduate of McGill University, was appointed Minister of Religious Affairs. Their presence has brought about some significant changes in the IAINs' orientation of study.

One obvious change is that the new trend of studying Islam is no longer limited to only one Islamic school of thought *(madhhab)*. Islam is now seen not from the perspective of only one particular *madhhab*, but from various perspectives. This approach encourages students to learn Islam's academic aspects without obligating them to follow a certain religious school. As a result, students become more open and tolerant toward different religious interpretations. This in turn propels the mushrooming of new thoughts on religion, as the sectarianism of holding to one *madhhab* increasingly diminishes. As a result, there has arisen a non-*madhhabi* approach to Islamic studies in Indonesia.

Another important change to Islamic studies in the IAIN has been the shift of Islamic studies from a normative approach to a historical, sociological, and empirical approach. The normative approach to studying Islam, which tends to neglect human socio-historical realities, has led Muslims to see Islam as an idealistic religion. Because of this idealistic view, Muslims are often trapped into "spiritual satisfaction," which in turn distances Muslims from empirical situations. On the other hand, historical and sociological approaches provide a wide range of analysis for the study of Islam, bringing social-historical realities into interaction with religious experience. As a result, Muslims are now becoming more aware of more mundane problems affecting them.

Indonesian scholars who have studied Islam in Western universities have initiated the emergence of historical and sociological approaches to Islamic studies in Indonesia. If previously the orientation of Islamic studies was by and large taken from the great tradition of Middle Eastern universities, the new orientation of Islamic studies in Indonesia has come about as a result of the opportunities available for

fresh IAIN graduates to study in Western universities. Some Indonesian Muslims, however, criticize this new orientation within Islamic studies. They question, for instance, how Islam can be studied from the West since Western countries do not have an Islamic tradition comparable to that of Middle Eastern countries. Furthermore, some Muslims also argue that what Muslims can learn from Western universities is only an "Orientalist approach," which will in the end harm Islam and Muslims.

These debates demonstrate the existence of differing opinions regarding the IAIN's status as either a religious or an academic institution. Controversy over the orientation of Islamic studies has colored the academic tradition of Islam at the IAIN. Although the new orientation of Islamic studies leans more toward that of Western universities, it has not diminished the desire of Indonesian Muslim students to study at Middle Eastern universities. The IAIN has therefore become the meeting place for these two orientations within Islamic studies. As a result, we can observe that various new modes of study have emerged in the IAIN. One the one hand, there is a strong tendency to study Islam using historical and sociological approaches. Various centers for study have now been established that investigate and conduct research on Islam in the context of contemporary ideas such as civil society, democracy, gender, and human rights. On the other hand, the influence of Middle Eastern studies on the IAIN is also apparent. The textual study of Islam also survives despite changes in the IAIN's study orientation. In the future, the meeting of these two great traditions in the IAIN may produce a distinct tradition of Islamic studies.

ISLAMIC STUDIES IN THE LOCAL CONTEXT

By any measure Islam in Indonesia constitutes one of the great branches of the family tree of Islam. Not only do Muslims in Indonesia constitute the majority of the population – they are as numerous as Arabic-speakers and Urdu-speakers – but they also have peculiar traditions that differ from those of Muslims in other parts of the Muslim world. However, until the early 1980s Islam in Indonesia had been regarded as being outside the mainstream of Islamic traditions. This is because, as many scholars have argued, the syncretic nature of Islam in Indonesia is not comparable to the supposedly "real Islam" of the Middle East, where Islam originated.[11] Moreover, Islam in Indonesia and Islam in Southeast Asia in general, as Anthony Reid has argued, is marginal because Islam in Indonesia "entered the Islamic world too late" and thus cannot shape and color Islamic doctrine and civilization.[12] When Indonesian Muslims began to interact with the Muslim community the seminal

ideas of Islamic civilization had already been established. Reid further argues that the geographical separation of Indonesia from Middle Eastern Muslim societies had distanced Indonesian Muslims from the social and political problems of other Muslim countries.

Studies by Roff (1985), Bulliet (1995), Keddie (1987), Ricklefs (1979; 1998), Hefner (1987), and Woodward (1989), to name only a few, have convincingly argued that it is inappropriate to consider Indonesian Islam "peripheral" – whether religiously or intellectually – vis-à-vis Middle Eastern Islam. However, because of its distinct social and political environment and its unique religious practices and interpretations, Islam in Indonesian has a special position. Mark Woodward, for example, in his study of the normative piety and mystical piety of Islam in Java, argues that Javanese Islam is exemplary of local Islam, which is interpreted with reference to local cultures (1989). If there are some distinct features of Islam in Java compared to Islam in Middle Eastern Muslim societies, Woodward argues, it should be viewed as part of Javanese Muslims' contribution to the interpretation of Islam.

Adopting a different line of argument Kuntowidjoyo maintains that in Indonesia and in Southeast Asia Islam has assumed a new dimension. In responding to contemporary ideas developed in the West, such as civil society, democracy, human rights, and gender, Indonesian Islam is more advanced than Islam in other Muslim societies. Furthermore, Indonesian Muslims are daring to use social sciences such as history, sociology, psychology, and anthropology to study Islam. Therefore, Kuntowidjoyo concludes, discourses on Islam in Indonesia are richer and more colorful.[13]

Islam in Indonesia also allows us to observe how Islam is related to the social context. As the prominent American historian of Islam, Hodgson, puts it (1974), the beautiful mosaic of Islam is reflected in the various forms of local Islam. It is true that Islam, when interacting with various cultures, produces local forms of Islam that may differ from each other. However, these various forms of local Islam are not an indication of a broken tradition of "universal Islam". Rather, they comprise diverse forms within a colorful mosaic.

CONCLUSION

There is little doubt that the creation of the UINs will have a far-reaching impact both on human resources development among Indonesian Muslims and on the direction of Islamic studies in Indonesia. Islamic studies in Indonesia will be influenced and shaped by various developments not only within the UIN, IAIN, and

STAIN but also within Indonesian society in general. However it is clear that the future development of Islamic studies will be marked by four major tendencies.

First, the tradition of Islamic studies will increasingly integrate the so-called 'Islamic religious sciences' with natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Second, the new tradition of Islamic studies in Indonesia will increasingly employ socio-historical approaches and analyses. Third, Islamic studies in Indonesia will consider local context – i.e., local cultures and local knowledge – in a more distinctive way. Fourth, it will employ a comparative perspective on local Islam in order to identify differences and similarities. This means that studying Islam in a certain locality, such as in Indonesia, will also necessitate considering Islam in other localities. Undoubtedly this kind of comparative approach will continue to gain momentum.

These tendencies within UIN, IAIN, STAIN, and within Islamic studies in Indonesia generally will provide the basis for a new tradition of Islamic studies. Its development could be a "perfect" combination of the two great traditions of Islamic studies developed in the Middle East and in the West. The end result is clear: the emergence of a distinctive Indonesian tradition of Islamic studies.

Endnotes

1   Azyumardi Azra, *Paradigma Baru Pendidikan Nasional: Rekonstruksi Dan Demokratisasi* [New Paradigms in National Education: Reconstruction and Democratization] (Jakarta: Penerbit Kompas., 2002); Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan* Modernisasi [Islamic Education: Tradition and Modernization], Jakarta: Logos, 2000.

2   Cf. Fuad Jabali and Jamhari, eds. *IAIN dan Modernisasi Islam di Indonesia* [IAIN and Islamic Modernization in Indonesia] (Jakarta: Logos, 2002).

3   Cf. Azyumardi Azra, "Reintegration of Sciences in Islam". In *International Conference of Islamic Universities League*, "Scientific Methods in Islam", Jakarta, 2003.

4   Cf. M. Atho Mudzhar, "Islamic Studies in Indonesia in the Making: In Search of a Qiblah". In *Islam in Indonesia: Islamic Studies and Social Transformation*, edited by Jabali Fuad and Jamhari. (Montreal & Jakarta: Indonesia-Canada Islamic Higher Education Project, 2002).

5   Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulama' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century* (Crows Nest, Aust; Honolulu: Leiden: Asian Studies Association of Australia (AAAS), 2004).

6   Anthony Reid, "Introduction". In *The Making of an Islamic Political Discourse in Southeast Asia*, edited by Anthony Reid (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1993), pp. 1-4.

7   Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren dan Tarekat: Tradisi-tradisi Islam di Indonesia* [Yellow Books, Traditional Islamic Boarding Schools, and Sufi Brotherhood], (Bandung: Mizan, 1996).

8   *Impact Studies* [On the Role of McGill University Alumna in Indonesia], Jakarta: Indonesia-Canada Islamic Higher Education Project, 2000.

9   Azyumardi Azra. *Esei-Esei Pendidikan Islam dan Intelektual Muslim* [Essays on Islamic Education and Muslim Intellectuals] (Jakarta: Logos, 1999), pp. 169–70.

10   *Ibid.*, p. 170.

11   Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

12   Reid, "Introduction", p. 5.

13   Kuntowidjoyo. *Paradigma Islam: Interpretasi Untuk Aksi* [Islamic Paradigms: Interpretation for Action] (Bandung: Mizan, 1991), pp. 44 ff.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEVELOPMENT AND ROLE OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES: SOME INDONESIAN REFLECTIONS

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This chapter presents some preliminary reflections about the challenges and opportunities in developing religious studies as an academic discipline in Indonesia, a religiously plural country which is at the same time the world's largest Muslim country. It begins with a description of the history and recent developments in religious studies in Indonesia. The significance of the new developments is set in the context of the situation of religious education at the lower level, relations between different religious communities, as well as the main problems facing the nation today—all with an emphasis on post-1998 *Reformasi* developments. The remainder of the chapter argues for two roles for religious study in Indonesian religious life. It asserts that in this situation the "academic study of religion" cannot—and one may argue, should not—remain purely academic.

THE ACADEMIC STUDY OF RELIGION IN INDONESIA

While the development of contemporary religious studies as an academic discipline in Western universities can be traced back to the years following the Second World War the field can be said to have matured only in the 1970s. Since then there

have been ups and downs, self-criticisms, and numerous developments which have brought it to its present state.[2] What is usually understood as "religious studies as an academic discipline" is a discipline which utilizes a variety of methods from the social sciences and humanities. Religious studies is commonly distinguished from theological study by its sense of critical distance and its self-conscious attempt to be more "objective", at least in the minimal sense of being aware of one's own presuppositions which inform one's study of religion. Indeed, questions of objectivity are elusive, and the very existence of this discipline, including what goes by the name "comparative religion", has been questioned—not to mention the term "religion" itself. As evident in textbooks which introduce the students to this discipline, the whole enterprise of religious studies has been constantly reconsidered, and its practitioners, too, have always interrogated themselves and what they purport to do.[3]

In Indonesia this field in the form we see it today has developed since the 1960s.[4] The history of the study of religion in Indonesian is usually traced back to the time when Mukti Ali became the first chair of the Department of Comparative Religion at the Yogyakarta State Institute for Islamic Studies (Institute Agama Islam Negeri or IAIN) in 1961, to be later followed by other IAINs. As noted by Karel Steenbrink, Ali did not seem to bother making a distinction between the "science of religion", the "history of religion", or the "comparative study of religion".[5] Some scholars are reluctant to call him a *scholar* of religious studies, since in his treatment of other religions he did present himself as a Muslim and occasionally gave assessments of other religions based on his perspective as a Muslim. In addition, he directly linked his study of comparative religion with efforts to promote interreligious dialogue—a project which flourished and was adopted as a matter of governmental policy when he later became Minister of Religious Affairs (1971-1978). Even until now, many state institutes/universities of Islamic studies in Indonesia still have a Department of Comparative Religion, but a very important development has taken place: the transformation of several IAINs into fully-fledged universities (called State Islamic Universities, or Universitas Islam Negeri/UIN). The transformation means that now the universities can offer non-religious sciences, such as sociology, psychology, natural sciences, and medicine. Along with this development the Department of Comparative Religion in Yogyakarta UIN, for example, is considering changing its orientation in the study of religion, and even to changing its name to reflect recent developments in religious studies which give a more emphatic treatment of other religions and the relationship between religion and contemporary issues. In this direction the IAINs/UINs have generally contributed in numerous ways to a better understanding between religious communities.[6] The present rector of the Yo-

gyakarta UIN, Amin Abdullah, has described the change of methodological orientation in the study of religion at UIN as one from 'normativity to historicity', which emphasizes socio-empirical studies.[7]

Similar developments, both in terms of incorporating new methods of religious studies and contributing to inter-religious understanding, have also taken place in Indonesian Christian universities. It may not be a coincidence that in the decade of the 1990s, a strong realization of the urgency of a "non-confessional" or "non-doctrinal" religious studies emerged. As an illustration we can note the founding of a graduate program on Religion and Society at the Satya Wacana Christian University (Salatiga, Central Java), a Program on the Study of Religions at Duta Wacana Christian University (Yogyakarta), and the Study of Religion and Culture at the Catholic-based Sanata Dharma University (Yogyakarta). These universities were particularly strong in their theology departments. As such there was also a strong need to distinguish the new programs from theology departments. As with some programs at the IAINs/UINs that invite non-Muslim scholars to teach the subject of religions other than Islam, the new programs at the Christian universities also have Muslim professors to teach subjects related to Islam. This obviously demonstrates an aim to present a more sympathetic—if not always more objective—study of religion.

Another important development was the founding of the Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS) at the "secular" or non-religiously affiliated Gadjah Mada University (GMU, Yogyakarta), the oldest and largest public university in Indonesia. Offering a Master's degree study program in religious studies, CRCS was founded in 2000 with the help of the above religiously-based universities, both Islamic and Christian, and in its initial stages was supported by both the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Since there is no undergraduate level of religious studies at GMU, which means there was no faculty specializing in religious studies other than anthropologists or sociologists doing research on religions, lecturers from those universities, and many other universities, including Buddhist and Hindu universities, were invited to teach courses at CRCS. Initially named "Comparative Religious Studies", in 2002 it changed to its present name to better indicate its methodology and the emphasis on broader issues developed there. CRCS now has three clusters emphasizing issues developed through the teaching and research: interfaith dialogue, religion and local cultures, and religion and contemporary issues. Besides its academic programs the Center also develops public education activities related to these issues. The lecturers as well as the students come from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds from all over Indonesia. The fact that it is an international program using English as its language of instruction also

enables it to admit a number of international students and, thanks to the many exchange programs, international professors. Many of the students come from religious educational institutions. Upon graduating they return to their home institutions—be they Islamic universities, *pesantrens*, Christian universities, seminaries and colleges, including Buddhist and Hindu colleges. Others are active in NGOs, some of them specifically interfaith NGOs.

Graduate training is the most significant area in which CRCS can contribute. Graduates who return to teach at their respective institutions or organizations already carry with them a more constructive understanding of religion and relations between religions. As is clear from the testimony of many of CRCS's graduates, they were able to change, to some extent, the way religion is taught. In its first years, CRCS concentrated on developing the teaching activities of the Center. Only in the past two years has it seriously developed its research program. In addition to research on religious education at the high school level, currently CRCS is developing a cluster of research projects on civic pluralism in Indonesia and religion and natural disasters. In different ways, both are pressing issues in today's Indonesia.

While initially CRCS held to the principle that a particular religion was to be taught by lecturers from that religious background so as to provide an insider's perspective, it soon became clear that it was difficult to maintain this principle in the framework of the developing curriculum. Instead, for specific courses, for example the World Religions course, one professor would teach the course and invite representative scholars from different religious backgrounds to be guest lecturers. This kind of course explores the history, doctrines, as well as recent developments in religion. In addition to the world religions, there is also specifically a course on indigenous religions which focuses mainly on Indonesia. Other courses take up contemporary issues such as Religion and Gender, Religion, Violence and Peacebuilding, Religion and Ecology, Comparative Mysticism, Comparative Scripture, etc.

A very recent development is the founding in 2006 of the Indonesian Consortium of Religious Studies, an international PhD program, hosted by GMU. This initiative is the result of a consortium of three universities—GMU, Duta Wacana Christian University, and State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga. The main advantage this young institution enjoys is the combined resources of three universities (professors, library, courses offered). This program, partly growing out of the interaction of the professors in the three universities at CRCS, is understood by its founders to be a kind of dialogue in itself. Indeed, without the trust built over the years between the professors in the three universities this would have been impossible. ICRS defines itself as an inter-religious international Ph.D. program, with

strong inter-disciplinary characteristics. To make the program truly inter-religious, until now each of the courses offered is taught by a team of professors representing different disciplinary and religious backgrounds. ICRS develops three areas of studies: Historical and Cultural Studies of Religion, Hermeneutics, and Religion and Contemporary Issues. It receives students from Indonesia as well as abroad.

THE CONTEXTS OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN INDONESIA

These new developments in religious studies are very significant in the history of study of religion in Indonesia. An awareness of the various contexts in which they have taken place is essential to understanding the direction in which the development of religious studies in Indonesia should go. First of all, there is the context of how religions have been taught at the lower levels of education in this country; second, despite a long history of inter-religious tolerance, relations between adherents of different religions are always tested by new social and political developments; third, the development of a discipline like religious studies needs to respond to developments and problems in the "secular" sectors.

Religious Education in the Schools

Indonesia is known as a religious country, home to the largest population of Muslims in the world, major world religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity, as well as a good number of indigenous religions. Religion is a compulsory subject for all Indonesian students at all levels of education from primary school to university level. But the teaching of religious courses is very limited in the sense that in schools Muslims only study Islam, Christians only study Christianity, etc. The instruction is quite normative. Even at the university level religion is also studied very normatively and with very minimal awareness about other religions. This kind of religious instruction is mandated by the national curriculum and followed by all public, as well as private schools. Even though many concerns have been voiced about the format as well as the effectiveness of this mode of teaching religion, the fact is that little has changed.

Government policy on religious education in Indonesian schools was first implemented soon after the 1945 declaration of independence. Initially the guidelines were not as rigid as they later became – where, for example, the present format makes religious study mandatory from the first grade of elementary school up to first year

university level, and all schools without exception must have a minimum number of hours reserved for religious education. Before 1966 some variation was allowed, and students (or their parents) could choose to take a course on religion or an alternative course, eg. moral education.[8] The present format, in which the policy is applied indiscriminately to all schools and courses are made compulsory for all levels of schooling, can be attributed to the political transformation in Indonesia that took place in 1966, that is, the bloody September 30, 1965 event. Under the Soeharto regime which followed all issues relating to religion underwent significant changes, including the policy on religious education.[9]

In the context of national education religious education is understood as meaning the study of one's own religion. It is a mono-religious education – some would say *instruction*. Subjects taught in the courses are aimed at getting students to internalize their own religion. In its implementation in school, during the religion hours students are separated into different classrooms based on their religion to receive instructions about their own religion. The starting point is therefore explicitly exclusive, and when other religions are taught they tend to be taught from the perspective of a particular religion. While this mode of religious education has been challenged, especially after the 1998 political reform, as far as government policy is concerned there has been no significant change. In fact, some even perceive a move toward making the policy even more rigid.[10]

The post-1998 reform period in general yielded significantly more political and social freedoms, prompting some schools to attempt to re-format their religious education programs while trying to follow the requirements of the national curriculum. These attempts have enjoyed differing degrees of success. In Yogyakarta[11], for example, a number of schools have tried to hold a single religion class for all students so they may learn the universal values of other religions together. In one Islamic school there was an experiment at creating a more inclusive religious education subject at the high-school level. However the success of this program depended on the particular teachers who took the initiative, and the program does not seem to have been institutionalized. A "religiosity education" program has been developed by the Archbishop of Semarang, Central Java, and was implemented by a few Catholic schools in Yogyakarta. Yet there have been some practical problems – for example the new course compromised the time for the teaching of the Catholic faith. The same Archbishop has also published a compilation of the teachings of many religions. Some schools add field trips to places of worship to the usual religious education curriculum. However, it is yet to be seen whether all these new experiments are ultimately successful. In research carried out by CRCS it was found that despite these innova-

tive attempts the teaching of religion in the schools still shows a discernable degree of exclusiveness, i.e. assuming the inherent superiority of a particular religion.[12]

Relations between Religious Communities

A much publicized problem in Indonesia since 1998 has been the rise of violence which, at least on the surface, appears to have been connected with religious motives. This includes the continuing communal violence in some parts of Indonesia such as Ambon and central Sulawesi, as well as the terrorist attacks on places associated with Western interests, such as the bombings in Bali and bomb attacks against Western embassies and hotels in Jakarta. Religious leaders have persistently rejected the hasty accusations that these violent incidents are religious in nature. However, many scholars are worried that especially among Muslims the moderate mainstream may be losing ground to the exclusivists. While such an analysis may be debated, one thing that is certain is that the religious harmony that both Indonesians as well as foreigners have praised in the past is not something that can be taken for granted. It is not an inherent essence of Indonesian religious life that cannot disappear, but something that requires concerted efforts to maintain.

That is the *least* we can say. From this point it would be natural to suggest that unless a systematic attempt is made to counter the exclusivist/violent tendencies among religious groups—however small such tendencies are at present—there is a real danger of broader religious (and one should add, intra-religious) polarization in the near future.

Current Socio-Economic Problems

There is another set of problems that are not specifically related to religion. Such problems were exacerbated in the period of the transition to democracy following the collapse of the New Order in 1998 and the *Reformasi* movement. They include wide-spread corruption (now "decentralized" to local governments, along with greater local autonomy), the widening gap between economic classes, poverty, and environmental crisis. These problems in combination have now manifested themselves in many worrying situations which mostly affect the less privileged groups in the population. The many environmental and "natural" disasters, large and small, all over Indonesia, are manifestations of the long-neglected problem of environmental degradation which has worsened since 1998 due to weaker governmental control. The number of casualties in these "natural" disasters is staggering.

TWO ROLES OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Examining all these problems—the religious, as well as the not specifically religious—one question which has been asked is whether religion is part of the problem or the solution? There are indications that in some instances religions have indeed have become part of the problem; the challenge is to make them part of the solution. Because of its violent medieval and modern history, the Western world, especially Western Europe, realized the ugly potential of religion much earlier, and many have given up hope in religion. But this attitude neglects two important points: that religions have also shown an amazing potential to civilize and humanize; and that religions are here to stay. So the more interesting challenge is how to make religion part of the solution. When we say that religion needs to be part of the solution, we have in mind not only problems which can be more immediately connected to religion, but also the more "mundane" problems.

More specifically, what has religious studies as an academic discipline to do with these considerations? Academic studies certainly do not develop in a vacuum. Whether or not it is acknowledged, socio-economic-political contexts determine to a greater or lesser degree the shape of relgous studies. Considering the manifold problems as illustrated above it would be almost impossible to develop a "purely academic" religious study in Indonesia—if such a thing can be said to exist at all. Recent developments in religious studies in higher education in Indonesia as outlined above have demonstrated this. Below is a description of the two main roles that religious studies can play in Indonesia. Some of these roles have already been partially achieved, others require further development.

Religious Literacy and Dialogue

People may be religious but not religiously-literate. Religious education which focuses mainly or even exclusively on normative doctrines of religious teachings may make students religious but not necessarily religiously-literate. Religious literacy demands that one understands the place of one's particular religion in the constellation of other religions living in the society, as well as its roles and limitations relative to other forces in social life. Such an understanding in turn demands the study of religion in a broader, non-normative way. The study of religion as a human phenomenon in a more objective manner—again, while being cautious about the definition of "objective"—is the realm of religious studies proper.

Indeed, as noted by Sunardi, the head of the Religious and Cultural Studies (*Ilmu Religi dan Budaya*) at Sanata Dharma, theology is the most institutionally established discipline in the study of religion. But for Sunardi that is precisely the main challenge of religious studies: how to transcend the limits of theology. According to Sunardi, "in Indonesia the need for different ways of speaking about religion is urgent because of the increase in religious experiences characterized by intense and rich religious encounter."[13]

It is difficult to deny that there is always a tension between the normative-doctrinal and the empirical/historical-critical approach to religion. The adoption of a critical attitude as part of that study—or even the mere use of non-theological language—can easily lead to accusations that one is weakening the faith. This is a classic problem that was also present in the West where contemporary religious studies first developed. Just like any other subject of academic study, skepticism and placing oneself at a distance from actual religious practice is regarded as one of the hallmarks of religious study, though there are criticisms of this approach, as we will discuss it later.[14]

One characteristic of normative religious education is that it tends to focus on truth claims. Such an education is thus almost necessarily exclusivist since the focus on truth-claims naturally leads to religious exclusivism. This exclusivism has its roots in the belief that all, or almost all, fundamental aspects of religion are sacred and unchanging. The historical and critical analysis of religion may thus be expected to neutralize this ahistorical tendency.[15] In fact, for better or worse, the very presuppositions of religious study already have this neutralizing potential.

The neutralization of such an exclusivist tendency paves the way for genuine inter-religious relation. There is a widespread realization that the so-called religious harmony that prevailed during the authoritarian regime of Soeharto in fact existed only on the surface. Harmony was limited to self-restraint among different religious groups, and hard questions about relations between different religions were not asked. Deeper understanding was not attained as the relationship is categorized by a limited notion of "tolerance". Religious study opens up the possibility for posing hard questions, the exploration of each other's world of discourse, and thus for a genuine dialogue. Otherwise, as Sunardi observes in the context of Indonesia, the study of religion may simply be a machine of production of subjective truths about the others. That was what happened with the discipline of Islamology in the Indonesian Christian institutions of theology education—the production of Christian truths about Islam; and the discipline of "comparative religion" elsewhere – as the production of Islamic truths about other religions![16]

There are two responses to this scepticism. First, indeed the early Indonesian history of comparative religion can easily engender skepticism; but this kind of scepticism surely is not the monopoly of Indonesia, and ways to rectify this situation have been widely discussed. Diana Eck, for example, now takes "comparative study" as designating a intellectual perspective to be cultivated in all fields of the study of religion–not as its subfield–to be complemented with other perspectives.[17]

Second, it is important to also note that taking some distance from one's own presuppositions is only the first step. The next step is to get closer to the religious others, while, to continue Eck, interrogating our own location and voice.[18] For a subject as delicate as religion one also needs to start with empathy for others, especially with regard to traditions different from their own. One needs to be immersed in a certain religious atmosphere to be able to understand that religion. Sometimes it even takes a "passing-over" to be able to truly understand others' beliefs. This and other terms that refer to similar ideas have been used by many scholars of religious study. The negotiation between the need to be objective and critical of one's own presuppositions needs to be combined with sympathy and closeness to the subject of study. This is partly what Eck suggests with her suggestion of a complementary perspective in the study of religion, a dialogical perspective. This perspective takes into account both our voices as well as the voices of the others with whom we are involved in a constant dialogue. "Today, the authority of the Orientalist voice is gone, and moving beyond Orientalism means moving into the methodological terrain of dialogue, a way of working in which both the voices of those we study and the voices of scholars situated in the contexts we study become integral to the process of understanding."[19]

Of course, this is much easier said than done. Regardless of the difficulty, only from a position of genuine understanding can an appreciation of others be possible. As Kimberley Patton puts it in her analysis of the postmodern fate of comparative religion, just because it is hard to do it right, that does not mean that we need to surrender the whole enterprise of studying religion.[20] The answer is not to surrender, but to take a position of humility and being open to criticism–two attitudes that actually are needed in all scientific enterprises.

To summarize, religious studies may be expected to create a kind of religious literacy, which in turn opens up avenues for dialogue. Religious studies can give dialogue between religious communities and traditions a more rigorous grounding thus making them more sustainable. In this regard it may be noted that what the Indonesian Consortium of Religious Studies aspires to do is described as "inter-religious studies". In the words of J. B. Banawiratma, inter-religious studies is the

further development of comparative religion and religious studies. It affirms "the reality, which is increasingly and more intensely realized, that a study of religions is a communication between subjects who are involved and meet in religious interpretation, experience, or understanding."[21]

There are, of course, objections to a simplistic linking of the academic study of religion with dialogue. While espousing dialogue as a perspective in the study of religion, Eck makes clear that she does not mean to suggest that scholars need to participate in inter-religious dialogue as it is often popularly understood today. She insists that, firstly, dialogue does not have to be perceived in terms of an enthusiast's subjective motivation for the promotion of some kind of unity of religions. One should thus not be required to sacrifice his or her "objectivity" in pursuing a scientific study of religion. Secondly, if "objectivity" is to be understood as having no authorial viewpoint, then it is outdated not only in the study of religion but in the social sciences in general.[22]

As mentioned earlier, Indonesia does have an older example of an attempt to link the study of religion with interreligious dialogue in Mukti Ali, the founder of the discipline of comparative religion in Indonesia. He has been criticized (and indeed discounted as a "scholar") by the historian of Indonesia B. J. Bolland, partly because of his involvement in the promotion of interfaith dialogue.[23] Yet this criticism can be understood as being in line with an older epistemology in which objectivity was naïvely understood as a requirement of any study in order to be considered "scientific". Mukti Ali's work beckons towards theology, which can be understood as working against the objectivity of the scholar.[24] Eck's double-sided argument outlined above can be regarded as an appropriate response to this criticism.

Yet this was not the only problem with earlier attempts at promoting comparative religion in Indonesia. One should also note Sunardi's reference to Indonesian Muslim comparative religion programs as being akin to the production of Islamic truths about other religions (and similar criticisms of Christian Islamology). That criticism seems valid in the past, when relations between religions during the colonial and New Order periods were manipulated so as to avoid engagement between different religious communities in the name of avoiding conflict, and when religion was under the hegemony of the government.

However, the more important challenge now is how to exorcise these ghosts of the past. Fortunately, the post-1998 period of Reformasi provides us with the freedom to do this. One crucial enterprise in this regard, to provide an illustration, is to interrogate the very use of the term "religion". What are the meanings of "religion", when the same term appears in quite different contexts - in textbooks on the study

of religion, as well as in such political documents as the Indonesian constitution, laws on marriage and education, and many kinds of regulations, including on all Indonesians' ID cards? Can we separate the political, the academic, and the theological uses of "religion"? For what is supposedly a personal affair is, in fact, loaded with political signification.

"Engaged" Religious Study

Religious study may be expected to play another constructive role. A recent trend is its more visible engagement with new problems at the societal and even the global level. Examples which come readily to mind are the lively discussions we have seen in the past few years in the fields of religion and ecology, and religion and bioethics. Included in this is also the engagement of scholars of religious studies from all traditions of world religions in global issues such as gender inequality and economic injustice, which, some fear, are exacerbated by political and economic globalization. All these potential problems affect mostly the less privileged of the world: the poor and women, regardless of their religious background. In this area scholarship is sometimes, positively or negatively, difficult to distinguish from "movements". Sometimes the boundaries between academia and social activism are even deliberately blurred. Certainly, religious believers have been concerned with all these issues for a considerable time. But it is only a recent development that these concerns have been institutionalized as academic fields of study, that is, as an enterprise with an explicit methodological awareness, with sufficient academic resources (such as journals, textbooks, and encyclopedias), with an academic community working in universities and professional associations, and with a set of standards.

We may provide an example of this engagement of religion with contemporary concerns from the recently developed enterprise of religion and ecology.[25] Since its inception, the motives that drove the establishment of "religion and ecology" as an area of study were not purely academic but based on both scholarly interests and ethical-religious concerns about the degradation of the environment. Scholars coming to this multi-disciplinary field are from backgrounds as varied as theology, philosophy, anthropology, and environmental science. In the early 1990s religion and ecology were recognized as a distinct study group in the American Academy of Religion. Another development which started just over a decade ago (1996) was the series of conferences titled "Religions of the World and Ecology" at Harvard's prestigious Center for the Study of World Religions. Following the conferences from 1997 to 2004 ten books (each more than 500 pages) bearing the series title "World

Religions and Ecology Series" appeared. Each volume focuses on one religion (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, Taoism, and Indigenous religions). These conferences culminated with a conference held at the United Nations in 1998. The two organizers of this series of conferences, Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, now sustain their initiative through the Forum on Religion and Ecology (FORE). FORE aims to develop religion and ecology as a subject of "academic study and research in universities, colleges, seminaries, and other religiously–affiliated institutions".[26] Another interesting development is the success of scholars involved in this field in participating in the formulation of the Earth Charter, which, despite some criticisms, has been widely promoted all over the world.

Nevertheless there are serious criticisms of religion and ecology both from outside and inside the field itself. One of the criticisms is that ethical and even religious commitment to environmental agenda, however lofty they are, may compromise "the critical acumen associated with distanced scholarship".[27] Taylor shows that such concerns are not idle; he gives examples of how such concerns have indeed damaged the scholarship. This problem, of course, has to be addressed by scholars involved in religion and ecology. Regardless, Taylor himself acknowledges that "ideas and initiatives incubated, if not given birth to, by religious studies scholars, have played an important role in the greening of religion and environmental ethics. They are, moreover, beginning to influence global environmental politics, bringing to them an important and sometimes innovative religious and ethical dimension".[28]

Another example concerns recent biomedical developments which have raised questions about the permissibility of family planning, abortion, euthanasia, and stem-cell research. These are ethical questions about life and death with which religion is naturally expected to be engaged. Indeed, engagement with such mundane issues may actually be an avenue for the revitalization of religions. Yet at the same time there is a danger that pragmatic considerations may lead to religions being politically exploited since religions, with their accepted authority and loyal followers, have an enormous potential to create change. Another risk is that such engagement may lead to the "religionizing" of non-religious problems. To address that concern we need to consider two points. First, it should be understood that in most societies in the world people are still religious. Realistically, therefore, there is no escape from speaking using religious language, albeit, one hopes, while restraining the temptation to instrumentalize religion. Second, religions do have a genuine potential contribution to make to help solve problems. In all societal problems there is always more than one option that can be offered as solution. Questions about what choices should

be made always involve ethical considerations. In this regard, religion has a role to play in reminding us about what is important and what is not in our narratives. For example, the values of justice and compassion which tend to be involved in almost all kinds of policy-making are strong and persistent themes in all religions. The study of religions may contribute fruitful insights in this regard.

In dealing with these new and challenging issues religions re-enter the public sphere most productively through *ethics*—not as competing theological truth-claims. How capable are the religions themselves in facing these challenges? How may a certain religion assert its ethical preferences in a society that consists of people with different religious backgrounds? What are the acceptable avenues for encounters between religions in the public sphere? These are all examples of legitimate questions to which scholars of religious studies may contribute answers.[29]

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to outline recent developments in the study of religion in Indonesia. While this field of study has a long history in the country it has recently been undergoing some important transformations. There is a widespread realization that the study of religion in Indonesia today must move beyond the normative and ought to more deeply explore other methodologies which promise better, more objective understandings of the subject. The academic study of religion under this new orientation is rapidly growing in Indonesia. Such an orientation would enable this discipline to fulfill two important roles: first, to help foster religious literacy and inter-religious engagement among Indonesia's religious believers, and second, to contribute to finding solutions to some of the most pressing contemporary problems facing the country. By engaging with other religions and with real problems, moreover, the religions themselves may be revitalized. However, as the illustrations discussed above have demonstrated, this process is far from easy. Difficulties stem both from methodological issues in the study of religion as well as the nature of the problems it seeks to address. Yet the fact that such new programs of religious studies are experiencing growth in Indonesia now would suggest that there is no other way except to gradually develop these new methodologies that can answer such objections and, furthermore, fulfil these two roles. This is the most important task facing religious studies in Indonesia today.

Endnotes

1   Both authors are institutionally affiliated with the Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS), Graduate School, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. As such, illustrations concerning CRCS and, more generally, Yogyakarta, are given prominence.

2   Thomas L. Benson, "Religious Studies as an Academic Discipline", in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 14, edited by Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan Press 1987), pp. 88-92.

3   See, for example, the assessment of comparative religion in Kimberly Patton and Benjamin Ray (eds.), *A Magic Still Dwells, Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age* (California: University of California Press, 2000); and a more recent series of articles on the future of the study of religion published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (74:1, March 2006).

4   The main source for this section is the results of a research project conducted by CRCS into practices of interfaith dialogue in Indonesia. The forthcoming book is co-edited by J. B. Banawiratma, Zainal Abidin Bagir, Fatimah Husein, and Suhadi Cholil.

5   Karel A. Steenbrink, "The Study of Comparative Religion by Indonesian Muslims: A Survey," *Numen*, 37 (1990): 155.

6   Abdullah Saeed, "Towards Religious Tolerance Through Reform in Islamic Education: The Case of the State Institute of Islamic Studies", *Indonesia and the Malay World* 27, No. 79 (1999): 177-191; Azyumardi Azra, "Teaching Tolerance through Education in Indonesia", a paper presented at *International Symposium on Educating for a Culture of Peace*, at Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University, Australia, 10-13 August 2005. More generally, for a useful recent source on the development and impact of IAIN, see Fuad Jabali and Jamhari, eds., *The Modernization of Islam in Indonesia: An Impact Study on the Cooperation between the IAIN and McGill University,* Indonesia-Canada Islamic Higher Education Project, Montreal and Jakarta, 2003.

7   See, for example, his *Studi Agama: Normativitas atau Historisitas* [Religious Stu-dies: Normativity or Historicity?] (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1996).

8   In the 1960 regulation, for example, there was a clause which gives an allowance that "students have the right not to take a religion course, if they or their guardians (for younger children) state their objections" (TAP MPRS No. II/MPRS/1960 Bab II Pasal 3). In the 1996 decree that clause was dropped (TAP MPRS No.XXII/MPRS/1966).

9   The new policy on religious matters in the Soeharto era should be understood, at least in its initial stages, as a response to the perceived communist threat. Following the September 30 1965 incident, the Indonesian Communist Party (the third largest in the world at that time) was violently suppressed and later banned. Subsequent policies related to religion, especially in its relation with the state – such as concerning the religious identification on the identity card, encouragement given to religious organizations to propagate their religion to those perceived as having no reli-

gion (which was most effective for the Christian missions and the Islamic *da'wah*), inter-religious marriage, religious education, or the government-sponsored interfaith dialogue ("Inter-Religious Harmony" became an official governmental policy in the Ministry of Religious Affairs) – all have to be understood in this context of anti-communism. Of course, other factors have also played important roles, but the significance of the response to the "specter of communism" in Indonesia can not be exaggerated.

10   The most recent bill on national education (2003) attracted considerable controversy before it was to be legislated because of a requirement that all schools without exception (including private Christian and Islamic schools) had to provide teaching about a particular religion for students who hold that religion, and taught by teachers of the same religion. So, for example, in Christian schools, Muslim students had to have a separate class on Islam taught by Muslim teachers, while Christian students in Islamic schools had to have a class on Christianity taught by Christian teachers. This was a sensitive issue partly because the Christian schools generally have many Muslim students, but not vice versa.

11   Our sources are two new studies on religious education in Yogyakarta. The first is a research project conducted by the Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS), Gadjah Mada University, whose results were reported in an unpublished manuscript, "Religious Education in Indonesia: Implication for Inter-religious Relations in a Plural Society" (2007). The second is a study carried out on religious education in schools in Yogyakarta between 2004-2006 by Interfidei, the oldest and most prominent interfaith NGO in Yogyakarta. The results were published in Listia, Laode Arham, and Lian Gogali, eds., *Problematika Pendidikan Agama di Sekolah*, Interfidei, 2007. The book contains a good section on the history of religious education in Indonesia since 1945 and descriptions of some models of religious education in some schools in Yogyakarta.

12   See CRCS, "Religious Education in Indonesia".

13   St. Sunardi, '"Laguna cara Landa kok tembunge basa Jawa": Postcolonial Perspectives in Religious Studies', paper presented at the International Conference on Religious Studies, "The Problems and Promise of Inter-Religious Studies in Indonesia", organized by ICRS, (January 14 – 16, 2007),

14   See Robert Cummings Neville, *Religion in Late Modernity* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), p. 203.

15   Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama – Normativitas atau Historisitas*, p. 15.

16   See St. Sunardi, '"Laguna cara Landa kok tembunge basa Jawa": Postcolonial Perspectives in Religious Studies'. Sunardi here seems to refer specifically to the tradition of comparative religion as developed first at the IAINs in the 1960s and promoted by Mukti Ali, as discussed in the first section of this paper. It is interesting to note that many Muslims may actually object to the discipline of comparative religion because it is "redolent of whiffs of western imperialism and Christian superiority", see Ninian Smart, "The Scientific Study of Religion in its Plurality", in Frank Whaling (ed.), *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion* (Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1984), 376, quoted in Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama – Normativitas atau Historisitas*, p. 18.

17   Diana Eck, "Dialogue and Method: Reconstructing the Study of Religion", in Patton and Ray, *A Magic Still Dwells*, p. 131.

18   *Ibid.*, p. 132, 142ff.

19   *Ibid.*, p. 139.

20   Kimberley Patton, "Juggling Torches: Why We Still Need Comparative Religion", in Patton and Ray, *A Magic Still Dwells,* p. 168.

21   See J. B. Banawiratma et. al. (footnote 4).

22   Eck, "Dialogue and Method", p. 141.

23   Karel A. Steenbrink, "The Study of Comparative Religion by Indonesian Muslims: A Survey," p. 154.

24   Cf. Diana Eck, "Dialogue and Method: Reconstructing the Study of Religion", p. 141.

25   A recent article which discusses this is Bron Taylor, "Religious Studies and Environmental Concern", in Bron Taylor, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (London: Concilium 2005), pp. 1373-1379.

26   *Forum on Religion and Ecology (FORE).* www.religionandecology.org Date accessed: December 17, 2008.

27   Taylor, "Religious Studies and Environmental Concern", p. 1375.

28   *Ibid.*, p. 1378.

29   In the area of religion's engagement with contemporary issues CRCS has been especially active. Besides offering courses on numerous subjects and facilitating research in this area (such as an ongoing project that awards grants to graduate students and scholars to do research on religion and natural disasters) the program also conducts regular seminars addressed to the wider public beyond academia.

CHAPTER FIVE

MAINSTREAMING *MADRASAH* EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES: ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

Carmen Abu Bakar

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in the Philippines can be traced back to the period of the Islamization of Sulu in the 13ᵗʰ century. It started first in the form of *maktab*, or Qur'anic schools for young children to learn to read and recite the Qur'an. Later, a more formal structure known as the *madrasah* was established teaching the subjects of Theology, Arabic, Jurisprudence, and History. Elementary, secondary and much later even collegiate levels were opened. Following the colonial period and the opening up of public secular schools the *madrasahs* (local Islamic schools) suffered a decline since they could not compete with government schools in terms of providing job opportunities for their graduates. *Madrasah* graduates from secondary level were also unable to enroll in secular universities because the curricular requirements were different. To acquire higher degrees, therefore, many *madrasah* graduates have had to leave the country for the Middle East where similar curricula made it easy for them to enter the system.

The *madrasah* has been an important educational institution for Muslims in providing young children with religious instruction. It has been responsible for transmitting Islamic knowledge, values and culture. Secular public education does not provide for this type of knowledge, so children who go to public schools are

often ignorant about their religion. Because Muslim parents want their children to have employable skills and religious awareness at the same time, children began attending regular schools as well as attending the *madrasah* on weekends. This situation is hardly conducive to proper learning since children are fully occupied every day of the week with schoolwork and have no recreation time. A happy compromise should be found which would allow the children to learn both their religion and necessary skills in the same school.

The *madrasah* system operates on the principle of volunteerism. It is usually administered by an organization or by a family that has decided to freely provide such a service to the community. The system operates independently of others and may not even be officially registered at the Department of Education. As such, there is no uniform or standardized curriculum. Yet in spite of these flaws or weaknesses the *madrasah* system continues to thrive, which is indicative of the Muslim community's strong desire to ensure that their children receive an Islamic education.

However since the September 11 2001 attacks on the United States, the independence of the *madrasah* in the Philippines has been challenged because of government perceptions of the links between *madrasah* and extremism. In the Philippines this has produced various reactions. Some *madrasah*s have been raided on suspicions that the schools were being used for terrorist activities. At the same time the World Bank has also made funds available for the mainstreaming of the *madâris*. This chapter, reviews some of the research that has been conducted on problems facing Muslim education in the Philippines before discussing recent attempts to mainstream the *madâris* into the Philippines public school system.

PROBLEMS OF THE *MADRASAHS*

A *madrasah* is usually set up by private individuals or groups to provide Islamic education for the children in the community. Since profit is not the essential motive for opening the school there is no compulsory payment of fees. Parents pay on a voluntary basis depending on what they can afford. Teachers are also volunteers and are paid minimal salaries. Operating on a low budget means that the schools are often lacking in books and other facilities. This constitutes one of the biggest problems for the *madrasah*. Other problems have to do with teacher competence, curriculum, instructional materials and infrastructure. These challenges have been the subject of national conferences and consultations over the last three decades, as will be detailed below.

The weaknesses in *madrasah* education in the Philippines began to gain increasing attention in the early 1980s. Numerous conferences were organized to discuss these problems and to devise ways to address them. On 27-31 October 1980, the First National Congress on Muslim Education took place in Marawi City. Although the Marawi Conference tackled the issue of the general education of Muslims, the subject of *madrasah* education was also taken up. The main problems that were identified were:

1. Curriculum
2. Inadequate resources
3. Lack of competent teachers
4. Lack of competent administrators
5. Lack of adequate teaching materials (no relevant textbooks and references)
6. Lack of school facilities such as buildings, etc.
7. Peace and order as an extraneous factor affecting the normal operation of *madrasah*.

To address these problems the conference recommended:

1. The creation of a committee to formulate a uniform pattern of curriculum relevant to the education system of the country;
2. The establishment of a *madrasah* educational foundation of the Philippines to take charge and/or administer donations, etc. from local/foreign sources;
3. The formulation, development and subsequent implementation of programs to train and retrain *madrasah* teachers;
4. Tapping the expertise of agencies for this purpose;
5. That *madrasah* be considered as institutions that may serve as an effective instrument in the quest for peace, national unity and development.[1]

This first national assessment of Muslim education in the Philippines was closely followed by the First Policy Conference on *Madrasah* held on 24-26 May 1982, at Western Mindanao University, Zamboanga City. This second conference largely reiterated the problems and recommendations discussed two years earlier. On the issue of the management and organization of the *madrasah* it found that the aims and objectives of the *madaris* were not well-defined and in some cases not supportive of national development plans. There was also a lack of supervision and coordination

of those involved in the *madrasahs*, and an absence of guidelines and requirements for accreditation. The conference also looked at the production of graduates who were proficient in Arabic and English, issues of registration and accreditation of the *madrasahs*, enrichment of the *madrasah* curriculum, and recognition of the *madrasahs* by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC). On the issue of physical facilities and the financing of *madrasah* it was found that the *madrasah* teachers were completely dependent on donations, which were often inadequate and did not always materialise.[2]

The Conference resolved that an association of *madrasahs* be established to be known as the Philippine Federation of *Madrasahs*, which would serve as the body through which the interests, well-being, and development of the *madrasahs* would be promoted. The *madrasah* should be recognized and integrated as part of the private education sector in the Philippine education system within framework of the Constitution and Islamic culture. Bodies should be created as necessary to provide assistance for the effective implementation of the *madrasah* development program. The Federation should also assume responsibility for forming appropriate committees to prepare, study, and finalize programs and projects necessary to pursue the broad objectives of the Federation as listed above.[3]

A more recent conference on the *madrasahs* held in Iligan city, June 9-10 2004, tackled similar issues, highlighting the problems of the lack of funds, facilities, infrastructure, accreditation, administration and management of *madrasahs*. The conference resolution recommended that a trust fund for the *madrasahs* be established, that training be provided for *madrasah* administrators, that model Islamic schools be set up, and that a Federation in Islamic and Arabic *madrasahs* be established.[4] Ahmad Saleh Haririe, Director of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) for Southeast Asia and the keynote speaker at the conference, noted that the IDB was venturing into professionalizing the *madrasah* institution and cited the need to modernize the curricula to provide science laboratories and computer facilities as priorities.[5]

From the data reviewed above it is apparent that while problems with the *madrasah* were identified some 20 years ago little has been done to adequately address these problems. The often-repeated claim of government neglect cannot easily be shrugged off, more so since the frenetic activities regarding the *madrasah* at present are due more to external rather than internal pressures.

PRESENT ISSUES FACING MADRASAH EDUCATION
IN THE PHILIPPINES

Allegations of Links to Terrorism

Since the September 11 2001 attacks in the United States and the armed insurgency of Muslim groups in the southern Philippines the main issue facing *madrasah* education has been the claim that the system fosters extremism than can lead to terrorism. Unfortunately, terrorism has become a convenient slogan that can include many types of political movement, whether these are for legitimate political ends or not. It is by no means clear that it is Islamic education that is responsible for the extremist nature of such movements. In the case of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) which has waged an armed struggle against the Philippines government the movement's leaders were mostly secular-educated. The same can be said of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) leadership, with the exception of the late Hashim Salamat. The Moro struggle for national liberation is driven more by the oppressive socio-economic situation in which the Moros have found themselves since the colonial era, rather than extremist indoctrination through education. The Abu Sayaff group's kidnapping activities have been rejected by the Moros in general and can be attributed not to religious extremism but to the tactical schemes of the late Edwin Angeles, who justified these acts as a way of raising funds for the organization. In fact, Angeles is believed to have been a "Deep Penetration Agent" of the military before he was mysteriously assassinated in Basilan.[6]

Because of their alleged links to extremism the *madrasahs* have come to be perceived by some in Philippines government circles to be a security threat. *Madrasahs* have become a target of raids and their credibility as educational institutions has been on the line. An additional effect has been to incriminate Islam and implicate Muslims generally in international terrorism in the public eye. However the renewed attention given to *madrasah* education has spurred the government to finally take concrete actions to develop the *madrasah*, as evidenced by the various activities of the Department of Education and other organs of government. The issue of *madrasah* education and terrorism was addressed in an International Ulama Forum in May 2004 held at the Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati City, attended by participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Cambodia and Thailand. The organization of the forum was in direct response to, as one local newspaper put it, "the accusation from world leaders as well as from Philippine officials that Islam promotes extrem-

ism and that Madrasa Education breeds terrorism."[7] The aim of the organizer, Taha Basman of the Mindanao Research Institute (MRI), was to show that by inviting leading Islamic scholars to join the forum it could be demonstrated that Islam is in fact a religion of peace, tolerance and moderation.

Lack of Support for National Development Plans

A less controversial issue facing Islamic education in the Philippines has been the perception that the *madrasah* are not sufficiently supportive of the Philippines government's national development plans. At one level there is a grain of truth in this view, since the traditional aim of *madrasah* education is to teach children to be knowledgeable of their religion and to live as good Muslims. However, at the same time it should be admitted that government development plans from the 1960s to the early 1980s have tended to overlook the development of Muslim communities. In fact, it could be argued that the policy of the Philippines government towards the Muslim regions in the southern Philippines has been largely one of benign neglect, and that this was a contributing factor to the outbreak of the Moro rebellion in the late 1960s.

Separation of Church and State

A further issue obstructing the development of *madrasah* education is the principle regarding the separation of church and state. Government assistance in the form of funding to religious schools, whether Islamic or otherwise, has constantly been questioned based on this principle. For example, a bill initiated in Congress in 2004 by Gerry A. Salapuddin, Representative of the Lone District of Basilan, to appropriate funds for *madrasah* development failed to gain enough support to pass primarily due to the argument that government funds cannot be used for religious purposes.[8] Given such obstacles to government financial support it is necessary for *madrasah* to find ways to become financially self-reliant. However this immediately raises the issue of the comparative economic disadvantage of the Muslim regions of the country. The Muslim provinces of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) are recognized as being the poorest in the country. In 1997 poverty incidence in the ARMM was at a high rate of 63.1% compared to the overall figure for the Philippines of 37.4%, and the ARMM ranked first among the 14 regions.[9] By 2003 there had been little improvement in the poverty incidence of four of the ARMM prov-

inces, with Basilan at 65.6%, Tawi-Tawi at 69.8%, Sulu at 88.8%, and Maguidanao at 55.7%.[10] As educational institutions, therefore, Philippines *madrasah* are doubly disadvantaged. As religious-based schools they can not depend on government funding as can the secular schools in the state education sector, while at the same time their ability to fund themselves sufficiently is limited by the economic disadvantage which is characteristic of the Muslim regions of the southern Philippines.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES TOWARDS *MADRASAH*

Government policies regulating the *madrasah* over the last three decades can be found in many documents, foremost of which is the 1987 Constitution. However specific policies regarding the *madrasah* can also be found in the peace agreements signed between the MNLF and the Philippines government. The most important of these are the 1976 Tripoli Agreement signed in Tripoli, Libya, between the Moro National Liberation Front and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) under the auspices of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference); the Final Peace Agreement signed in 1996, Manila, Philippines, between the GRP and the MNLF, also under the auspices of the OIC; and the Republic Act 9054, which lapsed into law in 2001.

Under Article 2, Section 22 of the 1987 Philippines Constitution "the State recognizes and promotes the rights of indigenous cultural communities within the framework of national unity and development". Further constitutional provision for Islamic education is effectively guaranteed under Article 14, Section 2.4, which states that "the State shall encourage non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems as well as self-learning, independent and out-of school study programs and particularly those that respond to community needs" [...]; and Section 17: "Further, the State shall recognize, respect and protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions and institutions. It shall consider their rights in the formulation of national plans and policies."[11]

The Tripoli Agreement (TA) was signed on 23 December 1976 in Tripoli, Libya, between the Philippines government and the Moro National Liberation Front. The agreement provided regional autonomy to Regions IX (western Mindanao) and XII (central Mindanao) during the period of the Marcos regime, 1972-1986. The MNLF claimed that the intent of the TA was to create one autonomous region, not two, and refused to participate. Among the issues agreed upon by the two sides was that "... Authorities of the autonomy in the South of the Philippines shall have the right

to set up schools, colleges and universities, provided that matters pertaining to the relationship between these educational and scientific organs and the general education system in the state shall be the subject of discussion later on". [12]

On 2 September 1996 the Final Peace Agreement was signed between the Philippines government and the MNLF during the Ramos administration. The word "Final" indicated that the agreement fulfilled all the provisions set forth in the 1976 Tripoli Agreement. Section C of the Agreement dealt with the issue of education and contained as many as 32 clauses (94-125), making it the second-most detailed subject of the agreement. Among the most significant clauses are Clause 95, which stated that "The Regional Autonomous Government educational system shall, among others, perpetuate Filipino and Islamic ideals and aspirations, Islamic values and orientations of the Bangsamoro people. It shall develop the total spiritual, intellectual, social, cultural, scientific and physical aspects of the Bangsamoro people to make them God-fearing, productive, patriotic citizens, conscious of their Filipino and Islamic values and Islamic cultural heritage under the aegis of a just and equitable society"; Clause 101: "The integration of Islamic values in the curriculum should be done gradually after researches and studies are conducted; Clause 102: "The teaching of Islamic values, as well as Filipino values, shall be incorporated in Good Manners and Right conduct in appropriate grade levels including the tertiary level subject to agreed norms, academic freedom and legal limitations"; and Clause 103: "Muslim culture, mores, customs and traditions which are mainly based on Islam, as well as the cultures, mores, customs and traditions of Christians and indigenous people, shall be preserved through the regular public and special schools in the Autonomous Region, considering that schools are perpetuating vehicles of the values of the people." On the specific issue of *Madrasah* education Clause 107 stated that "Existing Madaris, including Madari Ulya, shall be under the Regional Autonomous Government educational system as presently organized in the area of autonomy"; while Clause 117 stipulated that *Madrasah* teachers shall receive compensation out of the funds of the Regional Autonomous Government provided they are employed in the public schools. [13]

More recently, Republic Act No. 9054, which lapsed into law on 31 March 2001, provided further guarantees of state support for *Madrasah* education. Article 14 of the Act devoted a substantial 14 sections to the issue of education. Among the most significant issues dealt with were the supervision of *Madrasah schools* (Section 11), recognition of the use of Arabic as a medium of instruction in *Madrasahs* and other Islamic institutions (Section 12), recognition of existing *Madrasah* and *Madaris Ulya* as parts of the regional educational subsystem (Section 13); and the required

qualifications for *Madrasah* teachers in order to gain permanent appointments to the regional educational subsystem, and their compensation (Section 14).[14]

MAINSTREAMING *MADRASAH*

Mainstreaming *madrasah* was initially known by the term "integration". Implementation of this policy began in 1982 during the government of President Ferdinand Marcos through the Letter of Instruction 1221, issued on March 31, 1982, which directed various government offices such the Prime Minister, Members of the Cabinet, and the Minister of Education and Culture, "to optimize the development of the human resources of the nation, and to [...] enhance the nation's Islamic heritage" by pledging to undertake the following:

1. Formulate and adopt a program for the development of the *Madrasah* schools, at least for the improvement of their teaching staff and instructional facilities, but priority must be given, wherever possible to their progressive integration as a sector in the national educational system, with enhanced curricula, to the end that their graduates join the mainstream of Philippine education, endowing them with the capability to contribute to the modernization of their communities within the framework of their Islamic faith;

2. Strengthen the development of programs in Islamic Studies in state institutions of higher learning especially in Mindanao, including the accelerated strengthening of programs in *Shariah* law;

3. Establish and strengthen programs in the teaching and learning of the Arabic language which is vital to educational programs in Mindanao, but also a valuable field of study and professional education in higher education as a required or optional subject, wherever appropriate[15]

However, no further development took place until ten years later in 1992, when recommendations regarding basic education for cultural communities were made by the National Congress on Education, to wit:

- The *madrasahs*. The regular *madrasahs* (those that offer elementary education curriculum required by the DECS (Department of Education, Culture and Sports) should be recognized and classified as sectarian private schools; while special *madrasahs* (the truly religious schools) should be left alone;

- Provide government support to pupils/students of mission schools of various religious denominations (Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, etc.) accredited by the DECS, which provide education for cultural communities in areas inaccessible at government schools.[16]

At the same Congress the Summary of Recommendations on Sectoral Targets regarding Madaris made the following recommendations:

- Integrate only the regular *Madrasahs* within the public school system. The special Madaris are better left alone;
- Inject some subjects in the curriculum of the *Madrasahs* to introduce national standards in these schools. However, such a step towards mainstreaming should be balanced by preservation of the Muslim cultural heritage. It would be better to upgrade the *Madrasahs* curricula and program standards rather than to integrate them within the public school system;
- Provide special teachers and instructional materials for the *Madrasahs*. Moreover, the curricula (*sic*) has to be especially designed to suit the needs of the pupils because the Muslim culture has not adequately prepared them for formal schooling;
- The establishment of a middle-of-the-road educational system: a relevant *Madrasah* which incorporates acceptable fundamental elements of the public school for purposes of achieving national unity and maintaining peace and/or a flexible public school system which teaches concepts consistent with the Muslim culture;
- Redesigning the *Madrasah* curriculum for purposes of standardization;
- The use of vernacular as a medium of instruction;
- The revision of textbook and other learning materials to eliminate passages offensive to the Islamic faith and to include the appreciation of Muslim art, culture and history, as well as their translation to the vernacular;
- Look into the accredited *Madâris* and assist them so that they will be able to comply with the minimum standards set by DECS (Department of Education, Culture and Sports). [17]

The policy on the integation of *madrasah* into the public school system was finally approved through the issuance of implementing guidelines detailed under the Department of Education Order no.51 s.2004, executed by its Secretary in August 15, 2004. The main goal of this order was to establish a curriculum for both private and public schools in Muslim-dominated areas. Its aims were to establish a smooth transfer from public to private *madrasah* or vice-versa; to unify the long history of dichotomy among Muslims; and to promote Filipino national identity and at the same time preserve the Muslims' cultural heritage.[18]

At the beginning of the 2005-2006 academic year the Department of Education also issued a complementary directive which outlined the operational guidelines for the implementation of the new program. There are now special courses for Muslim students in public schools in Muslim-dominated areas. Training programs have been provided for Muslim teachers to qualify to teach the new programs.[19]

One of the key ideas associated with integration was the establishment of a system of accreditation whereby a *madrasah* could avail itself of a modified curriculum that incorporated the teaching of Islamic tenets and Muslim cultural heritage within the approved public school curriculum. As of 2005, however, out of 1561 *madrasahs* in the country only 35 had taken up the accreditation scheme implemented by Department of Education-ARMM. The *Republic Act No. 9054* also required the teaching of Arabic language and Islamic values, but this obligation has not been uniformly imposed.[20]

Nevertheless it is clear that positive steps towards the mainstreaming of *madrasah* curriculum have taken place. At the Conference and Workshop on the Unification of the Curriculum of Private *Madrasahs* in May 2002, some 400 *madrasah* operators in the ARMM area expressed their willingness to mainstream their curriculum to that of the national educational system.[21] This represents a significant change of position since the 1980s when integrating *Madrasahs* was first discussed, when many *madrasah* operators refused to consider participating in a project which they viewed as being essentially unwanted interference on the part of the government. It was widely believed at the time that changing the curriculum would dilute the meaning and substance of *madrasah* education and indeed its very identity as a religious school.

The objective of the new interpretation of mainstreaming is to allow the *madrasah* to become fully-fledged educational institutions that offer regular courses like other public or private schools. The goal is to make *madrasah* education in the ARMM a component of the National Educational System through the following steps: unification of the curriculum of private *madrasahs* to include basic education

curricula as a major first step in the recognition and accreditation by the Department of Education-ARMM and the central government; mandatory teaching of Arabic Language and Islamic Values in the public schools as mandated by Republic Act No. 9054; strengthening the organizational and funding mechanisms to sustain the mainstreaming efforts of the private *madrasahs* and to provide sustained adequate financial support for the teaching of Arabic Language and Islamic Values in public schools; and switching or transferability from *madrasah* to public schools, and vice-versa.[22]

According to Monaros Boransing, Under-Secretary of the Department of Education, the mainstreaming of the *madrasah* curriculum consists of two parts: an "enriched curriculum for the public schools for Filipino Muslims", which essentially means that all subjects offered at public schools are adopted with the inclusion of Arabic Language and Islamic Values; and a "standard curriculum for private *madaris*", which provides a unified curriculum for the *madrasah* in the Philippines. It offers three learning areas, namely: the Qur'an, *Aqidah* and *Fiqh*, *Sirah* and *Hadith*. These study programs will be integrated with the secular subjects offered in the public and private schools. These two curricula would also mean an increase in the number of class hours for Muslim students both in the private and public schools.[23]

The implementation of these reforms was divided into three steps and by 2004 was already underway. In December 2004, 40 *ulama* had begun preparing new textbooks and other instructional materials, teaching guides, and student workbooks from Grades 1 to 6 to be used in the new mainstreamed curriculum. Once finished the textbooks and other materials would be printed and copies distributed to the schools.[24] The second stage of implementation focuses on training the *madrasah* teachers. The training design consists of two phases. Phase I involves training *madrasah* teachers in the English language and teaching methodology. Phase II requires *madrasah* teachers to earn 18 units of education subjects on the completion of which they receive a degree in Education. This qualifies them to take the Licensure Examinations for Teachers (LET). Once they pass these exams they are considered professional teachers.[25] A third phase designed to sustain and institutionalize *madrasah* education is to provide for the offering of a major in Arabic language and Islamic Values in the Bachelor of Science in Elementary and Secondary Education.[26]

Another aspect of the implementation of mainstreaming at present are calls for the addition of some parts of a *madrasah* curriculum to the existing public school curriculum. This would appear to be a relatively easy process since it means simply selecting what subjects to add without disturbing the substance and content of the rest of the subjects or the philosophy and goals of the existing system. For example,

in the National Capital Region or Metro-Manila, 1752 Muslim pupils in 51 *madrasah* classes have been organized in various Muslim-populated communities in Grades 1 and 2. The largest number of *madrasah* classes was found in Quezon City, with the following distribution: three classes with 93 pupils at the North Fairview Elementary Schools, nine classes with 291 pupils in Culiat Elementary Schools, three classes with 119 pupils at Commonwealth Elementary School, and two classes with 73 pupils at Holy Spirit Elementary Schools.[27] According to Department of Education records, 50 teachers are now teaching *madrasah* subjects in Quezon City, Manila, Taguig and Pateros, areas which have the highest numbers of Muslim students in Metro-Manila.[28]

To help fund the implementation of these reforms Congress agreed to propose appropriating P100 million pesos for the Islamic *madrasah* school system. According to Rep. Rolando Andayam, chair of the House Appropriation Committee, this item was included in the Department of Education's proposed P119 billion budget for 2006. The money would be used to develop, produce, and distribute textbooks and other instructional materials. It would also fund the training of *madrasah* teachers in the subjects of English, Arabic, and Islam, as well as to fund *madrasahs* outside the ARMM. In addition the ARMM budget for 2006 proposed P3.6 billion for its more than 600,000 students.[29] In the end, however, Congress failed to approve a budget for 2006 and the 2005 budget was reenacted instead.[30]

Reaction to this program from the Muslim community has been largely positive. Muslim parents are happy that their children are being taught about Islam and Arabic language in the public schools. This means that children no longer have to attend weekend *madrasah*. Consequently, they have more time to spend with their families as well as time for relaxation. However children taking these programs do have to spend a longer time in schools since Arabic and Islamic classes are added to their regular schedules. It also means that the children have more subjects to study and need more hours to do their assignments. It is too early to determine whether this added load will have any adverse effect on the academic performance of the children. In his study of the integrated school experiences of selected schools in the ARMM Arsad points to a number of shortcomings:

> The contributions and additive approaches introduced Islamic concepts and courses into the school curriculum. The contribution approach owes to the occasional feature of Muslim heroes and holidays in the school curriculum. The additive approach owes to the addition of Arabic language and Islamic Studies subjects to

the school curriculum without providing for meaningful curriculum transformation. These have not had the expected impact because the Islamic subjects are, 1) limited to Arabic language and Islamic Studies which are both offered as discrete courses; and 2) the scope of both are not as extensive. Islamic Studies is a hybrid course of Islamic core subjects which need curricular restructuring and development. Moreover, the subject-centered curriculum designs of both schools do not allow for meaningful integration across learning areas, even if opportunities arise. Because class scheduling is rigid, the additional subjects have lengthened school time, thus taxing students. [31]

Judging from the experience of these schools, integration – or "mainstreaming", as is the preferred term – would appear to require more work than what is currently being done. Arsad offers an alternative framework to the current model that involves a restructuring of educational foundations, aims, modes of integration, curriculum and instruction. According to Arsad the successful implementation of such a framework demands more comprehensive research, planning, preparation and the sustained involvement of both practitioners and stakeholders.[32]

CONCLUSION

The problems facing *madrasah* education in the Philippines are an indication of the gap that remains between the government and the Muslim minority communities. While legal provisions exist for the protection, preservation and advancement of cultural communities, these laws are more operational on paper than in real life. The desire of Muslims to develop their own educational institution stems from the fact that their cultural and religious traditions are not always reflected in the national system which is secular in orientation and is often seen and interpreted through the lenses of the majority culture. Can mainstreaming, as implemented at present, achieve this purpose?

In the Philippines many religious communities have been able to set up and develop their own schools under the approved public and private school curriculum. Muslims are moving in this direction as shown by the new schools that have emerged with the new integrated curriculum. The program of mainstreaming *madrasah* education attempts to bridge the gap between secular education and the needs of Muslim

children to learn about their religion. On the other hand, some suspicions remain that mainstreaming is just another government ploy to manipulate, if not control, the "mental set" of young Muslims. This program of curriculum development became more pronounced following the launching of the "War on Terror", and it can hardly be denied that mainstreaming the *madrasah* system has been regarded as one of the solutions to the problem of terrorism in the Philippines. While great efforts are being made in the direction of education reform, an equivalent push to remedy injustices in the lives of the people is not as evident. This underlying imbalance in the search for a solution to the problem of terrorism may in fact work against the success of educational reform programs.

Endnotes

1   Report of the First National Congress on Muslim Education, 27-31 October 1980, Mindanao State University, Marawi City, p. 25.

2   "Summary Conference Report", Conference Report of the First Policy Conference on Madrasah held at the Western Mindanao State University, Zamboanga City on 24-26 May 1983, pp. 31-34.

3   *Ibid.*

4   Output of the First International Conference on Madrasah Education, 9-10 June 2004, <www. Bangsamoro.com>

5   IDB Representative at Madaris Conference (First International Conference on Madrasah Education, June 9-10, 2004 <www.Bangsamoro.com>

6   "Edwin Angeles: The Spy Who Came in From the Cold." Philippine Daily Inquirer, 10 July 2001   <http://web.archive.org/web/20060505051615/http://www.inq7.net/specials/inside_abusayyaf/2001/features/spy_turns_bandit.htm> (accessed 7 January 2009).

7   "ASEAN Islamic Leaders Arriving Tomorrow for Int'l Ulama Forum" Manila Bulletin Online, 26 May 2004 <http://www.mb.com.ph/issues/2004/05/26/MTNN2004052610417.html> (accessed 7 January 2009).

8   House Bill 1915, "An Act strengthening the madrasah education system and providing government assistance to Madrasah Education through the establishment of a fund for assistance to Madrasah Education appropriating the funds therefore, and for other purposes".

9   Arsenio Balisan, "Reconstructing Poverty Profiles", University of the Philippines, School of Economics, Discussion Paper No. 9915, September 1999.

10   2005 Philippine Human Development Report http://hdn.org.ph/wp-content/uploads/2005_PHDR/Chapter%204%20Human%20Development,%20Gender%20Equity%20and%20Human%20Poverty.pdf, p. 109.

11   See "The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines" <http://www.gov.ph/aboutphil/constitution.asp> (accessed 8 January 2009). The 1987 Constitution provided Regional Autonomy for the Bangsamoros of Mindanao and the Cordillera People of the Mountain Provinces. This transformed the Presidential Decree (PD) 1618 of President Marcos granting regional autonomy to the Bangsamoros, as provided for in the Tripoli Agreement of 1976, into a constitutional provision.

12   See "The Tripoli Agreement", United State Institute of Peace <http://www.usip.org/library/pa/philippines/tripoli_12231976.html> (accessed 7 January 2009).

13   See Philippines-Mindanao: Peace Agreement, <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/philippines-mindanao/peace-agreement.php> (accessed 7 January 2009).

14   The Republic Act 9054 is the Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM); see Republic Act No. 9054, http://www.congress.gov.ph/download/ra_11/RA09054.pdf (accessed 7 January 2008). This is an amendment to the Republic Act 6734 which was passed by the Aquino admi-nistration on 1 August 1989.

15   See Conference Report, First Policy Conference on Madrasah held at Western Mindanao State University, Zamboanga City on 24-26 May 1982.

16   The Congressional Committee on Education, "Proceedings of the National Congress on Education", Vol. 3: Consultative Reports; Book Three: Making Education Work, Quezon City, Philippines, 1993, cited in Nefertari Al-Rashid Arsad, "A Framework for the Integration of Madrasah into the Basic Education Curriculum", (Masters Dissertation, College of Education, University of the Philippines, Diliman, 2007), pp. 5-7.

17   *Ibid.*

18   *Ibid.*

19   *Ibid.*

20   Manaros Boransing, "Project Madrasah Education of the Department of Education", Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, Philippines (undated).

21   *Ibid.*

22   *Ibid.*

23   "Madrasah Education in the Philippines", in Sahifah, IIS Newsletter, January-June 2005, pp. 7-8.

24   *Ibid.*, p. 12.

25   *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

26   *Ibid.*

27   "1752 Muslim pupils enrolled in 51 Metro madrasah classes", Manila Bulletin, 17 October 2005, p. 17.

28   "127 Islamic teachers in ARMM, Region 2, to undergo training", Manila Bulletin, 30 October 2005, p. 9.

29   *Ibid.*

30   Oxford Analytica, "Philippines Fiscal Transparency", Country Report December 2006, p. 381, <http://www.calpers.ca.gov/eip-docs/investments/assets/equities/international/permissible-2007/philippines-fiscal-report-2006.pdf> (accessed 7 January 2009).

31   Nefertari Al-Rashid Arsad , "A Framework for Integration of Madrasah into the Basic Education Curriculum", p. 162.

32   *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

CHAPTER SIX

SALAFI *MADRASAHS* AND ISLAMIC RADICALISM IN POST-NEW ORDER INDONESIA

Noorhaidi Hasan

INTRODUCTION

One impact of the growing influence of the Middle East on the dynamics of Indonesian Islam can be seen from the proliferation of exclusive Islamic teaching centres *(madrasahs)* established by those who explicitly identify themselves as Salafis, literally meaning the followers of the pious forefathers, Salaf al-Salih. The presence of these *madrasahs* contributed a great deal to the establishment of the Laskar Jihad (Jihad Force), one of the three major Muslim paramilitary organizations which emerged in Indonesia in the aftermath of the collapse of the New Order regime in May 1998. Side-by-side with the Laskar Pembela Islam (Defenders of Islam Force) and the Laskar Mujahidin (Holy Warriors Force), Laskar Jihad was active in taking to the streets to demand the comprehensive implementation of the Islamic *shari'ah* and conducting razzias (raids) on cafes, discotheques, casinos, brothels and other venues reputed to be dens of iniquity. In these actions members criticized the prevailing political, social, and economic system as having failed to save the Indonesian Muslim *ummah* from the on-going multidimensional crisis. When bloody communal conflicts flared up in several provinces of Indonesia, they positioned themselves in the frontline in stating their determination to raise the banner of *jihad*. They asserted that *jihad* is necessary to assist Muslims to repel the attacks of Christian enemies.

The Laskar Jihad emerged as the most prominent radical group in Indonesia at that time, and succeeded in mobilizing thousands of voluntary fighters prepared to

die on the '*jihad* battlefield' in Ambon, the provincial capital of the Moluccas, and other trouble spots in Indonesia. During the mobilization process that started in January 2000 the Salafi *madrasahs* scattered in a dozen provinces in Indonesia played a crucial role. They served as recruitment pools through which aspiring *mujahidin* from the countryside were recruited. At the same time they constituted the main link in the chains of the network of the Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah (FKAWJ), the umbrella organization of the Laskar Jihad, responsible for coordinating the dispatch of fighters. To provide the preconditions and motivation necessary to sustain the costs of action, they independently organized paramilitary training and religious lectures explaining the magnificence of *jihad* and God's promise to bestow heaven upon those who die on the *jihad* battlefield.

The efflorescence of the Salafi *madrasahs* is a relatively new phenomenon, despite the fact that Indonesia has long been familiar with the Islamic education institution called *madrasah*. In Indonesia the term *madrasah* refers to Islamic primary and secondary schools that adopt a modern system of education in which Islamic subjects are taught alongside general subjects. The main aim of the *madrasah* is to produce graduates like those from modern-style 'secular' schools, called *sekolah*, but characterized by having a better understanding of Islam. There are more than 37,000 *madrasahs* scattered all over Indonesia. Some of them belong to private Islamic organizations while others are under the control of the government, in this case, the Department of Religious Affairs.[1] The *madrasah* is different from the *pesantren*, a term which refers to rural-based Islamic educational institutions which teach predominantly Islamic subjects using *kitab kuning* (classical Arabic books) with the main aim of producing religious leaders.[2] This *pesantren* are overwhelmingly identified with the traditionalist Muslim organization the Nahdhatul Ulama. They have emerged as exemplary Islamic teaching centres in which the *kyai*, the traditional *'ulama* in Java, serves as the central figure.[3] It should be noted, however, that some modernist Muslim organizations, including the Muhammadiyah, al-Irsyad and Persis, have also developed their own *pesantrens*, whose prototype is closer to the *madrasah*.

Although the Salafi *madrasahs* display some similarities with the (traditional) *pesantren*, they appear to challenge all the aforementioned educational institutions, including the *sekolah*, *madrasah* and *pesantren* itself. The system they have adopted suggests a rejection of anything regarded as the corrupting influence of Western culture and, at the same time, a marked aversion to the traditional corpus of religious authority. Interestingly perhaps, they construct a particular system of hierarchy directly connected to the religious authorities in the Middle East and other parts of the Muslim world.

Given their increasing significance this chapter discusses how the Salafi *madrasahs* have developed in Indonesia and what factors have contributed to their proliferation. Developments that have occurred both at the domestic and the transnational levels will be taken into account. In addition, this chapter will analyse the profile of the *madrasahs* which focuses on three aspects: their physical appearance, their curriculum, and the background of their students. These three aspects will shed light on the distinctiveness of these *madrasahs* even compared with similar puritan *madrasahs*. The chapter concludes by examining the network of the *madrasahs* that place an ever-increasing emphasis on their transnational linkages with the Middle East.

EXPANSION OF THE SALAFIS

The history of the Salafi madrasahs in Indonesia can be traced back to the mid-1980s when the Salafi communities were visibly expanding and becoming more assertive. Signs of this expansion were first and foremost strikingly seen in the emergence of bearded males wearing long flowing robes (*jalabiyya)*, turbans, and ankle-length trousers, as well as women wearing a form of enveloping black veil *(niqab)*. Their main concern was the question of the purity of the faith, *tawhid*, which was to be addressed by the call for a return to strict religious practice and the subsequent moral integrity of individuals. A commitment to wear the *jalabiyya* by men and the *niqab* by women, for instance, was viewed as much more important than taking part in political activities. They believe that Muslim society must first be Islamized through a gradual evolutionary process that includes *tarbiyah* (education) and *tasfiyyah* (purification) before the implementation of the *shari'ah* can be realized. As a strategy to reach this end, they are fervently committed to *dakwah* activities, participating in the erection of *halqas* and *dauras*.[4]

There is no doubt that the Salafi movement in Indonesia developed as a consequence of the worldwide expansion of the contemporary Salafi *da'wa* movement which had been influenced by the most puritanical sect of Islam, Wahhabism. This sect evolved from the reformist movement in the Arabian peninsula led by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) in the eighteenth century. Wahhabism emerged roughly one century before what is generally known as Salafism - identical with the reformist, modernist ideas disseminated by Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani (1838-1898), Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), and Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935) - became prominent.[5] It is no exaggeration to suggest that the contemporary Salafi movement is a form of reconstituted Wahhabism. This is indicated by the determi-

nation of the proponents of the movement to introduce more systematically the ideas formulated by the three main classical references among the Wahhabis, namely Ahmad ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), Muhammad ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292-1350), and Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. The followers of the movement often refer to *fatwas* issued by contemporary Wahhabite authorities, such as 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd Allah bin Baz (d. 1999) and Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani (d. 1999).[6]

The proliferation of the Salafi *dakwah* movement is inexorably associated with the rising influence of Saudi Arabia in the politics of the Muslim world. It gained enormous momentum at the beginning of the 1970s when the kingdom succeeded in gaining a crucial position in the Middle East in particular and the Muslim world in general as a result of the defeat of Muslim countries in the Arab-Israel War of 1967.[7] This position was reinforced by the explosion in world oil prices in the 1970s. Since then, Saudi Arabia has launched an ambitious global campaign for the Wahhabization of the *umma*.[8] The Rabitat al-'Alam al-Islami set up in 1962 is the organization responsible for this campaign, functioning as the main philanthropic agent in the liberal distribution of money to Islamic organizations all over the world.[9]

Saudi Arabia's geopolitical influence in the Muslim world faced a serious challenge when the Iranian Revolution erupted in 1979 and brought Ayatollah Khomeini to power. The Saudi kingdom was haunted by speculation that a similar revolution could possibly wipe out its own monarchical regime. This anxiety was to some extent justified when the kingdom witnessed the seizure of the Grand Mosque of Mecca by a group of people led by Juhayman al-'Utaiby in November 1979, which was followed by a series of Shi'ite demonstrations.[10] The challenge posed by the Iranian Revolution became more apparent when Khomeini proposed that Mecca and Medina be granted international status.[11] Saudi Arabia tried hard to limit the devastating effects of the revolution. At the domestic level it sought to prove its commitment to Islam by imposing a stricter enforcement of religious laws. At the international level it intensified the spread of Wahhabism, whose doctrines contain anti-Shi'ite sentiments.[12]

Saudi Arabian influence has come to Indonesia mainly through the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII, the Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation), a *dakwah* organization set up in 1967 by Muhammad Natsir and other former leaders of the Masyumi, the first and largest Islamic political party in Indonesia at the time. Masyumi had been banned by Indonesia's first president, Soekarno, in 1960. As the official representative of the Rabitat the DDII enjoyed Saudi support for the expansion of *dakwah* activities, including the construction of new mosques, the founding of *madrasahs*, distribution of free copies of the Qur'an and religious

texts, training of preachers, and similar works. These activities in turn contributed to the spread of the spirit of Islamic resurgence. The impact of the intensification of Islamic revitalization campaign launched by the DDII was felt most significantly on university campuses, which witnessed an increase in students' readiness to observe Islamic obligations.

Profoundly disquieted by the widespread impact of the Iranian Revolution, Saudi Arabia attempted to expand its Wahhabi influence in Indonesia by building on the foundations that had been created by the DDII. The kingdom provided support for the setting up the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab (LIPIA, Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies) in Jakarta in 1980. This institute was initially established as the Lembaga Pengajaran Bahasa Arab (LPBA, Institute of Arabic Teaching), and concentrated on developing the teaching of Arabic. LIPIA has succeeded in producing hundreds of graduates who have been able to continue their studies in Saudi Arabia.

The appeal for volunteers to wage *jihad* against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan represented the first serious challenge to the foreign students studying in Saudi Arabia on grants provided by the kingdom. They were required to prove their commitment to Islam. It is not surprising that after finishing their studies many such students decided to take part in the Afghan War. The same holds true for students from Indonesia. Some of them preferred not to return to Indonesia directly but spend some time in Afghanistan. Participating in the *jihad* there turned out to be a form of fieldwork for them. On the Afghan battlefields they stood shoulder-to-shoulder with voluntary fighters from various radical organizations from throughout the Muslim world, who found in the Afghan War an arena in which they could channel their radical spirit to defend Islam.

THE GROWTH OF THE SALAFI MADRASAHS

The return of LIPIA graduates who had completed their studies in Saudi Arabia and who had undergone their baptism of fire in the Afghan War marked the birth of a new Wahhabi generation in Indonesia. Among them we can note some remarkable names, such as Chamsaha Sofwan or Abu Nida, Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, and Aunur Rafiq Ghufron. Given their background it would not be appropriate to characterize them as "lumpenintelligentsia", the term introduced by Oliver Roy in imitation of Karl Marx to describe a new generation of poorly educated militants who lack the competence to speak of Islam as a political project.[13] In fact, these graduates are well

educated, enjoy a certain status as preachers and are able to produce a proper discourse. They are products of DDII which nurtures the ambition to mould religious authorities who are capable of speaking Arabic and reading classical and modern Arabic texts. But in contrast to traditional *'ulama* they adopt rigidly puritan views. As DDII cadres they are certainly well-acquainted with the Islamist discourses of modern political Islamic movements. Nevertheless, these fresh graduates can be clearly distinguished from their predecessors, DDII cadres who also had the opportunity to complete their studies in Saudi Arabia or other Middle Eastern countries, in terms of their commitment to the spread of Wahhabism.

The tendency which developed in Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of the seizure of the Grand Mosque undoubtedly contributed to the birth of this new Wahhabi generation. The policy of the Saudi Arabian government to more clearly demonstrate its commitment to Islam while suppressing radical expressions of political Islam, became the catalyst for a widespread Wahhabi resurgence, particularly among the youth, university students, and university staff. This phenomenon has been visible in their enthusiasm to demonstrate a commitment to religious propagation and a puritanical life-style while refraining from openly criticizing the government.[14]

The Salafi *da'wa* movement in Indonesia developed on university campuses. Since the early 1990s this movement has gained a new impetus with the arrival of other Middle Eastern graduates and Afghan War veterans, including Ja'far Umar Thalib, Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas, Yusuf Usman Baisa, Muhammad Yusuf Harun, Ahmad Zawawi, and M. Zaitun Rasmin. Their attempts to promote Salafi *da'wa* activities gave rise to Salafi communities in various cities in Indonesia. The proliferation of these communities gave birth to Salafi foundations, such as As-Sunnah, Ihyaut Turath, al-Sofwah, Lajnah al-Khairiyyah, Lajnah al-Istiqamah, and Wahdah Islamiyyah. The increasing attention paid by funding agencies in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries to supporting the Salafi *dakwah* activities following the Gulf War in 1990 significantly facilitated this development.

Congruent with the efflorescence of the Salafi foundations Salafi *madrasahs* have emerged in various provinces in Indonesia. The oldest Salafi *madrasah* is the Ihyaus Sunnah, established in Yogyakarta in 1994. The founding of this *madrasah* was soon followed by al-Turats al-Islami, which was established in the same city in 1995. From 1995 to 2000 a dozen other *madrasahs* emerged, including al-Madinah and Imam al-Bukhari in Solo, Minhajus Sunnah in Magelang, Lu'lu wa'l-Marjan in Semarang, As-Sunnah in Cirebon and Makassar, al-Athariyah in Temengung, Ittiba'us Sunna in Sukoharjo and Magetan, Al-Salafy in Jember, Ta'zimus Sunna in Ngawi, al-Bayyinah in Gresik, al-Furqan in Cilacap and Pekanbaru, and Ibn Qayyim

in Balikpapan. Various other *madrasahs* have emerged very recently indeed, including Bin Baz, al-Ansar, and Difa' 'Anis Sunnah in Yogyakarta and Ibn Taymiyyah in Solo.[15]

Nevertheless, the rapid development of the Salafi *dakwah* movement, of which the efflorescence of these *madrasahs* is indisputable evidence, was accompanied by disputes among its proponents, the main bone of contention being financial support from the Middle East. A major division emerged between Abu Nida and Ja'far Umar Thalib. The background to this conflict was the Sururiyya issue incited by Ja'far Umar Thalib, who accused Abu Nida and like-minded people of being sympathizers of Muhammad ibn Surur bin Nayef Zain al-'Abidin. He was critical of the Saudi Arabian government and its religious establishment following the kingdom's approval to have US troops stationed on its territory to guard the kingdom from the apparently imminent invasion by Saddam Hussein. The upshot was that a split developed among the Indonesian Salafis between the Sururis and the non-Sururis.[16]

MADRASAHS AS 'ENCLAVES'

The conflict among the Indonesian Salafis is outwardly manifested in differences in the physical appearance of the *madrasahs*. The Bin Baz, for instance, looks prosperous and is relatively large with a number of permanent building units consisting of study rooms, *musalla*, office, dormitory, and teachers' houses. As demonstrated by the inscriptions on their walls, these buildings exist thanks to donations given by some personalities in the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. This *madrasah* is built on 1 ha. area in Piyungan, Bantul, around 25 kilometres to the south of Yogyakarta, on land donated by Sultan Hamengkubowono of the Yogyakarta Court. In this *madrasah* there are 9 teachers responsible for around 300 (male and female) students divided into three levels, kindergarten, primary, and secondary. The majority of them board in a dormitory in which there is a strict separation between males and females.[17]

The Bin Baz *madrasah* shares many similarities with the Imam al-Bukhari. This *madrasah* looks even better and larger than the Bin Baz. It is built on a roughly 2 ha. area with a dozen permanent building units, consisting of study rooms, office, library, dormitory, teachers' houses, and a two-floor mosque in the front. Like in the Bin Baz every building unit bears and inscription on its wall declaring the main donor who financed its construction. These donors are also from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The location of this *madrasah* is in Selokaton, Surakarta, 15 kilometres to the

east of Solo, on the main road from Solo to Purwodadi. There are 400 students who study at three different levels, kindergarten, primary, and secondary. The number of male students is four times that of female students. All of them board in the dormitory which also maintains a partition between males and females. They are taught by 19 teachers, all of whom live in the teachers' houses provided by the *madrasah*.[18]

The situation in these two *madrasahs* is strikingly different from the other *madrasahs* mentioned above. The Ihyaus Sunnah, for instance, appeared to be unadorned and poor. This *madrasah* is located in Degolan, Kaliurang, around 16 kilometres to the north of Yogyakarta. It is built on no more than 300 square metres site rented for a period of 10 years with a modest mosque as its centre. Around 100 metres from this mosque there are two cramped – around 100 square metres – dormitories whose walls are made of bamboo and which have dirt floors covered with mats and plastic. This *madrasah* has some 70 students whose ages range from 7 to 17 years old. Some of them are 'day' students who have lodgings in nearby villages. They are taught by 4 teachers renting modest houses in the surrounding area. There is no classical system as in the Bin Baz and the Imam al-Bukhari. The students are divided into three groups in accordance with the difference in their ages.[19]

A similar situation can be found in the Minhajus Sunnah which is located in Magelang. This *madrasah* has 120 students whose ages range from 7 to 17 years old. They occupy an extremely limited space in corners of a modest mosque built on rice-farming land. All teaching activities take place in the mosque. Around 100 metres from the mosque there are a few teachers' houses and a small office. A radio station regularly broadcasts religious sermons of the *madrasah ustadhs* for a few hours in the afternoon. The same conditions are apparent in the al-Madinah, located in a village in Boyolali, around 20 kilometres from Solo. Although this *madrasah* has more than 100 students, its facilities are extremely limited. A small, modest mosque serves as the centre of its activities as well as the dormitory of a dozen of its students, who are not accommodated in a small, unfinished dormitory located near the mosque. The conditions of the As-Sunnah are even worse. It is located at Baji Rupa, Makassar. A small, modest mosque functions as the centre of all activities with three small wooden houses acting as dormitories for its students. This *madrasah* has almost 50 students, including the students from the surrounding villages. They are taught by 4 teachers.[20]

Although these *madrasahs* are generally located in areas of settlement, they have emerged as exclusive enclaves that draw a firm distinction with the more permissive, open society around them. Because of their reputation for exclusiveness surrounding villagers often view them as somewhat strange and unfriendly, and cynically

refer to them as *"pondok orang berjubah"* (*jalabiyya*-wearing Salafi *madrasah*). These *madrasahs* do indeed appear to be separate, independent villages that exist within real villages. Teachers, students and other members of the madrasahs are bound together in the form of tight-knit communities restricting contacts with outsiders. Except for certain important reasons the students will not be allowed to have contact with the surrounding people. They tend to be suspicious to outsiders. Their life is monotonous. The main components of their activities consist of praying, studying and memorizing the Qur'an. Students are subject to certain controls over their bodies. They are forced to conform to a homogenous norm.

The recent contribution of Almond, Appleby, and Sivan (2003) demonstrates that the spirit of enclave constitutes the core of contemporary Christian, Islamic, and Jewish fundamentalist movements. It is 'the primary impulse that lies behind the rise of the tradition so as to forestall the danger of being sucked into the vortex of modernity'.[21] In what they refer to as 'enclave culture', fundamentalists usually construct a 'wall of virtue' based on moral values. This wall separates the saved, free, and morally superior enclave from the hitherto tempting central community. The enclave places the oppressive and morally defiled outside society in sharp contrast to the community of virtuous insiders. In contrast to the inside anything outside is black. It is conceived as a polluted, contagious, and dangerous area.[22] The enclave is a separate space in which behaviour, language and dress codes are strictly regulated. Such strictness is required to maintain internal order because of the gravity posed by the outside danger.[23] Here lies the importance of authority as a guide to the behaviour of individual members. The specific patterns of behaviour, language and dress serve as distinguishing marks from the outside world. In the language of a Salafi *ustadh*, the pattern of behaviour, language, and dress is a question of identity that cannot be negotiated:

> Whether someone is a true believer or not can be seen from his behaviour, language, and dress. A faithful Muslim must behave like the Salaf al-Salih, speak with the language of the Quran and the Sunna, and wear Islamic dress such as *jalabiyya*, in order to distinguish himself from infidels. *Man tashabbaha bi qawm fa huwa minhum* [Whoever resembles a [infidel] group, he belongs to that group].[24]

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION AND CURRICULUM

In these *madrasahs* students study various subjects of Islam. The system of instruction is conventional in nature except in the case of the *madrasahs* implementing the class system. Every morning around 8 o'clock *ustadhs* come to the mosque and take different positions. The most senior *ustadh* usually takes a position at the centre of the mosque with the other *ustadhs* in its wings. Groups of students sit around them looking at the Arabic books in their own hands while listening to their *ustadhs*. The *ustadhs* read the books and explain the meaning of each sentence while giving illustrations and examples. Sometimes they use small blackboards to make their explanations clearer. Some students make notes on their books while others only listen.[25] In the case of the teaching of Arabic the students are drilled repeatedly to imitate as fluently as possible the examples of the sentence given by their *ustadhs*. Opportunities to raise questions are given to the students after the *ustadhs* finish their lessons. This activity lasts until the noon prayer. Between the noon prayer and the afternoon prayer, students have lunch and then take a rest. After the afternoon prayer, they come back to undertake the same activity. This afternoon activity ends around one hour before the sunset prayer at 6 o'clock. Between the sunset prayer and the evening prayer at 7 p.m. the students read and memorize some parts of the Qur'an, prescribed by their *ustadhs*.

Islamic Theology *('Aqidah),* or more precisely Wahhabite doctrine, is the main subject studied in these *madrasahs*. For this subject students read such works as Al-Qaul al-Mufid fi Adillat al-Tawhid, which is the summary of the Kitab al-Tawhid by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. In some of the *madrasahs* students are obliged to memorize this text by heart as a precondition before continuing on to study other books. Having completed this book they are usually required to study the Kitab al-Tawhid or its annotated commentaries such as Al Qaul al-Shadid 'Ala Kitab al-Tawhid by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Su'udi. Subsequently they should study al-Usul al-Thalatha by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab before reading al-Aqida al-Wasitiyya by Taqiy al-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyya or its annotated commentary, Sharh al-'Aqida al-Wasitiyya by Salih ibn Fauzan Ali Fauzan. Having mastered these primary books students are recommended to read other books, including Nabza fi al-'Aqida by Muhammad bin Salih al-'Uthaimin, Sharh al-'Aqida al-'ahawiyya al-Muyassar by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Khamis, and Kitab al-Firqat al-Najiyat by Muhammad bin Jamil Zainu.[26]

Given the fact that all these books are in Arabic students are first required to study Arabic language. Various aspects of Arabic are taught separately including *Nahw* (Basic Grammar), *Sarf* (Morphology), *Mutala'a* (Reading), *Imla'* (Writing), *Muhadatha* (Conversation), and *Balagha* (Rhetoric). For this subject, they use popular books in the traditional *pesantren*, including, *al-Nahw al-Wadih*, *al-Amthila al-Tasrifiyya*, *Qawa'id al-Sharf*, and *al-Balagha al-Wadiha*. In addition to these they make use of *al-'Arabiyya li al-Nashi'in*, a new, comprehensive book of Arabic distributed free of charge to various Islamic educational institutions by Saudi Arabian embassies.[27]

The understanding of the Wahhabite doctrine provides the foundation for the students to study other subjects including Qur'anic Exegesis, the Prophetic Traditions, Islamic Legal Theory, Islamic Jurisprudence, and *Dakwah* Method. For Qur'anic Exegesis they read, among other things, *Usul al-Tafsir* by Muhammad bin Salih al-'Uthaimin and *Aysir al-Tafasir li Kalam al-'Ali al-Kabir* by Abu Bakar Jabir al-Jazairi. For the Prophetic Traditions they study *al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyya* by Imam al-Nawawi or its commentary, *al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyya* by Salih al-Shaykh, as well as *Muzakkirat al-Hadith al-Nabawi* by Rabi ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, and *Darurat al-Ihtimam bi Sunan al-Nabawiyyah* by Abd al-Salam Abi Barjis Ibn Nasir Abd al-Karim. For Islamic Legal Theory the required reading materials include *al-Usul al-Fiqh* and *al-Usul min 'Ilm al-Usul* by Muhammad bin Salih al-'Uthaimin and *al-Waraqat fi Usul al-Fiqh* by 'Abd al-Malik ibn Juwaini. This subject is taught to support another related subject, namely, Islamic Jurisprudence, in which *Taysir al-Fiqh* by Salih bin Ghanim al-Sadlan, *Minhaj al-Muslim* by Abu Bakr Jabir al-Jazairi, and *al-Mulakhkhas al-Fiqhiy* by Salih bin Fauzan al-Fauzan are the main required reading. For *Da'wa* Method the students read *Dakwah al-Du'at* by Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyya and *Al-Da'watu ila Allah* by Ali Hasan al-Halaby al-Atsari.

Some of the *madrasahs* offer special programmes for university students, called *Tadrib al-Du'at* (training for preachers) and *Tarbiyat al-Nisa* (education for women). These programmes last for a certain period of time, ranging from three months to one year. The *Tadrib al-Du'at* is designed to produce preachers ready to conduct *dakwah* activities. The subjects taught consist of Islamic Theology, Qur'anic Exegesis, the Prophet's Traditions, Islamic History, Islamic Law, Ethics, and Arabic. The *Tarbiyat al-Nisa* is addressed to women and is aimed at forming their personality according to the Wahhabite doctrines. In this programme the participants study Islamic Theology and Islamic Jurisprudence besides receiving instructions on behaviour, fashion, gender relations, and the methods of taking care of husbands and children. The materials used are selected from the books required in the aforementioned regular programmes.

ABANGAN CONVERTS

Under the pressures of the poor conditions and a heavy curriculum the students of the Salafi *madrasahs* never seem to lose courage or become drained of their enthusiasm to study Islam. They feel that this is part of the struggle that should be endured by a Muslim to uphold the dignity of Islam. When asked about their hopes a disproportionate number want to become Muslim preachers committed to *dakwah* activities. It is of interest here to uncover the puzzle of who they are. From my observations it is apparent that they generally come from poor families in the countryside who live on low incomes. These include petty merchants, artisans, unskilled workers, factory labourers, peasants, and agricultural labourers. They come originally from *abangan* families who have converted to become 'true Muslims'. *Abangan* is a term introduced by the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1960) to refer to nominal Muslims in Java compatible with local customs influenced by Animism, Hinduism and Buddhism. They are contrasted with *santri*, or the more 'puritan' Muslims committed to a more or less normative profession of the faith. In Geertz's analysis the main conflict between these two groups is rooted in the *santris'* determination to repudiate *abangan* practices which revolve around communal feasts called *slametan*.[28]

The interest of *abangan* people in Islam has developed apace with the intensification of *dakwah* activities pioneered by DDII and other Muslim organizations in the last three decades. For the *abangan* coming to knowledge of (orthodox) Islam relatively late brings its own consequences. They become directly acquainted with a strict, orthodox Islam intermingled with militancy. The zeal of the Islamic resurgence in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution and the counter-reaction to it by the Saudi Arabian government has undoubtedly imparted a striking flavour to this form of Islam. Although it offers only two choices, black and white, this form of Islam has awakened a certain recognition among some of the discontented *abangan*. It has seemingly offered an appropriate channel for them to find a new anchor in their social life, which had been shaken by an accelerated process of modernization taking place in villages.

Having become acquainted with orthodox Islam the *abangan* are urged to transform themselves quickly into true Muslims. The willingness to do so is reflected in their spirit of dedication to study various aspects of Islam by participating in the *halqas* and *dauras*. Even when faced with great difficulties they always appear enthusiastic in their studies to recite the Qur'an, and perform the ablutions *(wudu')* and prayers *(salat)* properly. Those who can already recite the Qur'an still feel it necessary to be able to recite it better. They are ashamed when they realize their failure

to pronounce some letters of the Arabic alphabet, such as *'ain*, correctly (among the Javanese *'ain* is usually pronounced as *ngain*). To polish their pronunciation, they are eager to listen to cassettes of Qur'anic recitation *(murattal)* by well-known reciters from Saudi Arabia.

The next step is to adopt Arab-style dress and let their beards grow long. This is usually accompanied by a commitment to distancing themselves from their previous relationships and environment. By doing so they feel they can more readily assert their claim to be true Muslims. Subsequently these people usually replace their *abangan* names with Arabic (Islamic) names. Javanese names like Sutarto, Hartono, Raharjo, Suryanto, Sumarjono and Wardoyo are substituted with names like Ahmad Haris, Muhammad Chalid, Hamzah, Ibn Usman, and Ibn Rasyid. Those who have children simply adopt their children's Arabic name and insert Abu before it, becoming Abu Khalid, Abu Ahmad, Abu Mash'ab, and Abu Sulaiman. This process of disassociation from tradition occurs quickly.

These *abangan* converts send their children or other family members to the Salafi *madrasahs*. They believe that the mistakes committed by their parents of letting their children live in the darkness of *jahiliyya* (ie. *abangan*) culture must not be repeated. Through the process of education in the *madrasahs* it is hoped these children will become committed Salafis who are generally more fluent in reciting the Qur'an and have a deeper understanding of Islam than their parents.

YEMEN AS A MODEL

The Salafi *madrasahs* in Indonesia take the Islamic teaching centres attached to Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i, one of the most outstanding Salafi authorities in Yemen, as their model. The *ustadhs* of these *madrasahs* are indeed mostly graduates of those Islamic teaching centres. Otherwise they are graduates of Saudi Arabian universities or Islamic teaching centres controlled by the Saudi religious authorities, notably Muhammad bin Salih al-'Uthaimin. The relation of these *ustadhs* with their Middle Eastern mentors is relatively close and sustained. They maintain contact through correspondence, telephone, and fax machines particularly when they feel a need to raise a question or request *fatwas* to deal with certain delicate problems. This close relation often yields opportunities offered by their mentors to send their best students to study directly in the Middle East.

Muqbil began receiving recognition as a leading Salafi authority in the early 1980s in response to his efforts to spread the Salafi *dakwah* movement in Yemen. His

knowledge of Wahhabism was forged by his experience of studying in Saudi Arabia for almost two decades. Initially he studied at an Islamic teaching centre in Najran, Mecca, run by Muhammad bin Salih al-ʻUthaimin, before seizing an opportunity to enroll at the Medina Islamic University. During this period of study he had the opportunity to attend the *halqas* of some prominent Salafi authorities, such as ʻAbd al-ʻAziz ʻAbd Allah bin Baz and Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani. Following an accusation of his involvement in the Juhayman al-ʻUtaiby-led attack on the Grand Mosque of Mecca, he was arrested. After languishing in a Saudi prison for several months he was expelled to his native land.[29]

Back in Yemen Muqbil began to spread Wahhabism by first establishing the Madrasah Dar al-Hadith al-Khayriyya in Dammaj, his native tribal region east of Saʻda. In his efforts to spread Wahhabism various challenges arose, particularly from the foes of the Wahhabis, namely, the Shafiʻis, Ismaʻilis, and Zaydis who have traditionally dominated Saʻda. They did not want the doctrines taught by Muqbil to prevail and usurp their dominant position. In fact, he had felt the bitterness of the challenges posed by his foes, particularly the Zaydi *sayyids*, even before his departure to Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, he survived his detractors because of the support of his tribal fellows, the Wadiʻis. He even succeeded in developing his teaching centre into one of the most exemplary teaching centres for Salafis all over the world. Tens of thousands of students have studied with him, a significant number of whom have come from outside Yemen from such diverse places as Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Indonesia, as well as Belgium, the United States and the United Kingdom.[30]

Muqbil's relations with Saudi Arabia appeared complicated but at the same time dynamic. Time spent in a Saudi prison in 1979 was certainly an unforgettable nightmare for him. It was said that he had often made harsh criticisms of the Saudi Arabian royal family, and once even considered this regime to have been trapped into "infidelity". His concern for spreading Wahhabism, however, brought him close to Saudi Arabia. The Holy Mosque Establishment, a charitable organization sponsored by the Saudi Arabian government, has officially supported all institutions of learning associated with him, including the Damaj centre, the Maʻabir Centre, the Maʻrib Centre, the al-Hudaida Centre, and al-Khair Mosque.[31]

In many cases Muqbil adopted a position in favour of Saudi government policies. He was persistent, for instance, in criticizing the Iranian Revolution, for which purpose he wrote a book entitled *al-Ilhad al-Khomeini fi Ard al-Haramayn* ('The Impudence of Khomeini on the Earth of the Two Holy Sanctuaries'). Similarly, during the civil war in 1994 he mobilized his followers to be active on the battlefronts against

the Maxist-Leninist forces. This engagement made his name known on the political scene in Yemen. Even when the battle was over his engagement on the Yemeni political scene did not lessen. He was involved in cooperation with the al-Islah party, which had a mission to break down the remaining powers of the Marxist regime in the former South Yemen.[32] It must be noted that the Islah party was highly active in providing an umbrella for Afghan war veterans.[33]

Furthermore, Muqbil reinforced his relations with Saudi Arabia by giving Bin Baz support and defending him from the attacks of Muhammad ibn Surur al-Nayef Zayn al-'Abidin and like-minded people who condemned his *fatwas* legitimizing the arrival of US troops in the kingdom. Muqbil even inveighed against Muhammad ibn Surur, whom he accused of practising *takfir*. Muslims are required to excommunicate any sovereign considered apostate, resorting to violence if necessary. Muqbil's effort to support Bin Baz interlocked him with Bin Baz defenders in Saudi Arabia, including Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Muhammad bin Salih al-'Uthaimin, Rabi' Ibn Hadi al-Madkhali and Zaid Muhammad ibn Hadi al-Madkhali. These figures are important Saudi Salafi authorities with whom the *ustadhs* of the Salafi *madrasahs* have also established linkages.

REPERCUSSIONS OF THE AFGHAN WAR

The central position of Yemen in the growth of the Salafi *madrasahs* in Indonesia is undoubtedly related to the Afghan War. This war enabled *mujahidin* across the world to get to know each other and exchange information and experiences in an environment based on the ethos of *jihad*. Networks were thereby formed and relations were established. Salafis scattered around the world, for instance, were integrated because of this war. They became acquainted with the centres of Salafi *dakwah* movement or Salafi Islamic teaching centres which existed in other parts of the Muslim world.

One of the factions of Afghan *mujahidin* which became the main destination of Salafis from all over the world was the Jama'at al-Da'wa ila al-Qur'an wa Ahl al-Hadith. It was a strict Salafi faction and Saudi Arabian 'principality' led by Jamil al-Rahman. This faction had special relations with the Pakistani Ahl-i Hadith, a reformist movement founded in the Indian Sub-continent in the nineteenth century which has many similarities with Wahhabism, particularly in terms of its rejection of traditional practices, such as visiting the Prophet's grave.[34] Jamil al-Rahman himself is a graduate of a religious school of Ahl al-Hadith in Panjpir sponsored by Saudi Arabia. Before establishing this faction he had joined Hekmatyar's Hizb-i Islami.[35]

The Jama'at al-Da'wa set up its base in Kunar, an isolated province beyond the control of the central authorities. Because of its closeness with Wahhabism many jihad volunteers from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Yemen preferred to join this faction. With the support of private sources in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, it evolved into a strong faction which was able to seize control of Kunar and establish a Shura Council there. Surprisingly, perhaps, it applied the *takfir* doctrine. Afghans who lived in the areas controlled by the government were treated as infidels who were subject to the rules of *futuhat* (conquest), including killing men who resisted and taking women and children as prisoners.[36]

The Jama'at al-Da'wa has developed more hostile attitudes towards non-Muslims and the West than any other faction, considering them the enemies of Islam. Fighters in this faction have frequently attacked journalists and humanitarian workers, accused them of being agents of the West. But the engagement of this faction on the political scene of Afghanistan ended with the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, following which it retreated from the political quarrel for power. Jamil al-Rahman himself then became the target of assassination by his rivals. The faction's veterans devoted their time to conducting what they believed to be *dakwah* activities. Resorting to iconoclasm they destroyed statues and monuments and attacked local religious practices considered an anathema to Islam.[37]

It is likely that the linkage between Indonesian Salafis and Muqbil's students began to develop during the war when they met in the Jama'at al-Da'wa faction. Indeed, proponents of the Salafi *dakwah* movement in Indonesia generally claim to have joined this faction during their engagement in the war. The importance of this faction among them is indicated by the fact that some of the mosques they built upon their return to Indonesia have been named Jamil al-Rahman. But this relationship was not reinforced until Ja'far Umar Thalib, a young figure of Hadrami descent, decided to leave for Yemen to study directly under Muqbil only one year after his return to Indonesia. His decision to study there to some extent revitalized the classical linkage between Indonesia and Yemen. This decision brought him to a country which has long been a source of inspiration for the Indonesian Hadramis. As a diasporic community the Hadramis consistently retain some cultural attachment with their country of origin. It should be noted that Hadrami immigrants, who began to wend their way to the archipelago in the fifteenth century, were partially responsible for the development of Islam in Indonesia.[38] Yet, their role significantly decreased during the twentieth century in the wake of the emergence of indigenous religious authorities who had no connection with the Hadramaut. The main success of Ja'far as the first Indonesian student of Muqbil was to initiate the cooperation which has enabled hundreds of Indonesian Salafis to study there.

One may question why Ja'far Umar Thalib did not choose to go to Southern Yemen, where the majority of Indonesian Hadramis originated. His decision apparently had to do with the changes taking place on the religious map of the Muslim world as a consequence of the Saudi Arabian campaign for the Wahhabization of the *ummah*. Because of this campaign, new centres of Islamic reform have sprung up with special linkages with Saudi Arabia. One such example was Northern Yemen, particularly the area around Dammaj, which emerged as one of the major sites for Salafi teaching centres with Muqbil as their central figure. To establish contact with Northern Yemen, therefore, means to create a strategic linkage with Saudi Arabia.

CONCLUSION

The growth of the Salafi *madrasahs* in Indonesia stagnated in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States. Various factors contributed to this stagnation. Since the United States' declaration of its "war on terror" the stream of Indonesian students travelling to Yemen has practically dried up. Hundreds of students who were still living there at the time the attacks occurred were forced to return home. Like students from other countries, those who remained were hounded by the Yemeni police and intelligence agents on the grounds of suspected linkages with Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda network. Many were subjected to interrogation and arrest. The campaign against terrorism also created problems for the Salafi *madrasahs* in Indonesia. They also became targets of suspicion by the Indonesian police and intelligence forces, as well as the national media. Some of their *ustadhs* claimed to have been interrogated by security agents in the months following September 11. When the world's attention was directed towards Indonesia in the aftermath of the Bali bombing on October 2002, the Laskar Jihad, which became the node of the Salafi *madrasahs*, was suddenly disbanded. This disbandment paralysed the activities of some of the *madrasahs*. The Ihyaus Sunnah, for instance, was forced to close down. More importantly, perhaps, the changed international situation exacerbated a serious fragmentation among these *madrasahs* and within the Indonesian Salafi movement generally.

Endnotes

1   Pusat Data dan Informasi Departemen Agama [Data and Information Center, Department of Religion], 2002.

2   For a further account of the differences of these three educational institutions, see Karel A. Steenbrink, Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah: Recente Ontwikkelingen in Indonesisch Islamonderricht (PhD Dissertation, Nijmegen Catholic University, 1974).

3   On the *kyai* and the *pesantren*, see Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *The Pesantren Tradition: The Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of Traditional Islam in Java* (Arizona: Arizona State University, 1999).

4   *Halqa*, literally meaning circle, is a forum for the study of Islamic sciences, in which an *ustadh*, teacher or preacher, gives lessons on the basis of certain books and his participants sit around him to listen to and scrutinize his lessons. It is distinct from *daura*, literally meaning turn, which is a type of workshop held for a certain period of time, ranging from one week to one month, during which participants gather and stay in one place and follow all the designed programmes.

5   John O. Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, 2nd ed. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), pp. 53-6.

6   Being firmly associated with the global Islamic resurgence this movement also inherited some aspects of Salafism, notably its anti-West sentiments, which inspired the birth of the twentieth-century Islamist movements, such as the Ikhwan al-Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood) and the Jamaʿat-i Islami (Islamic Community).

7   Gilles Kepel, *Jihad, the Trail of Political Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), p. 69.

8   Cary Fraser, "In Defense of Allah's Realm: Religion and Statecraft in Saudi Foreign Policy Stategy", in Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and James Piscatori (eds.), *Transnational Religion and Fading States* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1997), p. 222.

9   Reinhard Schulze, *Islamischer Internationalismus in 20. Jahrhundert* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), pp. 215-216; see also Kepel, Jihad, p. 72.

10 Regarding opposition movements in Saudi Arabia, see Mamoun Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent* (London: Macmillan, 1999).

11 On the contestation between Iran and Saudi in post-Khomeini revolution, see Fraser, "In Defense of Allah's Realm", pp. 226-234.

12 Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 151.

13 See Oliver Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, translated by Carol Volk (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 84-5.

14 R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985), pp. 139-40.

15 Interviews with Abu Nida, Ustadh Ihsan and Idral Haris, Yogyakarta and Solo, December 2002 and January 2003.

16 See Noorhaidi Hasan, "The Salafi Movement in Indonesia: Transnational Dynamics and Local Development," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 21, 1 (2007): 83-94.

17 Interview with Abu Nida, the founder of the *madrasah*, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

18 Interview with Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, the founder of the *madrasah*. Selokaton, Solo, March 2003.

19 Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib and Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, the founder and teacher of the *madrasah*, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

20 Interview with Zainuddin, a student of the *madrasah*, Makassar, April 2003.

21 Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, Strong Religion: *The Rise of Fundamentalism around the World* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 30.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 33-7.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 46-52.

24 Interview with Muhammad Ihsan, Yogyakarta, 30 December 2002.

25 This method resembles the *bandongan* system popular in the traditional *pesantren*.

26 Interviews with Abdurrahman and Abu Ihsan, teachers of the Salafi *madrasahs* in Magelang and Boyolali respectively, March 2003.

27 *Ibid.*

28 Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1960), pp. 121-30. For a comparison see Mark R. Woodward, *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta* (Tucson: Association for Asian Studies, 1989).

29 Bernard Haykel, "The Salafis in Yemen at a Crossroads: an obituary of Shaykh Muqbil al-Wadi'i of Dammaj (d. 1422/2001), Jemen Report 2 (October 2002). For the Salafism in Yemen, see Laurent Bonnefoy, "Salafism in Yemen: A 'Saudisation'?" in *Kingdom without Borders Saudi Arabia's Political, Religious and Media Frontiers*, ed. Madawi Al-Rasheed (London/New York: Hurst and Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 245-59.

30   *Ibid.*

31   See Quintan Wiktorowicz, "The New Global Threat, Transnational Salafis and Jihad," *Middle East Policy* 8, 4 (December 2001): 32.

32   As for the linkage between the Yemeni Salafi and al-Islah, see Eric Watkins, "Islamism and Tribalism in Yemen" in Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds.), *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Colorado and Oxford: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 215-225; see also Paul Dresch and Bernard Haykel, "Stereo-types and Political Styles: Islamists and Tribesfolk in Yemen", in *The International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27 (1995): 405-31.

33   See James Bruce, "The Azzam Brigades: Arab Veterans of the Afghan War" in *Jane's Intelligence Review* 7, 4 (1995), pp. 178-180.

34   Concerning the Ahl al-Hadith, see Barbara D. Metcalf, "Traditionalist Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs", ISIM Papers (Leiden: ISIM, 2002), p. 6.

35   Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 118.

36   Barnett R. Rubin, "Arab Islamists in Afghanistan," in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Political Islam, Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.: 1997), pp. 196-7.

37   *Ibid.*, p. 167.

38   See Syed Farid Alatas, "Hadhramaut and the Hadrami Diaspora: Problems in Theoretical History", in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (eds.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 29-34.

CHAPTER SEVEN

COLONIAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE RESHAPING OF ISLAM, THE MUSLIM AND ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA

Shamsul A. B.
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Besides Islam the Southeast Asian region is heir to Hindu and Buddhist traditions as well as to three European colonial systems of government and administration: British, Dutch and French. It is evident that Islam has not escaped the influence of the others. Indeed, in some aspects of life Islam has been considerably reformulated by them as a result of having had to embed itself in a pre-Islamic metaphysical milieu and to undergo a process of reshaping by the rational-scientific logic of the European technology of rule. It follows, therefore, that in order to understand the state of contemporary Islam, Muslims and Islamic studies in Southeast Asia one must begin with materials and data from the region, rather than with some middle-Eastern and theological formulation of Islam – while at the same time not denying that Islam is a universalistic theology originating in the Arabic Middle East.

The aim of this chapter is to present the Malaysian case, based on the assumption that of all the past influences that have influenced Islam, Muslims and Islamic education in Malaysia it is British colonialism that has had the greatest impact. Indeed, its effects have lasted well into the postcolonial era. It is therefore necessary to explore the role of colonial knowledge in reshaping Islamic education both during and after the colonial period. However in order to establish the nature of the impact of colonization it is imperative first to briefly examine how Islam became embedded in the Southeast Asian region during the pre-colonial era. Indeed, numerous studies

on Islam and the Muslim in Southeast Asia – Malaysia included – have emphasized time and again how critical was the impact of the interaction between Islam and pre-Islamic traditions, and how it has shaped the former in the way it is has been accepted and practiced as a way of life.

ISLAM EMBEDDED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

THE EMBEDDED THESIS

Discourse about the ontology of Islam in the Malay world has been heavily informed by an argument within Southeast Asian studies initiated in the 1960s by Clifford Geertz, the American cultural anthropologist, and William Roff, an historian of the Malay world of Scottish origin who in the 1970s took issue with Geertz's argument. Both came to create their own niche in the production of knowledge about Islam and Muslims in the Malay world.

Geertz made famous the phrase "Islam observed" which he articulated in a book of the same title comparing Islam and Muslims in Indonesia with those in Morocco.[1] Ontologically Geertz's emphasis is on "Islamic praxis" or "Islam as a lived reality amongst Javanese Muslims". Perhaps his famous cultural reading and observation was the *abangan-priyayi-santri* continuum, his typology of Muslims in Java. His many writings on Islam as cultural practice in the Sukarno era of Indonesia have been widely read and have indeed been influential beyond the world of academia.

Roff, in an article in the French journal *Archipel* almost two decades later introduces the phrase "Islam obscured".[2] Although not a direct reaction to Geertz's "Islam observed", the article nonetheless serves well as a general response to an analytical trend that had become popular amongst Southeast Asianists both within and outside the region which privileges a culturalist perspective in the representation of Islam in the region. Roff argues that one must not overemphasise the cultural face of Islam to the extent of obscuring its significant political role in shaping the social life of Muslims at both the structural and agency levels. In his elaboration of the political role of Islam in the Malay world Roff describes the nature of "political Islam", or "Islam as a political system", in the form of the Malay *KERAJAAN*,[3] the pre-colonial Malay feudal polity. Roff thus provides us with an alternative meaning and form of the notion of "political Islam".

Useful as they may be in their analyses of Islam in the Malay world Geertz and Roff narrate only part of the story. As is the case with Hinduism and Buddhism, Islam's original home is not the Malay world. Islam was brought to the region by people of foreign origins including merchants and Sufis. When it arrived in the Malay world Islam encountered a rich and vibrant Malay civilization that had experienced a history of at least a thousand years, with indigenous animistic beliefs providing the anchor. Anthropologically speaking it is unthinkable that Islam could have transformed this civilization overnight. In fact, it took Islam centuries to find a comfortable home in the Malay world.[4]

The sociological process of settling into this new home, so to speak, involved complicated, indeed dialectical, interactions between these foreigners bringing the religion of Islam and the locals who eventually embraced the faith. Even amongst the locals the "Islamic spread" was evidently uneven. Just as Hinduism and Buddhism had to contend with indigenous beliefs and cultural practices, accepting and accommodating them into their ontology, Islam too had to contend with all the social phenomena that existed upon its arrival. Whether or not we wish to label this whole diffusionistic process as "syncretism" (if we are structuralists) or "hybridization" (if we are post-structuralists), one rather deceptively simple fact remains. Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam all had to go through, for want of a better term, a process of "embedment".

The Islam that Geertz "observed" and the Islam that Roff felt was "obscured" was the Islam that had been truly embedded into the historical and sociological contours of the Malay civilisational landscape. However that does not end the ontological story. The Islam that the foreigners brought to the Malay world, be it from the Arabian Peninsula, India or China, had itself previously undergone in these respective regions a complicated process of "embedment". In other words, ontologically, the Islam that came to this region was definitely the "embedded form" and not the "pristine form". How do we otherwise explain the many shapes and patterns of mosques found in the Malay world? How do we account for the contrast in Mecca during the Hajj season of white garments on Muslims from the Malay world with the black ones on those from other parts of the world?

In other words, although there existed a set of Islamic theological universals accepted by all Muslims – such as the six articles of faith that promise to bind all Muslims together as brothers and sisters – in a lived material reality, these universals have been remoulded by local ontologies and sociological conventions. The "embedment" process was in fact more complicated than this. A pendulating movement between "dis-embedment" and "re-embedment" occurred when new social forces

arrived in the Malay world after Islam. The most significant of these was European colonialism. Both Islam and European colonialism, as practised in the region, became reconfigured in a fluctuating social, political, and economic scenario.

In the context of the European rationalist epistemology that informed the colonial process, Islam and other religions were perceived as non-rationalist and even anti-rationalist entities. In the British Empire they became "traditionalised", "marginalised" or simply sidelined through the application of the technology of rule and official procedures that constitute modern bureaucracy. As a result Hindus became separated from Hinduism and Muslims from Islam. This separation was supported and legitimised by the construction of "colonial forms of knowledge". Among these was the field of "Malay studies" which focused on the Malay *ethnie* as a unit of analysis and consisted of a corpus of material that detailed and elaborated exotic, non-scientific and yet aesthetically-laden "traditional" Malay conventions and material culture. This is but one of many examples of what we may call the process of "de-embedment" and "re-embedment" that has affected Islam in the Malay world.

Therefore, the Islam that Geertz observed and the Islam that Roff found obscured had undergone a series of embedment processes within sociological contexts and historical circumstances that prevailed before and after the arrival of Islam. We wish thus to argue that it is necessary for scholars seeking to characterise or label Islam in the Malay world to take a closer look at "embedded Islam" and at the complex process that contributed to that "embeddedness". In our attempt to understand and explain the ontology of Islam in the Malay world and the larger Southeast Asian region it will be helpful if we take cognizance of the "Islam embedded" thesis in a more serious fashion.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACT OF ISLAM
IN THE MALAY WORLD

Sociologically, Islam had a tremendous impact upon pre-colonial Southeast Asia. The three major aspects of the impact may be divided into (i) spirituality; (ii) intellectual contribution; and (iii) the establishment of new rules for social order through the adoption of the *shari'ah*. It is within this context, which, in turn, involves the said three elements, that our contemporary understanding of Islam and the Muslims in Southeast Asia has to be firmly located. It is useful, therefore, to briefly examine how each of the three elements of Islam has taken root in the region.

In terms of spirituality Islam in the Malay world is not simply a veneer over the structure of the Malay-Indonesia society, as argued by some scholars, but rather it has played an enormous role in transforming both the "body" and the "soul" of the different societies in the Malay world.[5] In particular, Islamic mysticism or *tasawwuf* and its practices of purifying the heart and intellect have been widely influential among the societies of the Malay world. Through the efforts of *sufis* who acted as preachers (*mubaligh)* to the king as well as the masses the nature of Malay spirituality, as some Muslim scholars have claimed, has been elevated to a higher state. The foremost amongst the scholars was Al-Attas.[6] He argued that the highly intellectual and rationalistic spirit of Islam entered the receptive minds of the Malays of the archipelago and turned them away from all forms of mythology. Besides, he argues, the doctrine of One God and man as essentially His creation, together with the equality of spirituality between man and man, gave the ordinary man in the Malay world a sense of worth and nobility denied to him in pre-Islamic times. He further argued that Islam brought spiritual refinement and knowledge to the people of the Malay world through an intellectual and rational impetus, not only to the courts but also to the people in general, as evidenced by the fact that not all philosophical treatises were written solely for the pleasure of kings.[7] The elevation of spirituality among the Malays led to the growth and proliferation of the *sufi* orders (*tariqah*) which stressed the importance of practicing mystical teachings in an organized manner.

The intellectual contribution of Islam to Malay civilization from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century provided the epistemological change necessary for the establishment of a stronger Islamic-based social order in the Malay polity called the *KERAJAAN.*[8] During that period the Malay-Islamic literati, especially mystical poets and writers, undertook both missionary and intellectual works to spread Islam. One of them was 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkil (d. 1693) who is recorded as the first Malay translator of the Qur'an, together with al-Baydawi's commentary on it. However, prominent among these missionaries was Hamzah al-Fansuri (h. 1589/1604) a *sufi* poet and writer who belonged to the Qadariyyah Order. He was followed by another Malay *sufi,* Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani, Shikh al-Islam of Aceh, who was intellectually involved in the mystic doctrine of *wujudiyyah.* His theosophical concerns were shared by another controversial *sufi* theologian, historian and missionary par excellence from Aceh, Nur al-Din al-Raniri (d. 1666). Al-'Attas argues that Nur al-Din al-Raniri's thought had a tremendous impact in the Malay world. First, he was the first man in the region to clarify the distinction between the true and false interpretation of *sufi* theosophy and metaphysics. Second, al-Raniri is known as the first scholar to prepare a Malay translation of the best commentary on the creed by al-Nasafi.

Third, al-Raniri's *Sirat al-Mustaqim* dealing with the essentials of Islam is considered a classic. Finally, al-Raniri is also a highly celebrated Malay writer because of his book *Bustan al-Salatin*.[9]

Without doubt the most significant and central contribution to governance in the Malay-Muslim *KERAJAAN* was the *shari'ah*.[10] One could say that Islamic civilization in Southeast Asia manifested itself by way of enacting the Islamic *shari'ah* holistically, that is, by applying *shari'ah* as the basis of social order. For example, the Malacca sultanate in the 15th century officially applied two forms of *shari'ah*-based law, namely, first, the Malacca Digest (*Hukum Kanun Melaka*) and, second, the Maritime Laws of Malacca (*Undang-Undang Laut Melaka*).[11] These two legal codes were complimentary in providing solutions to the full range of legal disputes. The Malacca Digest comprised all matters of criminal and civil law, family law, the legal power of the ruler, rules relating to proper conduct, particularly with regard to sexual matters, laws regarding slavery, and penalties for all offences. The Maritime Laws consisted entirely of rules, regulations, procedures and codes of conduct which were to be used at sea, to be obeyed and respected by Muslim and non-Muslim outsiders and insiders.[12]

Studies by Malaysian historians reveal the tremendous impact of Islam in the Malacca legal system by looking into both of these two legal codes.[13] For instance, in the Maritime Laws of Malacca, the captain of a ship (*maalim*) was considered an *imam* (leader) and his subjects as *ma'mum* (followers). Similarly, the Malacca Digest contained many provisions based on the *shari'ah* in order "to follow injunctions in the Qur'an and enjoin good and forbid evil (*amr bi al-ma'ruf wa-nahy 'an al-munkar*)". The Islamic influence was clearly expressed throughout the legal texts. Many terms and concepts have been absorbed and are widely used such as *imam, mu'allim, taksir fufuli, amanah, hak ta'ala, thayyib, ta'zir* and *mithqal*.

In spite of Islam's dominance in governance and the social life of Muslims under the *KERAJAAN* polity there are conflicting opinions about Islam and its relationship to pre-Islamic custom or *adat*.[14] The continued practice of both the matrilineal-based *adat pepateh* and the patrilineal-based *adat temenggong* by the Malay-Muslims has created a measure of tension and conflict with *shari'ah*. Proponents of *adat* tend to justify the position of *adat* as not being contradictory to the *shari'ah*. Besides *adat* other forms of pre-Islamic ritual exist among other non-Islamic cultural beliefs and practices such as magic, superstition, spirit worship, taboos, the consultation of shamans (variously called, *pawang, dukun* and/or *bomoh*), as well as the fear of *jin* and *iblis* (supernatural beings). Such beliefs have long permeated the life of many Malays, particularly in the villages.[15]

One can conclude that the coming of Islam to the Malay world constituted a new era in its history. Undoubtedly, Islam transformed many popular pre-Islamic cultural practices and beliefs and imbued them with an Islamic world view. But it was an embedded version of Islam, not the 'pristine form' practiced by the first community of believers in Mecca and Medina. Indeed, each of the influences which came from the Middle East, China, and India, was shaped by its own socio-historical context. It was already an embedded form of Islam that subsequently reached the shores of the Malay Archipelago. The Islam that arrived also brought changes in the sphere of Islamic knowledge, with Malacca exercising its special role as the centre of Islamic learning throughout the Southeast Asia. It was also Islam that unified the Malay sultans in confronting the encroachment of Western imperialism.

FROM 'KERAJAAN' TO '*kerajaan*': ISLAM RE-EMBEDDED UNDER COLONIAL RULE

Like Islam before it, British colonialism could only operate and be embraced by the populace in Southeast Asia in its embedded form. Indeed, we would like to argue that British colonialism embedded itself in the region by drawing a clear line of demarcation between the 'religious' and the 'secular', where British colonial rule represented the 'secular.' Given the separation of state and church in Britain long before its colonial expansion it is not surprising that anything to do with 'religion' and other indigenous beliefs, whether in Europe or in colonised Southeast Asia, came to be regarded as 'traditional' as opposed to the 'secular modern' that colonialism adopted as its central principle of governance and indeed the social system that it imposed.

Of all the influences that have impacted upon Islam and Muslims in Southeast Asia, especially in Malaya, it is not the 'religious' Christianity but the 'secular' British colonialism that is the more significant. Socio-geographically its influence on the region was not even, and was articulated in numerous versions, but it undoubtedly had a lasting effect. The most significant observable impact was in terms of the transformation of the nature of governance in the region. The advent of colonial rule brought about an important encounter between 'church' (read Islam) and 'state' (British colonial administration). Only this time the encounter took place under different empirical circumstances: between 'Islam the religion and its believers' and the modernizing 'secular state' of the colonial government. Malaya was certainly not the first British colony to have experienced this. The South Asian countries (India,

Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Sikkim and Nepal) experienced British rule much earlier than Malaysia.

The American anthropologist of India, Bernard Cohn, has argued that colonialism involves more than just the conquering of physical space. More importantly it involves the conquest of indigenous 'epistemological space'. This involves the dismantling of indigenous thought systems, hence disempowering them of their ability to define things, and subsequently replacing them with a foreign one through a systematic application of a series of colonial 'investigative modalities'. According to Cohn "an investigative modality includes the definition of a body of information that is needed, the procedures by which appropriate knowledge is gathered, its ordering and classification, and then how it is transformed into usable forms such as published reports, statistical returns, histories, gazetteers, legal codes, and encyclopaedias".[16]

In the Malay world the colonial conquest of epistemological space through the use of various investigative modalities resulted in the reconfiguration and reconstitution of the ancient concept of KERAJAAN, from one in which 'church' (read Islam) and state were fused to another version of *kerajaan* in which 'church' (read Islam) and state were separated. The colonial and post-colonial notion of *kerajaan* was divorced from its pre-existing Islamic content. As a result, the indigenous Islamic component of the pre-colonial KERAJAAN was systematically 'traditionalised' and perceived as non-rational. Its position was recast as peripheral to the larger modern-rationalist complex of the secular colonial state. The process of the transformation of this premodern polity from KERAJAAN to *kerajaan* occurred in at least three crucial areas: namely, the bureaucracy, the judiciary, and education.

The impact of the British bureaucratic presence and policies in Malaya can be clearly discerned in the following events.[17] First, the British began establishing themselves through an indirect intervention in 1786 when Penang was acquired from Kedah, which later led to a widening of its direct involvement upon areas traditionally the domain of the Malay Sultans. British residents were stationed first in the Federated Malay States (FMS) and later in the Unfederated Malaysian States (UFMS). The Pangkor Treaty (1874), which was signed by the Malay sultans, gave full authority for the British to control Malaysia. It stipulated that the Sultans receive and provide a suitable residence for a British Officer to be called Resident, who was accredited to the royal Court, and whose advice must be asked and acted upon on in all areas other than those touching upon Malay religion and *adat* (custom). It simply meant that religion was to be clearly separated from secular matters such as politics, administration, law, economics, education and so forth. Islamic and Malay

customs were recognized as being under the jurisdiction of the sultans, while matters of governance were the responsibility of the British (in fact, the British administration later even violated the so-called "non-interference" policy in Islamic and Malay *adat*).

These bureaucratic changes flowed into the realm of religious administration and hence religious judicial matters.[18] Despite the fact that the British introduced some reforms in the religious aspects of Malay society through the Council of Islamic Affairs and Malay Customs (*Majlis Hal Ehwal Islam dan 'Adat Melayu*), this newly established institution excluded the role of Islam from all aspects of life except in the limited sphere of religious affairs. Hooker argued that the British intention was to limit the reach of Islamic law to family law and to introduce its own secular legal system. The British policy to exclude *shari'ah* became evident, for instance, in a court decision in the case of Ainan vs. Syed Bakar (1939). The issue in dispute raised in this particular case was whether a baby, delivered by Ainan after a marriage of only three months, could be considered legitimate. The *Syariah* court considered the baby illegitimate. Nevertheless, as a result of the implementation of the Evidence Enactment Law in the Malaya Court, it was ruled that the law which should be followed was the Evidence Enactment Law, not the *Shari'ah*. Therefore, the disputed baby was considered legitimate by the civil law.[19]

The religious administrative reform restricted the independence and jurisdictions of the Islamic judges, or *qadis*. Their power was limited compared to the civil judges. They were denied the power to arrest and punish offenders. The British administrators only permitted the *qadis* to become prosecutors in magistrate courts for criminal offences. This was a striking contrast to the powerful position of the *qadis* in the pre-colonial period of the Malay sultanates. The laws and regulations introduced during the colonial period are taken almost completely from British law. The late Ahmad Ibrahim pointed out that the deteriorating position of the *syariah* had mainly been caused by the British misunderstanding of Islam as a religion, since the term *ugama Islam* was equated with the Christian understanding of religion.[20] In addition, all the senior judges were appointed by the British Resident General with the approval of the High Commissioner and were trained in the British system of law. It was therefore natural for them to refer to and apply English law. As a result, the power wielded by the British in implementing legal policies led to the current Malaysian view of the *shari'ah* as a legal code which was confined to personal law.

In the sphere of education, Islamic education suffered the same fate of being peripheralized or transformed into a modern form.[21] Before the British educational policy was introduced Islamic education had been an extremely important homog-

enizing and socializing tool because it provided the means by which Islam continued to flourish among the Malays. In the past the Arabic script, popularly known as *tulisan jawi*, had been the written medium used in traditional Islamic traditional education. Malay children would begin learning the Qur'an at home (*mengaji Qur'an*) by way of recitation (*membaca*) and memorization (*menghafal*). Later, these children were sent to specific houses where religious teachers, known as *Tok Lebai*, taught the Qur'an and personal duties (*fardu ain*). For more advanced studies in religion, Malaysian parents sent their children to educational institutions such as *pondok* and *madrasah*. At the upper level Malay students used *kitab jawi*, popular religious textbooks written in the Malay language using the Arabic alphabet, for different subjects, ranging from Islamic law (*fiqh*), to theology (*kalam*), religious principles (*usul al-din*), Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*), and the prophetic tradition (*hadith*).

Both *pondok* and *madrasah* played important roles in preserving the Islamic identity of Malays and providing them with the core of Islamic education. Some scholars hold the view that the essence of the *pondok* institution for Malay society was in the way they provided a 'template' for the transmission of Malay Muslim culture from one generation to the next. Beginning in the nineteenth century, Malay society witnessed the growth of *madrasah*, a differentiated version of the *pondok* system. *Madrasah* were more formal and organized in terms of administration and curriculum. Later, some *madrasah* began to combine theological subjects with secular academic and vocational ones. Important among these schools was the Madrasah al-Hamidiyyah in Limbong Kapal, Alor Star, Kedah, founded in 1906.

In this *madrasah* the curriculum included the study of *fiqh, tasawwuf, tafsir, hadith* and a comparative study of the four *fiqh al-mazahib* (for schools of *fiqh*) at a more advanced level. It is interesting to note that in *Sekolah al-Diniyyah*, which was established in 1924 in Kampong Lalang, Padang Rengas, Perak, the school's curriculum included mathematics, history, English and commercial subjects. More importantly the students were also taught business, the techniques of rice planting, and even how to make soap. Because of its advanced curriculum the *Sekolah al-Diniyyah* became popular. With sixteen students enrolled in 1924 it grew to about 500 pupils in 1941 and had opened at least eight branches of the school in the surrounding areas.

The strength of Islamic education, as illustrated above, began to deteriorate gradually with the direct involvement of the British in educational policy.[22] Several scholars have noted how the establishment of secular schools during the British period contributed to the introduction of elements of secularism into Malay society.[23]

The first attempt made by the British administrators in the sphere of education was to set up English medium schools in urban areas. Only a limited number of

Malays were admitted and thereby assured of employment and a high post in the administration. Meanwhile the British also established Malay medium and Islamic religious schools in the rural areas. The purpose of these two types of schools, according to George Maxwell, the chief secretary, was to train "the sons of Malay fishermen to become better fishermen and the sons of Malay farmers, better farmers." It is clear that the British preferred the English medium school and it became their policy that Malay and Islamic education remain of lower quality than English education. Even O.T. Dussek, a famous British educator who became the first principal of the Sultan Idris Teacher Training College (SITC) in Tanjong Malim, Perak, criticized the system of English education for failing to cater to "the needs of the country or the state of intellectual development, or to the social culture attained by the inhabitants".[24]

Apart from the secularization process incurred by the English medium school, the British administrators implemented the same policy in the Malay schools (*Sekolah Melayu*) by initiating the following action. First, the Qur'an could be taught in schools but had to be separated from the teaching of the Malay language. Second, lessons in the morning concentrated on the teaching of the Malay language. The teaching of the Qur'an could be done only informally in the afternoon. Third, teachers' allowances from the government were meant only for the teaching of the Malay language, while parents were obliged to pay for the allowances of those teaching Qur'an lessons.

In 1905, the British administration formed, for the children of the aristocrats, the elite Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK), located in a small town called Kuala Kangsar in the state of Perak. The formation of this prestigious college strengthened the trend of British policy towards secular education in Malay society. The MCKK was formed to educate 'Malays of good families' and to train them to fill subordinate post in government services. While the school produced excellent academic achievements it also hastened the separation of the Malay traditional leadership from the masses. The process of secularization among the Malay students became even more complex with the entry of English missionary schools. Although the British officially forbade Christian missionaries from operating missions in the British Malaya, the administration allowed these same Christian preachers to establish missionary schools in towns and cities. Malay children were encouraged by the British to attend these missionary schools even though some were obliged to enroll against the wishes of their parents.

It could be argued therefore, as elsewhere in the Muslim world, with the deepening influence of secular education in Malaysia the value of a secular education had more appeal. Thus the consolidation of British colonial rule led to the rise of both

religious and secular schools, which dichotomized the dissemination of knowledge within the Malay society.

COLONIALISM AND THE MUSLIM RESPONSE IN MALAYSIA

The Muslim response to colonialism in Malaysia was articulated in two major forms. The first was an anti-British political movement by different groups within the Malay community in Malaysia, conducted at different times and motivated by a variety of local religious and political economic motivations. The second response was in the emergence and articulation of internal contestations amongst the Malay-Muslims themselves. The impact of governance change, namely, from *KERAJAAN* to *kerajaan* brought about by the epistemological and ontological restructuration carried out by the British, undoubtedly played a major role in the second response. These internal contestations revolved around three major motivations, namely, conservatism, reformism and nationalism. Some had their socio-historical roots in an ideology of 'pristine Islam' while others developed out of interactions with 'the modern' brought by British colonialism.

The Anti-British Movement

In Malaysia and other parts of the Malay world the *ulama* (lit. religious specialist) who were trained in traditional Islamic education (especially the oral-based *pondok* tradition), confronted and resisted the encroachment of Western imperialism in the spirit of *jihad*. At the end of the nineteenth century, a number of anti-British movements were nurtured by this spirit. The 1857 murder of the Perak Resident, J.W.W. Birch, at Pasir Salak, Perak, proved clearly that there was a strong resistance movement against the presence of the British informed by religious ideas. Muslims in Perak where there were a number of religious schools felt that the British administration was jeopardizing the position of Islam. Harry Ord had wrote a special memorandum in 1876 explaining Birch's murder in which he claimed that Muslim fanaticism had been invoked against the infidel, in this particular instance, the British.[25]

In Terengganu the anti-British movement coloured by the spirit of *jihad* became prominent in the 1920s after several well-known *ulama* opposed the practice of English land law which contradicted the *shari'ah*'s rulings on individual property. H.W. Thomson, the British Resident in Perak who was assigned to study the upheaval in Terengganu, noted the strength of the Islamic element in the opposition to British

rule: "Religious feeling has always run very high in Terengganu and it is probable that the religious leaders made the most of every hardship case."[26]

Internal Contestations: Of Conservatism, Reformism and Nationalism

The so-called *Gerakan Pembaharuan* (Reform Movement) in Malaya was dominated by the 'Middle East Stream' led by Shaikh Tahir Jalal al-Din, Sayyid Shaikh al-Hadi, Shaikh Abu Bakr al-Asha'ari and others.[27] They were strongly influenced by the modernist thought of the Arabic reformists Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1879), Shaikh Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905), and Rashid Rida (d. 1935). The influence of the Arabic newspapers *al-'Urwat al-Wuthqa* and *al-Manar* on the the Malay reformists of this era was apparent when Sayyid Shaikh al-Hadi issued a monthly newspaper *al-Imam* in 1906. The impact of that newspaper was clearly felt in the Malay community. *Al-Imam* was described as "a bomb shell on the quiet scene of Islam."[28] Al-Hadi warned his community about the need to reform their educational objectives and abandon superstitious practices (*khurafat*). Al-Hadi's Islamic reformist thinking was not without critics, however. In the context of the highly religious and ethical Malay society, his famous novel *Hikayat Faridah Hanum* (the Story of Faridah Hanum), which depicted liberal ideas like the emancipation of Malay women and the sexual lusts of youth, made him a controversial figure. Shaikh Tahir Jalal al-Din echoed the same reformist ideas. His prolific writings in *al-Imam* (1906-1908), *al-Ikhwan* (1926-31), and *Saudara* (1928-1941) were very religious in content. He insisted that Malay society utilize the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions as the best solution to its backwardness. In fact, Shaikh Tahir attacked some *ulama* as being responsible for perpetuating deviational *adat* (Malay customary laws).

In the wave of Islamic reformism, Malay society continued to be engaged in heated polemics between the reformists and the traditional *ulama*. The latter, which was categorized as *Kaum Tua* (traditionalist), began to feel threatened by the greater influence of the former, who identified themselves as *Kaum Muda* (reformist). As a result the *Kaum Muda* accused the *Kaum Tua* of being the real obstacle to Malay progress and even the destroyers of Islam. In response to these charges, the *Kaum Tua* labeled the *Kaum Muda* as deviants and communists. Despite certain negative elements resulting from the conflicts between the two religious groups, the efforts of Muslim reformists must not be ignored.[29] Their achievements include the following: first, they succeeded in elevating the intellectual horizons of Malay society through *ijtihad* (juridical opinion) and reducing *taqlid* (imitation) based upon the critical understanding of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Prophetic traditions). Second,

educational reforms were made in the religious schools by correcting the content of the curriculum.

Utilising Islam as an ideological platform for nationalist movement is common throughout the Muslim world, including by Malay-Muslims in Malaysia.[30] Movements placing Islam at the forefront of the Malay worldview entered another historical phase just before Malaya achieved independence in 1957. Broadly speaking, this period witnessed the emergence of two patterns of struggle: radical and moderate. For example, Haji Wan Ahmad bin Wan Ngah, a famous *'alim* from Perak, was classified as a radical fighter who advocated the idea of Pan-Islamism. Haji Wan Ahmad urged Malaysian pilgrims to strengthen their spiritual bonds with Turkish pilgrims during the *Haj* (Pilgrimage) season. He even strongly urged the Malay-Muslims to substitute British colonial rule for the Turkish administration.

Another interesting development during this period was the formation of the *Parti Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya* or PKMM (Malayan Malays Nationalist Party) in 1945, formed by Mukhtaruddin Laso and Burhanuddin al-Hilmy to oppose British colonialism in Malaya. Despite elements of socialist thinking in the leadership the PKMM succeeded in projecting an image of a Muslim political party which had the support of the majority of Muslims. Through the PKMM Burhanuddin al-Hilmy began to introduce elements of Islamic political thought.

Meanwhile, British administrators made another attempt to maintain their rule with the idea of the Malayan Union in 1946. The proposal was perceived as degrading the sovereignty of the Malay society and their Sultans. The *ulama* and the Malay nationalists protested against the proposal by organizing several mass demonstrations. The Malay *ulama* carried out their own protest by launching a 'long march' of 46 miles on foot on the northern highway from Seberang Prai to Alor Star, the capital state of Kedah. The demonstration had a tremendous impact on Malays in British Malaya because the *ulama* took the opportunity to 'advertise' their anti-Malayan Union campaign by distributing free food, including rice, to villagers and pupils from small towns who were watching the procession.

The tense situation surrounding the Malayan Union and the Malay response led to the formation of the UMNO (United Malays National Organization) in 1946.[31] UMNO began as a loose grouping of *negeri*-based Malay-Muslim political associations. It was formed in response to the urgent need for Pan-Malaysian unity to oppose the British Administration's imposition of the Malayan Union in 1946. Some have argued that the participation of the *ulama* in UMNO was a show of solidarity and not an acceptance of UMNO's ideology. The majority of the *ulama* were dissatisfied with UMNO's ideology which placed Islam second to ethnic Malay

nationalism. They were also opposed to the leftist ideology of some of the Malay leaders. The establishment of *Hizb al-Muslimin* (HAMIM, the Muslim Party) in 1948 marked a clear effort to give greater emphasis to the role of Islam. Ideologically, the basic aims of HAMIM were to achieve independence, to build an Islamic-based society, and to create a *dar al-Islam* (Islamic state) in Malaysia. In addition to these goals HAMIM expressed its readiness to cooperate with other Malay political parties as well as Islamic movements outside the country. HAMIM's activities gained widespread support from the Malay community.

Identifying HAMIM as the greatest threat to British colonialism the British invoked the 1948 Emergency Law by detaining seven leaders, including the party chief, al-Ustaz Abu Baqir. *Ma'had Ihya' as-Sharif*, which based its operation in Gunong Semanggol, Perak, advanced the cause of the Islamic struggle in Malaysia, through the formation of two Islamic organizations, *Pusat Perekonomian SeMalaya* (PEPERMAS, the Centre of the Pan Malayan Economy) and *Majlis Agama Tertinggi Malaya* (MATA, the Supreme Religious Council of Malaya).

Basically, the main aim of PEPERMAS was to demand the rights of Malays in the economic sphere while pushing for a governmental body, elected by the people, to administer the economy. MATA, on the other hand, was intended to handle matters pertaining to the religious aspects of Islam, i.e., arrangements for the *Haj*, collection and distribution of *zakat* (tithe) and fixing the date for the E'id (Muslim feast following the end of Ramadan). MATA also demanded that the sultans surrender their authority over religious matters, and that elected representatives be given seats in all councils in order to safeguard Islamic interests.

The *Persatuan Islam SeTanah Melayu* (PAS or Pan Malayan Islamic Party) was formed in 1951, marking another historical development for Islam in Malaya.[32] PAS was actually formed by the religious section within UMNO that had decided to break away from the party. Ideologically, PAS demanded the creation of an Islamic State. As a popular political party PAS managed to maintain its influence among a majority of the traditional *ulama* and *ustaz* (religious teachers) and students from the traditional religious schools who were mainly influenced by Islamic culture. In spite of the fact that PAS has not succeeded in its struggle to create an Islamic state, its influence remains until today a major force in Malay-Muslim politics.

Following PAS's launch of its Islamic struggle in Malaya UMNO became its arch-rival. It was, however, UMNO that became the premier Malay political party and it successfully formed an alliance with the Chinese and Indian political parties, the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), respectively. The coalition was called the Alliance Party and in the first national

elections in 1955 it proved very successful. Indeed, out of fifty-two contested seats, the Alliance won fifty-one. It has continued to control the political scene since 1957, admittedly in a larger and expanded coalition called the National Front. In confronting PAS's ideology UMNO leaders have rejected outright PAS demands that Islam should shape matters of state. UMNO leaders expressed their Islamic orientation through the Alliance Memorandum to the Reid Constitutional Commission 1956-57, which advocated that Islam be considered the religion of the country, but that religious freedom be guaranteed and the country considered a secular state.

It could be said that any discussion on Islamic-Muslim opposition in Malaysia during the colonial period has to take cognizance of the fact that the Malays as a community then were not a unified and homogenous social entity. They were divided along *negeri* divisions, theological and non-theological issues, educational background, political party affiliations and notions of nations-of-intent.[33]

Each of these factors led to different forms of response and resistance, both towards colonial rule as well as between themselves, which resulted in a divided Malay community. Some were informed by fundamentalist teachings of Islam, a few by modern political radicalism, and the rest simply by a desire to resist Western, secular, colonial rule.[34] Plurality, not fundamentalism, characterised the Malay-Muslim response and resistance to colonialism. This pattern did not change very much after Independence in 1957. Indeed, what we observe is the strengthening of *kerajaan* by modern institutions that moulded and conditioned the social life of the Malays and Islamic cultural practices in Malaysia.

ISLAM AND ISLAMIC EDUCATION
IN POSTCOLONIAL MALAYSIA

It could be said that the Malaysian Constitution became the single most important modern institutional tool that has moulded and conditioned Malaysian Islam, including Islamic education. The Constitution has defined the socio-political space of Islam in Malaysian government and politics. This delineation of the 'Islamic/Muslim' socio-political space, as we observe today, into a rather special space, is rooted in a straightforward constitutional provision in which every Malay person is automatically defined as a Muslim. In other words, religion (read Islam) became the ethnic identifier for the Malays. As a result Malay politics has inevitably become an intra-Muslim factional contestation. Inter-ethnic politics between the Malay, Chinese and Indian and Indian communities since Independence has taken on the character of a struggle over identity politics.

The special position of Islam as provided in the Malaysian Constitution of 1957 is as follows:

- Islam is the religion of the Federation;

- There is no religious head for the whole Federation. The King continues to be the head of the Muslim religion in his own *negeri* and it is provided that he shall be the head of the Muslim religion in Malacca, Penang, in the Federal Territory and in Sabah and Sarawak. Each of the other states has its own ruler as the head of the Islamic religion in that state;

- *Negeri* law may control or restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the Islamic religion;

- Other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation. This means that every religious group has the right to manage its own religious affairs; to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes; and to acquire and own property and hold and administer it in accordance with the law.

In spite of being given a special position Islamic law is in practice subordinate to the civil law. Its scope is limited to family law and Muslim religious offences. Hence the *Shari'ah* courts have a limited jurisdiction.[35] There is no provision in the Malaysian Constitution for the jurisdiction and powers of the *Shari'ah* courts or for the appointment and discipline of their judicial and legal officers. It is therefore clear that in Malaysia, Islamic law is not applied to the whole community nor is it applied in its pure form. Various *negeri* legislations in Malaysia, in the main, deal with the administration of Muslim laws and not with the substantive Islamic laws.[36] It could thus be said that the status of *Shari'ah* law in Malaysia since Independence is largely symbolic, rather than substantive. It fulfils a bureaucratic purpose but not as a set of laws that function to inculcate fundamental Islamic values and way of life.

Furthermore, because the administration of Islamic matters and Malay customs is not centralised at the Federal level but is under the jurisdiction of each *negeri* religious bureaucracy and its ruler, the interpretation of some parts of the *Shari'ah* laws differs from *negeri* to *negeri*.[37] This independence is fiercely guarded by each *negeri* to the extent that there have been occasions when the commencement date of the Ramadan fasting has differed in the various *negeri* because each used different methods to ascertain the arrival of the new moon; some used astronomical techniques while

others chose to physically sight the new moon. It could be said that the legal position of Islam in post-colonial Malaysia is thus characterised by fragmentation and pluralization. However this pluralization has a 'colonial-modern', not an 'Islamic' origin.

The plurality of Islamic teachings and legal practices in Malaysia is further complicated by an equally pluralistic Islamic education system available in the country. Interest in Islamic education has been dominated by the belief that such education has a direct bearing on the future of the *ummah*, or Muslim community. Accordingly the federal government and the *negeri* governments have developed their own separate official policies for Islamic education, supposedly serving the interests of each entity.

In the national education system since 1956 Islam has been taught as single subject, namely 'Islamic Religious Knowledge.'[38] It was, however, not a compulsory subject. However it has been observed that the subject has three major weaknesses. First, it lacks a comprehensive examination on the subject in an integrated manner, including cognitive, attitudinal and practical knowledge which has made it a 'lightweight' subject; second, it lacks a coherent and integrated, syllabus of what should be taught as "Islamic Religious Knowledge", including the ritual aspects such as prayer, *zakat*, pilgrimage and the other basic articles of faith; and third, there is a lack of comparative religious study. In short, teaching the subject is seen as paying lip service to the Federal government. Hence the ironic situation has developed in which a course on Islamic religious knowledge is absent of any Islamic religious instruction.

From the 1950s and 1960s at the *negeri* level both *pondok* and *madrasah* began to lose their influence in many parts of the country, particularly in the Malay-dominated *negeri* of Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis. However, the more pertinent factors that thus far have not been investigated and elaborated are the internal workings of the different religious schools in the various *negeri*. These include the details of their organization, the type of pedagogy applied, the curriculum and syllabuses that have been adopted, the kinds of textbooks made available, the teachers' training and the employment opportunities of the school-leavers. This lacuna both in facts and analyses has rendered most discussions of Islamic education weak and hovering at a superficial, general level, as Rosnani Hashim has argued.[39] The internal working of these religious schools at the grassroots is more complex and complicated than most have imagined. Apart from weaknesses in the curriculum, Malay parents are less willing to send their children to these schools because better job opportunities are available to their children through education offered by the government. It appears that only those who have failed the national education system tend to enroll

in these schools. In other words, Islamic religious education is regarded as having less value compared to other secular subjects.

Yet at the same time there is an opposite trend. Since the 1970s with the revival of interest in Islam and eventually in the 1980s through a conscious effort at 'Islamization' conducted by the Malaysian government since the 1980s, Islamic religious education, both at the federal and *negeri* level, has received an unprecedented boost. The number of government-funded primary and secondary religious schools has increased many fold. Tertiary Islamic education has expanded, Islamic faculties in local public universities have been enlarged, and new Islamic university colleges specialising in Islamic education have been established to cater for the growing student population. This trend has reduced considerably the number of Malaysian students enrolling in Islamic tertiary institutions in the Middle East and South Asia.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Islam in the Malay world in general and Malaysia, in particular, like elsewhere in the world, is an embedded form, in the sense that it is not in the pristine form that was practiced in Mecca and Medinah during Muhammad's time or during the rule of the four Caliphs that followed after Muhammad's demise. The embedding process is a complex one because when it first arrived around the 12th century the indigenous peoples of the Malay world were already practitioners of animist beliefs, Hinduism and Buddhism, all of which have become intertwined and hybridized articulating local Malay world features, both in their tangible forms (such as architecture) and intangible forms (spoken in the Malay language). Islam entered into the lives of the peoples of the region and was inevitably shaped and reshaped by the extant historical-structural mould.

The teaching of Islam at the early initial stages of its introduction in most parts of the world has always been very strongly dependent on the 'oral method'–reading aloud the Qur'an, memorizing, oral interpretation, and open discussion. Indeed, the faith was originally communicated in this way by Muhammad, could not read or write but was nonetheless able to build a large number of followers in a short time. It could be said that Islam was suited to the illiterate who subsequently learnt to read and write the Arabic alphabets which would enable them to read the Qur'an and other Islamic texts. This, in turn, through the use of the same Arabic alphabet, would lead to the creation of texts in Persian, Urdu and Malay, that would unify millions of followers in those linguistic constituencies under the same faith.

The *pondok* school tradition in the Malay world, especially in Malaysia, is largely oral-based and teaches Islamic theology. Besides memorizing the Qur'an to become a *hafiz,* students came to also learn Jawi (the Arabic script used for Malay language) and eventually to read the Qur'an and other *kitab.*

The teaching of Islam in the written form developed much later in the Malay world. During the colonial period *madrasahs* were established which taught Islamic theological subjects along with modern science and mathematics. The combination of theological subjects and modern ones was the result of both administrative and market demand. Graduates from such schools were employed in the public service and especially in the religious offices of every province or state. They served the colonial state as well as the Muslim population.

In the postcolonial period in Malaysia there has been a huge expansion of Islamic education combined with modern subjects, which has led to the establishment of Islamic Faculties in local universities and the setting up of the International Islamic University Malaysia in 1983. In the 1990s Islamic education was mainstreamed with Islamic economics, banking and finance. *Shari'ah* lawyers serving the *Shari'ah* courts have also increased in number. Those studying law in Malaysia today can opt to specialize in Islamic law irrespective of one's religion. Islamic financial institutions are now viewed as a viable alternative to conventional ones. In 1997 the University College Islam was established, and in 2007 it was up-graded to a fully-fledged university.

The re-embedding of Islam into the colonial mould was the turning point in the expansion and transformation of Islamic education in Malaysia. From a purely theological focus it has become 'modernised' and mainstreamed with secular subjects. Both the size of the student population and the number of schools and institutions of higher education specializing in Islamic education have also expanded. More significant is the fact that their content and curriculum have become rather pluralized and their graduates more employable in the job market.

Endnotes

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2   William Roff, "Islam Obscured? Reflections on Studies of Islam and Society in Southeast Asia", *Archipel* 29 (1985): 7-34.

3   KERAJAAN refers to the Malay traditional polity. The root word is the Sanskrit RAJA. When the prefix KE and the suffix AN are added it becomes another noun, KERAJAAN, which literally means, the polity of the RAJA. The use of capital letters, in this instance, in KERAJAAN, is to indicate its pre-colonial form, where religion and state were fused. The spelling of kerajaan in lower case here means a polity in which church and state were separated.

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23 Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*; Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*.

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25 See, Ooi Swee Lee, "The First Colonial Governor: Sir Harry Ord, 1867-1873," (B.A. Hons thesis, University of Malaya, 1959), p. 23.

26 See, Shaharil Talib, *After its Own Image*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 18

27 Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*.

28 *Ibid*

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CHAPTER EIGHT

ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAMS IN MALAYSIA'S HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS: RESPONSES TO CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES OF MODERNITY, GLOBALIZATION AND POST 9/11

Muhammad Nur Manuty

Modernity, globalization and the international situation following September 11 2001 have been the focus of intense debate among Malaysian scholars of Islam in recent years. Countless conferences, seminars, and workshops discussing these issues have been organized. While the administrators of Islamic Studies programs in Malaysia's institutions of higher learning have a history of being generally quite dynamic and pragmatic, nonetheless these recent global changes have prompted them to again review some of the programs and courses offered in Islamic Studies so as to ensure that a new breed of Muslim scholars or `*ulama* can be produced who are able meet these new challenges. This chapter will outline some of the changes that have taken place in Islamic Studies in a number of Malaysia's leading higher education institutions, drawing on the observations of the administrators of some of the programs themselves.

ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAMS IN MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITIES

The term "Islamic Studies" as employed in this paper denotes the systematic study of Islam both as a religion (*al-din*) and as a civilization (*al-hadarah*) through the integration of the major disciplines of *Usul al-Din* (Islamic theology), *Shari`ah* (divine law), *Akhlaq* (ethics), with *dakwah* (Islamic missionary work), Arabic language and its literature, Islamic history and civilization. It includes study programs offered at the undergraduate and postgraduate level in a university, faculty, institute, college or academy.[1]

Historically, an Islamic Studies program was first introduced in then independent Malaya at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, with the formation of the Department of Islamic Studies in 1959. Professor Dr. Muhammad 'Abdul Rauf, a renowned Islamic scholar from Egypt, was appointed as the first head of this department. Later, in 1981, the University of Malaya expanded its Islamic Studies program from a departmental level program into a full fledged faculty known as the Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya (AISMU). The academy comprised the following faculties - *Shari`ah*, *Usul al-Din*, Islamic Education and a Pre-Academy Program in Nilam Puri, Kelantan. AISMU offers BA degrees in *Shari`ah*, *Usul al-Din* and Islamic education. It started its MA programs several years ago, which was followed by a PhD program a few years later.[2]

The second Islamic Studies program in Malaysia, established in 1970, was the Faculty of Islamic Studies at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in Petaling Jaya, Selangor. This faculty is made up of five departments, namely *Usuluddin* and Philosophy, *Shari`ah*, Arabic Studies and Islamic Civilization, *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* Studies, *Da`wah* and Leadership Studies. It also offers MA and PhD programs in addition to the BA. From its formation Malay language (Bahasa Malaysia) was the official language of instruction. Nevertheless, the use of Arabic has remained important until today.[3]

Another significant development in the Islamic Studies programs in Malaysia was the establishment of the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) in June 1983. A new mode of studying Islam was conceived and actualized in the university's *Kulliyyah* (Faculty) of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences. From 1983 until 1990 Islamic Studies became a core university subject which compelled all IIUM students from various faculties to study fundamental subjects in Islam such as Qur'an, *Hadith*, *sirah* (Biography of the Prophet Muhammad), Islamic theology, *shari'ah*, and *akhlaq*, in the Center for Fundamental Knowledge, better known as CFK. Professor Mohd. Kamal Hasan became the First Dean of CFK. In

1990, Dr. Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman, one of the founders of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), an Islamic think-tank based in Virginia, USA, became the second Rector of IIUM (1990-2000). Abdul Hamid introduced a new type of Islamic Studies program which he named *Kulliyyah* of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences under his supervision was oriented towards the idea of the Islamization of knowledge, namely, that revealed knowledge subjects such as the Qur'an, the Sunnah and Sirah, must become the principle guidance for human sciences subjects which are in their essence heavily influenced by Western rational philosophy and methodology.[4] Meanwhile, Abdul Hamid asserted the importance of the methodological study of subjects of Islamic revealed knowledge based on both the Qur'an and Sunnah sources, and the critical examination of the classical works. Only through proper Islamic methodological study could IRK students produce new thinking (*tajdid al-fikry*). Abdul Hamid also declared that the three core departments in IRK, namely, the Department of Qur'an and Sunnah, the Department of Usuluddin and Comparative Religion, and the Department of Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh (the Department of Islamic Ruling and the Science of Jurisprudence), did not aim to follow the models of al-Azhar, Egypt, or Madinah al-Munuwwarah, Saudi Arabia. The *Kulliyyah*'s M.A and PhD programs have been offered for over a decade now and some important academic research has been carried out by postgraduate students, such as the importance of understanding *maqasid shari'ah* (purposes of *shari'ah*), new thinking in the study of Tawhid as the guiding principle for the Islamization of knowledge, new methodologies in the study of *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis) and relating studies to modern necessities.[5]

Another important development in Islamic Studies programs in Malaysia was the establishment in 1987 of the "Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization", better known as ISTAC. It was founded by Professor Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, a prominent Malaysian Islamic scholar and philosopher. From its inception ISTAC aimed at providing a postgraduate studies and research program with the objective of training scholars and intellectual leaders to play creative roles in the restoration of Islamic thought and civilization to its rightful place.[6]

In 1997 the Ministry of Education set up another Islamic Studies program, the College University of Islam Malaysia, better known in Bahasa Malaysia as the "Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia" or KUIM, in Nilai, Negeri Sembilan. In 2007 KUIM changed its name and status to become USIM, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia. Originally USIM planned to focus on producing purely scholars from the Islamic Studies program, following the pattern of the al-Azhar University model. However USIM finally revised its academic programs. USIM now follows almost the same model

as IIUM, Gombak, Selangor. Unlike IIUM, however, USIM admits only religious stream students. Yet these students are not only enrolled in Islamic Studies programs but are also taking law, medicine, dentistry, business and management, information technology and computer science, and languages. Another important niche of the USIM is their establishment of the Institute of the World Fatwa (INFAD) which aims at examining *fatwas* (Islamic rulings) from all parts in the world.[7]

SOME SELECTED ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAMS: A BRIEF SURVEY

In what follows I will outline the structure of a number of academic programs in Islamic Studies (mainly at the undergraduate level) offered by a selection of Malaysian higher education institutions as a way of demonstrating an overall picture of the dynamism and practicality in the study of Islam in Malaysia.

The Islamic Academy, University of Malaya (AISMU)

The Islamic Academy of the University of Malaya (UM) is based on the teaching philosophy that the best form of academic training for their students is an integrated academic program with Arabic language as its primary medium. As a case in point, for students specializing in the BA *Shari`ah*, apart from the completion of 15 credit hours in courses such as Islamic Civilization and Asian Civilization, he or she also has to take another 30 credit hours in compulsory *Shari'ah* core courses, i.e., Introduction to *Shari`ah*, *Nazariyyat al-Hukum* (theories on Islamic Legal Rulings), *Fiqh al'Ibadat* (*Fiqh* of Islamic Rituals), etc. One of the unique features in *Shrai'ah* studies is specialization in the following programs: i) Department of *Fiqh* and *Usul al-Fiqh*; ii) Department of *Shari`ah* and Law; iii) Department of *Shari'ah* and Economy; iv) Department of *Shari`ah* and Management; v) Department of *Siyasah Shar`iyyah* (Religious Political Science); and vi) Department of *Falak* (Astronomy).[8] Students specializing in courses offered in the Department of *Fiqh* and *Usul al-Fiqh*, for instance, are required to take fundamental courses (51 credit hours) as part of their specialization. Among these courses are the following: *Manahaj al-Fuqaha'* (Methodology of Muslim Jurists), *Fiqh al-Jinayat* (*Fiqh* on Criminology), *Fiqh al-Zakat* (*Fiqh* on Alms Giving), Studies on *Hudud* Laws, etc. Yet it should be noted that students are given the opportunity to select up to 15 credit hours in other related courses, such as *Fiqh* on

Women's Affairs, *Fiqh* on Consumerism, and *Fiqh* on *al-Ikhtilaf* (*Fiqh* on Conflict of Opinion).[9]

In AISMU's Department of *Shari`ah* and Laws, among the compulsory subjects for students are the following: Introduction to the Legal System of Malaysia, Malaysian Islamic Administration Laws, Criminal Law, Contract Law, Islamic Family Administration Law, etc. At the same time students also have the opportunity to select 15 credit hours in courses such as Islamic Law and Gender, Law and Violence towards Women, the Islamic Judicial system, etc. As for programs in the Department of *Shari'ah* and Economy, students have to take a number of compulsory subjects, such as Introduction to Islamic Economics, Introduction to Economics, the Islamic Banking System, Principals of Accountancy, the Malaysian Economy and Contemporary Issues, and others. In the elective courses for non-compulsory subjects, students are able to select courses such as Conventional Economic Thought, Islamic Principles of Taxation, the Islamic Capital Market, Econometrics and Issues in Islamic Economics.[10] Based on this overview of the wide range of *Shari'ah* programs in AISMU, the Islamic Studies curriculum designers in this institution seem to have the aim of making *Shari'ah* subjects more acceptable to the local and global market.

Faculty of Islamic Studies, National University of Malaysia

From its inception the Faculty of Islamic Studies at the National University of Malaysia (NUM)[11] had two principal objectives: (1) to produce well-trained graduates with skills in the field of Islamic Studies; and (2) to create a new generation whose understanding of Islam is sound and comprehensive, who have a healthy way of thinking, commitment, and sense of responsibility towards the nation and desire to create a disciplined society in line with the principles of Islam and its philosophy.[12]

Based on the above objectives the Faculty of Islamic Studies has introduced a wide range of courses. Let us examine the academic programs offered by the Department of *Usuluddin* and Philosophy. For the B.A. degree, students have to take about 60 courses totalling 110 credit hours. Apart from taking foundation courses in Islamic Studies, such as *Usuluddin* (Islamic Theology), *Akhlaq* (morals) and *Tasawwuf* (mysticism), *Fiqh `Ibadah* (Ritual Fiqh) and *Mu`amalat* (Social Transaction), Methodology of *Fiqh*, Methodology of the *Qur'an* and *al-Hadith,* Contemporary Islamic Thought, Islamic Leadership and Islamic Management, undergraduate students are also required to take foundation courses offered by the department. These compulsory courses comprise the following: the Study of *Qur'anic* Exegesis, Islamic Philosophy, the Study of *Hadith,* `*Ilmu Kalam* (Islamic Theology), Comparative Religion,

Modern Philosophy, Contemporary Study of the *Qur'an*, and Logic and Critical Thinking. Apart from these courses a student specializing in *Usuluddin* and Philosophy also has to take the normal compulsory university courses, namely, Islamic Civilisation and *Kenegaraan* (Nationhood) and General Studies (*Pengajian Umum*). Students are also required to choose a number of elective courses related to the study of religion, such as the Sociology of Religion, the Anthropology of Religion, and the Contemporary Study of Religion.[13]

Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (IIUM)

The International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) set up its *Kulliyyah* of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage in 1990. It offered three academic programs at the BA and postgraduate levels, namely, Islamic Theology and Comparative Religion, *Fiqh* (Islamic Legal Rulings) and *Usul al-Fiqh* (the Science of Islamic Jurisprudence) and *Qur'an* and *Sunnah studies.* For the BA program in Islamic Theology and Islamic Thought an undergraduate student has to take 36 credit hours or 12 subjects in foundation courses such as the *Qur'an*, the Islamic '*Aqidah*, Islamic Ethics, Sciences of the *Qur'an*, Sciences of the *Hadith*, Creative Thinking and Problem-Solving, etc. Apart from these subjects students are required to take another 20 subjects which are equivalent to 60 credit hours. Among these courses are the following: Issues in *Tasawwuf, al-Firaq* (sectarianism), *Usuluddin* 1 & 2, Contemporary Moral Issues, Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought, Critical Review of Philosophy in Islam, History of Western Philosophy, and the Philosophy of Science. Students must also choose 4 courses (12 credit hours) in elective courses such as Introduction to Economics, Introduction to Law, Parenting, and the Geography of the Muslim World. Finally, students also take 4 subjects in general skills courses.[14]

In the Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization or ISTAC (also at IIUM), the majority of courses offered follows the previous curriculum established in the time of Professor Syed Muhammad Naquib al-'Attas, who founded ISTAC in 1987 and was its First Founder-Director. The present curriculum provides postgraduate areas of research and concentration comprising Islamic and other Civilizations, Philosophy, Theology, Ethics and Contemporary Issues, Islamic Spirituality and Contemporary Society, Islamic Science and the Contemporary Muslim World: Regions and Issues. The strong feature of ISTAC's academic curriculum is reflected in its ability to provide famous academics who have a high international reputation.[15]

Faculty of Leadership and Management (USIM)

At the Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) several integrated courses have been introduced as in other Islamic higher education institutions. Perhaps one can examine the present Faculty of Leadership and Management (FLM). Normally, Islamic higher learning institutions like to repeat the *da'wah* programs in some Middle Eastern universities. Nevertheless, at USIM the main idea of the FLM is to produce Muslim preachers (*du'at*) who are well equipped with specific skills like communication, management, psychology, etc. According to Professor Mat Asin Dollah, one of the founders of FLM, USIM believes that FLM's academic programs are able to produce resilient Muslim preachers who are able to face the onslaught of modern and global challenges.[16]

RESPONSES BY MUSLIM INTELLECTUALS TO THE CHALLENGES OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAMS

Although numerous prominent Malaysian scholars in Islamic Studies have recently devoted considerable attention to issues of modernity, globalization, and the post-September 11 2001 international situation, it should not be forgotten that debate about the necessity for change in Islamic Studies curricula offered by Malaysia's higher education institutions has been taking place since the early 1980s, and even earlier. In an important paper delivered in 1978 the prominent Islamic Studies scholar and current Rector of IIUM, Professor Mohd. Kamal Hasan, addressed the issue of the place of Islamic Studies in contemporary Malaysia.[17] He called on the authorities not to posit Islamic Studies at the periphery of Malaysian education and society since its main purpose was to serve the Creator (Allah swt). He argued that courses on Islam for students of Islamic Studies had to clearly explain the relationship between the universe, man, society, historical change, and contemporary reality. The approach of such courses must take into consideration prevailing thought patterns and categories of thought within their rational, secular, and empirical setting.[18]

Almost two decades later in 1997 Professor Mohd. Kamal Hasan delivered another impressive paper discussing the direction of Islamic Studies in contemporary Southeast Asia at an international conference on Islamic Studies in Southeast Asia, organized by the newly established College of Islamic Studies at Prince of Songkhla University in southern Thailand. He declared the necessity for scholars of Islamic

Studies to carry out several levels of reform and renewal so that Islamic Studies could play a more effective role within Muslim Southeast Asia. Among the most important steps that needed to be immediately taken were the following. First, Islamic Studies needed to produce not only a profound critique of the conventional ideology of development (or of "catching up with the West") but also more up-to-date and relevant courses of *al-mu`amalat* (transactions). Second, *fiqh al-siyasah* (the science of governance in Islam) required reform as a result of the global movement for democratization, human rights, and the empowerment of oppressed sections of human society. The world has left behind the classical classifications and formulations of *dar al-Islam* (the abode of Islam), *dar al-harb* (the abode of war), and *dar al-'ahd* (the abode of covenant) and new realities were forcing Muslim scholars to theorize new conceptualizations of Islamic jurisprudence, such as *fiqh jadid* (new approaches to the study of *fiqh*). New subjects were being developed, such as *fiqh* of priorities (*fiqh al-awlawiyyat*), a discipline which emphasizes the importance of learning and doing things which are important to the current Muslim situation. For example, forming a knowledge-based society is considered more important than implementing *hudud* law. Another new subject of *fiqh* is *fiqh* for minorities (*fiqh aqalliyyat*), which focuses on issues of rulings and principles where Muslims are a minority in non-Islamic countries. There is also what is known as *fiqh siyasah shar'iyyah*, a comprehensive discipline which explains different principles in dealing with many contemporary aspects such as politics, administration, economy, society, and so forth.[19]

The recent phenomenon of globalization has caught the attention of another prominent Malaysian scholar of Islamic studies, Siddiq Fadzil, the present Rector of the College of Darul Hikmah, a private Islamic college run by ABIM (one of the leading Islamic movements in Malaysia).[20] Discussing the dangers of globalization for the education sector Siddiq Fadzil predicted that the current trend towards the commercialization of higher education would eventually result in intellectual centers becoming irrelevant to the aspirations of the *ummah*. Institutions of higher learning were becoming out of touch with the Muslim community because they served only the capitalists. Consequently, the thinking of the *ummah* is being moulded not by scholarship in the intellectual domain but rather by media propaganda.[21] Another negative effect of globalization was the missing dimension of the close relationship between teachers and students. Siddiq Fadzil posed the following question to advocates of globalization: what would happen to future generations of Malaysians when the student-teacher relationship no longer involved eye-to-eye contact? He pointed out the concerns of the noted social forecaster John Naisbitt, who argued that the present phenomenon of "high tech" without "high touch" was harmful to the dig-

nity of man as intoxication with technology risked rendering man ignorant of his own tastes and consciousness.[22]

Undeniably the aftermath of the September 11 2001 attacks on the United States has been a shock to scholars of Islamic Studies in Malaysia and to the field itself. Siddiq Fazil predicted that the tragic event would have unfortunate implications for Islamic Studies programs in the West, particularly in the United States. Some scholars worry that their hopes to see a new, more objective form of Orientalism emerge in the West may have been dashed. Rather, as the late Edward Said predicted, it appears that a new form of Orientalism may be taking hold, which serves the interests of American neo-colonialism. In the face of these bleak events and the challenges that they pose a new paradigm of thinking must be sought in Islamic Studies, where programs must be strong, relevant to present realities, responsive to economic development, have strong appeal at the global level, and, most importantly, have the ability to reveal the true beauty of Islam. To realize this task there is an urgent need to develop a framework of Occidentalism (*al-istighrab*) with a healthy knowledge methodology in order to marginalize the present trend towards neo-Orientalism.[23]

Emeritus Professor Dr. Osman Bakar, a well known Muslim scientist and philosopher, has expressed similar concerns to those of Siddiq Fadzil. He argues that it is our duty to give special attention to this American agenda. He has suggested that Islamic Studies programs ought to maintain their traditional curricula while at the same time offering more courses on contemporary subjects, including special courses on Islam and the West. With this kind of curriculum we can defend the Islamic identity of the *ummah* which is under constant attack. In reality, the condition for success is having confidence in our own Islamic identity.[24]

In sum, it is clear that contemporary scholars in Islamic Studies face great challenges in designing strong, sustainable Islamic Studies curricula in the mist of the apparently unstoppable wave of globalization. Many conditions must be fulfilled in order to ensure success. Among these are those pointed out by Kamal Hassan in his call for the reform of Islamic Studies in Southeast Asia: "the reform agenda of Islamic Studies obviously is contingent upon a *tajdid* frame of mind, a determination to achieve quality of higher education and research output despite the odds, a redesign of curriculum, a reinventing of the academician and an anchorage in a new culture of quality and excellence."[25] Now, we will examine briefly some of the efforts developed by these Islamic Studies institutions in reforming their Islamic Studies curricula.

Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage, IIUM

Wan Sobri Wan Yusuf, the Deputy Dean (Student Affairs) of the *Kulliyyah* of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (IRKH) at the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM), was in the first batch of graduates from IIUM in 1987. He echoes the thinking of Kamal Hassan. According to Wan Sobri, courses in IRKH are designed to specifically address modern ideological problems and challenges. One of the main priorities of IRKH is how to actualize the vision of the Islamization of knowledge in the human sciences through human sciences departments. Wan Sobri sees many courses offered in IRKH as being dynamic in nature. The innovative nature of the program is such that it could even be said that such courses are not available in the established traditional Islamic universities in the Arab world, such as al-Azhar in Cairo or the Islamic University of Madinah, Saudi Arabia. For instance, IIUM requires all of its students to take a university-wide course called Tawhid and Methodology of Sciences. Clearly, this course is important in teaching the idea of *tawhid* (unity of God) and its relation to revealed knowledge (*'ulum naqliyy*) and acquired knowledge (*'ulum 'aqliyy*).[26]

According to Wan Sobri, the strength of the IRKH curriculum lies in its multi-disciplinary approach, where the integration of knowledge becomes the main objective. Wan Sobri is fully confident that graduates of IRKH can adjust themselves to whatever societal settings. It is very encouraging to see graduates of IRKH in the process of making their names as *'ulama* and Muslim professionals with versatile Islamic features not only in the local scene but more and more in the international arena. Today, graduates of IRKH (IIUM) have been incorporated as executive officers in the Malaysian Civil Service and Diplomatic Service because of their command of English and Arabic. Another encouraging development is that some IRKH graduates, particularly foreigners, have been able to get excellent jobs in their respective countries. One foreign IRKH graduate has been recognized as one of the most respectable scholars on Islamic *shari`ah* and is a member of many important international *fatwa* committees.[27]

With regard to the issue of postmodernism in the Muslim world Wan Sobri is confident that IRKH courses have the ability to face up to such fashionable trends. He makes no apology for reaffirming that authority in religion must be entrusted to the *'ulama* as prescribed in the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. However, Wan Sobri also recognizes the fact that *'ulama* today cannot monopolize their religious knowledge without listening to scholars from different disciplines, i.e. economics, finance, biology, etc. Academicians who have no proper training in the social sciences are therefore

required to undergo special courses, while academic staff in the social sciences are reciprocally required to attend special advanced classes in Islamic Studies.[28]

Wan Sobri points out that the IRKH Curriculum Committee is tasked to comprehensively review its curriculum every two years, during which it seeks academic advice from prominent Islamic scholars in different subjects from different parts of the world. In spite of these academic achievements Wan Sobri admits that some courses in IRKH, such as the study of the *Qur'an and Sunnah*, require more specific attention. Some issues relating to the classical study of these two foundational subjects, as discussed by certain prominent scholars such as the late Shaikh Muhammad al-Ghazali, Shaikh Yusuf al-Qardawi, Syaikh Taha Jabir al-'Ilwani, Fazlur Rahman and others, need to be widely exposed to students. According to Wan Sobri, these two important subjects must be studied using a contextual framework, rather than through history alone.[29]

Another important contribution of IRKH according to Wan Sabri is in the field of comparative religion. In fact, IRKH graduates are equipped with a strong foundation in comparative religious study. There are both intellectual and practical justifications for this program. First, it is in line with the Islamic intellectual tradition in which noted Muslim scholars were also scholars of other religions, such as al-Biruni, Ibn Hazm, al-Naubakhti, among others. The IRKH has also drawn inspiration from a number of prominent contemporary Muslim scholars who have established programs in comparative religious studies, such as the late Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi of Temple University, Fazlur Rahman of Chicago University, Seyyed Hossein Nasr of George Washington University, Mahmoud Ayoub from Temple University, and others. Second, Malaysia is a multi-racial and multi-religious country and is thus in a unique position for scholars of Islamic Studies to easily study at first hand local religious traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Sikhism, and Christianity. It is hoped that through this comparative religious studies program a healthy tradition of comparative religions may one day flourish in Malaysia, as was once the case in Andalusia.[30]

Muddathir 'Abdel Rahim, Professor of Islamic Political Thought at ISTAC, regards ISTAC's curriculum as perhaps one of the best programs in post-graduate studies in the Islamic world. Having taught in many universities in the Middle East and Western universities Muddathir attributes this dynamism to the academic leadership of Professor Syed Muhammad Naquib al-'Attas, the Founder Director of ISTAC. He views the curriculum's strengths as lying in its core courses in Theology, Islamic Philosophy, Islamic Culture, Islamic Civilization and the Social Sciences. During the directorship of Al-'Attas ISTAC managed to attract many prominent international

Islamic scholars. In response to criticisms of ISTAC from some quarters that it is a fortress of classical Islamic thought, Muddathir defends ISTAC for the way it has produced what he regards as a remarkable academic achievement in blending contemporary issues with the traditional study of the Islamic classical works, whereby postgraduate students are able to master the appropriate methodology in Islamic Sciences. They too, says Muddathir, are competing in reading and understanding selected great Islamic classical works such as Hujjatul Islam al-Ghazali, Imam al-As'ari, Al-Razi, al-Biruni, Imam al-Shafi'e, Ibn Rushd and so forth. As a result of this policy ISTAC's academic contributions have been internationally recognized as one of the most prestigious institutions for postgraduate Islamic Studies in the world. ISTAC has been able to produce a number of excellent Islamic scholars in various fields. Among the names that can be mentioned here are Mustafa Cerich, an Islamic scholar in Islamic theology who is now *Rais al-'Ulama* to the Government of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kamar Oniah Kamaruzzaman, an Islamic scholar of comparative religion in IRKH, IIUM, and Ugi Suharto, a well-known Islamic scholar in the History of Islamic Economics at IIUM, Gombak, Selangor. In addition, ISTAC has published a considerable amount of high quality scholarship in Islamic Studies produced by their scholars in various disciplines, some of which has been translated into world languages.[31]

In response to the issues of modernity ISTAC successfully organized a major international symposium on "Islam and the Challenge of Modernity" in August, 1994 which Professor Syed Muhammad Naquib al-'Attas, the then Founder-Director of ISTAC, described as unique not only in this region of Southeast Asia, but perhaps also in the contemporary Muslim world. The symposium brought together diverse scholars from different theological, legal, and intellectual leanings both from within and outside the Islamic tradition.[32]

Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia)

In illustrating the achievements of the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FIS) at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), one of the faculty's founders, Faisal Othman, pointed out that the Faculty has been successfully producing Muslim professionals since 1974, many of whom currently occupy influential posts in Malaysia's public sector. In retrospect, the Faculty's decision in its early days to make the Islamic Studies curriculum flexible, in contrast to the rigidity of some traditional institutions, has been proved to have been correct. It has ensured that many of its graduates who are

at present scholars of Islamic Studies were exposed to Western methodologies in the social sciences. Today the command of such methodologies is clearly recognized as an asset to graduates of Islamic Studies.[33]

At the same time, however, the FIS does have a number of concerns about certain aspects of the FIS's programs. For example, Faisal admitted the fact that declining standards in Arabic language among the present FIS undergraduates has tarnished the image of FIS. He also pointed out that in his opinion it is not necessary to design new courses to face the challenges of globalization, modernity and post-9/11. For him, students must command the Arabic language since Arabic is the most important tool in understanding the *Qur'an*, the *Sunnah*, and other aspects of the Islamic heritage. Nevertheless, Faisal admitted the importance of knowing English in order to give undergraduate students the confidence and courage to be in the mainstream of national and international affairs. He expressed his deep concern about the somewhat simplistic attitudes towards current global events among the Faculty members which may hinder the healthy on-going process towards reforming the Islamic Studies curriculum. For example, the contemporary challenges of modernity, globalization and post-9/11 have seemingly not stimulated some scholars to thinking beyond the oft-repeated but simplistic mantra that "Islam is the solution" (*al-Islam huwa al-hallu*). This sort of thinking is all too apparent when they dismiss categorically the modern thinking expounded by some contemporary modern Muslim scholars such as Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi (USA), Fazlur Rahman (USA), Hassan Hanafi (Egypt), Mohammad Fathi Osman (USA), and others as *kufr*. Although a legitimate criticism can be made that there are some fundamental flaws in the arguments of some of these scholars from a Qur'anic and Hadith point of view, nevertheless, some of their critiques have some legitimacy. Such simplistic dismissals of important arguments suggest that these academicians in FIS may lack both courage and a sound Islamic methodology.[34]

Faisal also mentioned that the FIS in UKM and other Islamic studies institutions in the country had been pressured indirectly by some concerned quarters, both outside and inside the country, to review some Islamic Studies subjects such as *jihad* in the context of Qur'anic and Sunnah studies. This was in response to the aftermath of the September 11 2001 and the international "war on terror" led by the USA and its allies. Faisal reaffirmed his conviction that the doctrine of *jihad* taught in FIS is strictly in line with the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The principles are clear, and scholars in Islamic Studies have not in any way been required to change their teachings on *jihad* because of pressures from outsiders. On the bigger issue of the challenge of globalization to the FIS, Faisal seems unconcerned. The

Faculty's main focus, as he sees it, is not to produce a large number of *'ulama* for the global market but rather for local consumption. Faisal justified his argument on this point with a verse from the Qur'an in which God says: *"And it is not proper for the believers to go out to fight (jihad) all together. Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they (who are left behind), may get instructions in (Islamic religion), and that they may warn their people when they return to them, so that they may be aware (of evil)."* (Surah al-Taubah: 122).[35]

The Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya

The Academy of Islamic Studies at the University of Malaya (AISMU) is recognized as one of the most advanced higher learning institutions of its kind in Malaysia. Over a considerable period of time it has been providing new and innovative programs in Islamic Studies to its students. It currently offers four BA degrees with 16 specializations, including the recent BA degree in Applied Science and Islamic Studies. Ruzman Md. Noor, presently Deputy Dean for Undergraduate and Student Affairs at the Academy, explains that the rationale of AISMU's dynamic curriculum is to enable its students to acquire a command of courses in Islamic heritage (*al-turath al-Islami*) through the use of classical and modern Arabic language, while at the same time ensuring that students also take numerous applied courses. The ability of AISMU to repeatedly develop original courses in different faculties demonstrates a considerable degree of creative thinking among its academic staff. For example, AISMU is the only Islamic higher learning institution in the country to offer a special course on Islam and Gender. Some new courses are deeply rooted in the local context, such as Islam and Malay Society and Culture, Political Islam in Malaysia, Politics and Malaysian Society, etc.[36]

Ruzman attributes the success of this integrated approach in AISMU's Islamic Studies program to its academic integrity. In spite of the fact that their academic staff come from both traditional and modern backgrounds, they have been able to cooperate to produce a practical model of Islamic Studies that is relevant to contemporary Malaysian society. That is, neither the model of al-Azhar, in Cairo, Egypt nor al-Madinah al-Munawwarah in Saudi Arabia, is absorbed completely into AISMU's curriculum. Rather, the curriculum takes into account the distinct social, political, and religious setting in Malaysia. As for the issue of the Salafi orientation among some lecturers who are graduates from Madinah al-Munawwarah University, Ruzman believes that these lecturers have not created major problems among students, particularly in the sphere of Islamic theology. Despite the fact that the Salafi have

some reservations about the thought of certain famous Muslim theologians such as Imam al-Asy'ari, Imam al-Ghazali, Imam al-Juwayni and others, they acknowledge the fact that the views on Islamic theology of such famous Muslim theologians have been adopted in Malaysia a long time ago within Islamic Studies centers, both traditional and modern. Ruzman believes that AISMU has the potential to train competent *'ulama* imbued with the spirit of *tajdid* (renewal) in their thinking and actions. This conviction can be attributed to the fact that AISMU provides ample time for its students to master Arabic language in the AISMU's Preparatory Islamic Studies Center located in Kota Bharu in the state of Kelantan. In addition, AISMU's *shari`ah* program is also strong in terms of content and methodology and is recognized by many prominent scholars of *shari`ah* studies as highly progressive.[37]

Faculty of Leadership and Management (USIM)

Another institution that has introduced an integrated curriculum in its program is the Faculty of Leadership and Management (FLM) at the University Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Nilai, Negeri Sembilan. The BA degree in *Dakwah* (Islamic Missionary Work) is tied up with courses in modern management. Apart from the compulsory university courses, Faculty foundational courses and elective courses, students must complete 60 credit hours in core courses offered in the Faculty. Some of these courses include, Principles and Theory of Leadership, Islam and Contemporary Issues, Human Resources Management, Islamic Work Ethics and Organizational Management, Planning and Strategy. One of the main objectives of USIM's FLM is to create a competitive spirit among its preachers (*du`at*), instill strong and progressive leadership qualities, and enable them to empower human resources.[38] In our opinion, this kind of integrated program has been widely accepted in the public and private sectors where graduates from USIM have been able to obtain attractive jobs as professionals and executives.[39]

IMPROVING THE PRESENT CURRICULUM
OF ISLAMIC STUDIES

It is clear, then, that calls for reform in Islamic Studies programs and courses well predate the present concerns related to globalization and the aftermath of the September 11 2001 tragedy. As a matter of fact, the Islamic Studies curriculum experts

in Malaysia designed this program from as far back as the early 1970s. Moreover, these calls have met with positive and often very dynamic responses from the various programs in Islamic Studies offered by Malaysian higher education institutions. Much progress has been made in reformulating *usuluddin* (Islamic theology), *shari'ah* (Islamic law) and *dakwah* (Islamic missionary) courses taking into account Malaysia's distinct social environment. Nonetheless, in view of the unprecedented nature of the contemporary challenge to Islamic Studies programs it is timely for scholars of Islamic Studies to seriously consider the urgent calls for reform made by Professor Mohd. Kamal Hassan. First and foremost at this critical juncture in the development of Islamic Studies programs one must give serious thought about new thinking in the study of *fiqh*. Perhaps, one can agree with the view of Shaikh Yusuf al-Qardawi who has coined the special term for *fiqh* of the priorities (*fiqh al-awlawiyyat*).[40] This new disciple must become one of the major courses which determines the overall design of courses in *shari'ah* studies. In the context of *Usuluddin* subjects, for instance, there is a pressing need to see its courses deal with the latest developments in philosophy, the natural sciences, the social sciences and comparative religions. Despite the fact that all the Islamic Studies programs in the Islamic higher learning institutions have incorporated these ideas into some of their courses, it is essential that the content of such courses should always reflect the highest academic standards.

In addition it can perhaps be said that courses on *shari`ah* have advanced much more than in other disciplines. It is interesting today that the subject of *mu`amalat* (transactions) appears to be very popular among students because it deals with the idea of Islamic financial products, and thus has direct relevance to the job market in the growing industry of Islamic finance. However, despite these encouraging developments *shari`ah* courses ought to be more dynamic in nature since recently the question of *shari`a* and its relation to modernity and change has caught the attention of many people in Malaysia – both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars, professionals, politicians, administrators, NGO leaders and others. In this connection new courses that relate the study of Islam to issues of human rights, democracy, civil society, plural society, non-violence, freedom of expression, conflict resolution, international and strategic studies, contemporary economic thought, globalization, etc., should be considered a priority. Some of these courses are addressed specifically in the Department of *Siyasah Shari'iyyah* (the Islamic principle of governance) at AISMU. Meanwhile, the subject of *usul al-fiqh*, as one of the most important methodologies in *shari'ah* studies, should also be given a new orientation since conventional theories of *usul fiqh* in certain areas require revision. Therefore, there is a pressing need to develop new principles of *usul al-fiqh*. This is in line with the opinions of some

prominent scholars in *usul al-fiqh* such as Hassan al-Turabi of Sudan, Muhammad 'Ali Jumu`aah, the present Mufti of Egypt, and others.

With regard to *dakwah* studies, despite the fact that USIM's Faculty of Leadership and Management has succeeded in introducing modern courses in contemporary management studies in order to prevent *da'wah* studies from becoming static, the FLM of USIM are seemingly still not able to produce a substantial academic literature pertaining to the science of leadership and management from an Islamic perspective. Moreover, the courses currently offered in traditional *dakwah* subjects appear somewhat artificial in that they are still heavily influenced by the Kulliyyah of Dawah wal Wa'z wal-Irshad (the Faculty of Islamic Missionary Work, Advice and Guidance) model from Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. Perhaps one can begin to look into the importance of "cross-cultural" *dakwah* as a new subject to be thought out, since it is imperative for students in *dakwah* programs to know the multi-religious and multi-cultural setting in this region so that they can have a better understanding and awareness of other religions, traditions, and cultures while remaining Muslims in their own religious tradition.[41]

In addition, the authentic science of Islamic leadership and management seems to be missing from this otherwise convincing picture. Thus, it is imperative for the Malaysian experts in Islamic Studies curricula to redesign the program to produce a more systematic course of study in the science of Islamic leadership and management. FLM should also seriously consider designing new courses that examine the roles of NGOs in society as NGOs become more vital globally.

On a broader level two important courses that ought to be introduced immediately into contemporary Islamic Studies programs are Inter-Civilization Dialogue and the Study of Occidentalism. Such courses are needed not only at an intellectual but also a practical level, because they will help instill confidence in graduates of Islamic Studies that they can play important roles not only in a pluralistic society such as Malaysia, but equally importantly as participants in the global scene.

Besides this, in more specific terms it is timely for the Islamic Studies programs in Malaysia to review some of the approaches to the conventional study of *kalam* (scholastic theology), philosophy, *tafsir* and *hadith* disciplines. Top priority should be given to the critical scholarship on how to develop new methodologies for *'ilm al-Kalam* as well as the Islamic critiques of modernism and postmodernism. It is also important that the contemporary *mufassir* and *muhaddith* are reexamined with a critical view to some of the classical interpretations.[42] In recent years many liberal-minded Muslim scholars such as Mohammed Arkoun, Hassan Hanafi, Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid, Ibrahim Musa and others have challenged the authenticity of classical

mufassir and *muhaddith* in dealing with some of the most pressing problems of modern times. It is essential that Islamic Studies programs respond to these criticisms by contributing to the intellectual discourse, rather than disengaging from such debate or adopting passive thinking.

CONCLUSION

Despite the challenges currently facing the field of Islamic Studies in Malaysia's institutions of higher learning the orientation for change is clear. But the kinds of change being considered and carried out by Malaysian scholars of Islam are certainly not a spontaneous reaction to recent new threats to the field, nor a response to outside pressures. Rather, such change and development has been taking place over a long period and has its own natural momentum. Yet scholars in the field maintain a strong conviction that the nature of Islamic Studies courses and the Islamic heritage on which it is based – the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* – has its own strength. Islamic Studies will confidently face and overcome whatever challenges the future may bring. Perhaps this sort of self-belief can be traced to a source of wisdom found in the Islamic philosophy of science:

> "Forming new Islamic thinking by way of blending the past Islamic heritage with the present realities and using the legitimate methodology of knowledge based on the Qur'an and Sunnah"[43]

Adhering to this philosophy one can be certain that Islamic Studies will not be marginalized by the present global situation. Rather, as a field of scholarship it will continue to be creative, innovative, and responsive to the rapidly changing world.

Endnotes

1   Mohd. Kamal Hassan, "Islamic Studies in Contemporary South East Asia: General Observations," in *Islamic Studies in ASEAN – Presentations of an International Seminar* (College of Islamic Studies, Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani, 1997), p. 479.

2   *Ibid.*, pp. 479-80.

3   Panduan Pra Siswazah, Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Sesi Akademik 2005-2006, p. 22.

4   In the 1970s several Muslim intellectuals including Professor Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi, from Department of Religion, Temple University, Philadelphia, USA, introduced the concept of the Islamization of knowledge. Later, in 1976, Muslim intellectuals from natural and human sciences backgrounds formed the Association of Muslim Social Scientists in USA and Canada. AMSS has been instrumental over the last three decades in conducting seminars, conferences, workshops and publishing academic works in promoting the program of the Islamization of knowledge an intellectual movement not only in the USA and Canada but to the rest of the Muslim world.

5   Interview with Dr. Ibrahim Zain, Deputy Dean, Post Graduate Studies, IRKH, IIUM, 9th January, 2005, Gombak, Selangor.

6   Mohd. Kamal Hassan, "Islamic Studies in Contemporary South East Asia", p. 480.

7   Panduan 2005/2006 Fakulti Kepimpinan Dan Pengurusan, Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia (KUIM), Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Sesi akademik, 2005-2006, p.12.

8   Buku Panduan Program Ijazah Dasar, Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Tahun Akademik 2005/2006, pp. 40-45. According to the credit system in Malaysian higher educational institutions a 3 credit hour course is equivalent to 52 hours of teaching within 14 weeks.

9   *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Malay*: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, or UKM.

12 Buku Panduan Prasiswazah, Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, pp. 66-67.

13 *Ibid.*, pp. 66-77.

14   Position Paper, Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (Usuluddin and Comparative Religion), International Islamic University Malaysia, Gombak, Selangor, n.d.

15   Paper, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 2005, Kuala Lumpur, n.d. pp. 1-2.

16   Interview with Professor Mat Asin Dollah, Deputy Rector (Academic affairs), USIM, 8th November, 2008, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan.

17   See Mohd. Kamal Hassan, "Some General Observations on Human Sciences and Islamic Studies in the Context of National Development", Seminar Islam Di Pusat-Pusat Pengajian Tinggi ASEAN [International Conference on Islam in ASEAN'S Institutions of Higher Learning], organized by the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia on 2-5th December, 1978 at Bangi, Selangor, pp. 49-145.

18   *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145.

19   Mohd. Kamal Hassan, "Islamic Studies in Contemporary Southeast Asia", pp.487-488.

20   ABIM – Angatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement).

21   Siddiq Fadzil, "The Islamic Higher Learning Institution: Opportunity and Challenge", paper presented to the International Seminar on Islamic Studies in Higher Learning Institutions, organized by Kolej Darul Hikmah, April 2004, Anjung Rahmat, ABIM, Kula Lumpur, p.5.

22   *Ibid.*, p. 12.

23   *Ibid.*, p. 10. Muslim scholars are heavily in debt to the prodigious contributions of Westerners to Islamic studies. They have edited and published some of the most important primary sources of Islam in Arabic but also in other Muslim languages. Though the achievements of Orientalism are many and deserve respect, its image is sullied in the Muslim world because of Christian proselytization and imperialism. See Isma'il Ibrahim Nawwab, "Muslims and the West in History," in Zafar Ishaq Absari and John L.Esposito (eds.), *Muslims and the West – Encounter and Dialogue* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute Press, 2001), pp. 28-29. In contrast to Orientalism, some contemporary Muslim scholars such as Hassan Hanafi, a well-known Muslim philosopher from Eqypt, has called for Islamic studies programs in the Muslim world universities to begin the study of Occidentalism – a discipline which focuses on comprehensive aspects of the Western world and its people beginning with history, religion, culture, civilization, socio-economy politico systems and the like. See Hassan Hanafi, *Jidal al-Ana wa Al-Akhar* (Cairo: Maktabah Madbuli al-Saghir, 1997), p.37.

24   Osman Bakar, Keynote Speech, "Position and Role of Islamic Education In the 21st Century: From 11th September," for the National Conference on Empowering of Islamic Higher Learning Institutions, organized by Kolej Darul Hikmah, Kajang, Residence Hotel, UNITEN, May, 2004, Kajang, Selangor.

25   Mohd. Kamal Hassan, "Islamic Studies in Contemporary South East Asia", p. 491.

26   Interview with Wan Sobri Wan Yusuf (Deputy Dean of Student Affairs, Kulliyyah of IRK, IIUM), 3rd January, 2005, IIUM, Gombak, Selangor.

27   Interview with Wan Sobri Wan Yusuf, IIUM, Gombak, Selangor, 3rd January, 2005.

28   *Ibid.*

29   *Ibid.*

30   *Ibid.*

31   Interview with Mudatthir Abdel Rahim (Ex-Vice Chancellor, Umm al-Durman University, Khartoum, Sudan), 7th January, 2005, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur.

32   Shifa al-'Attas, (ed.) *Islam and the Challenge of Modernity.* Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1996.

33   Interview with Faisal Osman (ex-Dean, Faculty of Islamic Studies, National University of Malaysia, 1988-1992), Bangi, Selangor, 5th January, 2005. Faisal himself was among the first batch of Malaysian students who studied under the late Professor Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi at the Department of religion, Temple University, Philadelphia, USA, in the early 1970s.

34   *Ibid.*

35   *Ibid.*

36   Interview with Ruzaman Md. Nor, Deputy Dean (Academic and Student Affairs), Academy Islam, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 6th January, 2005.

37   *Ibid.*

38   Buku Panduan 2005/2006, Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia (KUIM), Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, p. 19.

39   Interview with Professor at Asin Dollah, Deputy Rector (Academic Affairs), USIM, 8th December, 2008, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan.

40   See Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *al-Siyasah al-Shar'yyah fi Da'I Nusu al-Shari'ah wa maqasidiha* (al-Qahirah: Maktab Wahbah, 1998), ms. 306-318.

41   See Ridzwun Wu, (ed.,) *Cross Cultural Da'wah* (Singapore: Darul Arqam, 2004).

42   See, for instance, 'Irfan 'Abdul Hamid, *"al-Hurriyyah fi al-'Aql al-Kalami wa al-Falsafi al-Islami"* in *Islamiyyat al-Ma'arifah*, Vol. 31-32, 2003, pp. 51-91; Abu Ya'rub al-Marzuqi, "Teaching Philosophy in Usul al-Din" in *Journal of Islam in Asia***,** No.1, June (2004): 425-449; Ibrahim Zain, "*Manhaj Imam al-Haramain fi Dirasah al-'Aqidah*" in *Islamiyyat al-Ma'rifah*, Vol.17 (1999): 89-109.

43   Yusuf al-Qaradwi, *Qadaya Mu'asarah* (al-Qahirah: Dar al-Shuruq, 2002), p. 18.

CHAPTER NINE

ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE DILEMMAS OF MUSLIM MINORITIES[1]

Omar Farouk Bajunid

INTRODUCTION

Education is fundamental to Islam.[2] Theoretically, Islam is supposed to be inseparable from knowledge and education. Muslim scholars will cite sources from the Qur'an and showing that Islam is symbiotically and inseparably linked to knowledge and education. The full realization of one's obligations and indeed potential to observe Islam cannot possibly be realized without a strong foundation in Islamic knowledge. The concept of knowledge in Islam is both holistic and practical. Education in Islam is supposed to promote human dignity and enhance the human personality. Islamic literacy defined broadly as the ability to read and understand the Qur'an and to know the basic Islamic principles and practices to facilitate practice of the faith is obligatory for Muslims regardless of their background. Likewise, the principle of individual accountability in Islam requires Muslims to account for everything they do in their daily lives; what they do or fail to do, what they say or not say, what they eat and what they think. It is obvious that Muslims need guidance through knowledge and education to help them face their daily lives.

Muslim scholars will argue that, as made explicit in several Qur'anic injunctions, the status of those who possess knowledge and those who do not cannot possibly be the same.[3] Thus, in an important sense although Muslims may claim that

Islam is egalitarian in character, in terms of giving every individual Muslim the opportunity to seek knowledge and to apply it in the pursuit of good deeds, in reality, the Muslim *ummah* will be a hierarchical community because of the different levels of knowledge and piety that different people acquire. The '*ulama*, as the custodians of knowledge and the Islamic tradition and as promoters of education, have a special role in Islam and are usually recognized as exemplary leaders.

Islam also cannot be understood just as a religion in the narrow sense of the word as it is not simply about rites, rituals, rules and doctrines. Islam too, is not just about spirituality but also encompasses every aspect of human life. Islamic education is designed to empower every individual believer with the appropriate knowledge and means to seek and find the right answers to life. Thus, Muslims across time and space need to learn about the fundamental principles of Islam, its worldview, laws, practices, history, languages and of course, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which constitute the foundation of Islam. At the same time they must relate to the broader spectrum of knowledge in every known and new field, including those which relate to worldly matters, that emerges with each rising generation.

From the foregoing it seems obvious that for Muslims to be able to harness the full potential of their Islamic faith they will not only need a firm grounding in Islamic education conceptualized in the broadest sense but also have to secure the right conditions which will grant them the freedom and ability to practise their faith unimpeded. But this is where the contradictions between the Islamic ideals and the realities on the ground begin to appear, especially when Muslims, as has often been the case, may not be in full control of the wider social, cultural, and political environments to which they belong and the events which have overtaken them. The peculiarities of the specific contexts in which Muslim communities exist invariably tend to affect the way in which they are able to meet their religious obligations as Muslims without undermining their position as members of the wider society. Thus, the external environmental variables cannot be underestimated in any attempt to evaluate how Muslim minorities try to reconcile the comprehensive demands of their faith with the practical realities of their immediate contexts which may or may not have anything to do with Islam at all. The situation of the Muslims in mainland Southeast Asia also has to be seen and understood within this perspective.

This chapter examines the educational dilemmas facing the Muslim minorities of mainland Southeast Asia.[4] It takes the view that these dilemmas cannot be separated from the political dilemmas confronting them. There is a need, therefore, to understand the different national, social, cultural, economic, ethnic, historical, and demographic contexts within which Muslim minorities have to operate in order to

appreciate the dilemmas that they face collectively or as religious minorities of their respective nations. Likewise, the internal constraints within the respective Muslim communities, including their inability to develop a more liberal, constructive, and imaginative understanding of their religion and its demands, as well as the appropriate responses to the challenges of modernity and change, have also compounded their dilemmas. The chapter holds the view that the Muslim minorities of mainland Southeast Asia have always assumed a significant role in their respective polities. For centuries they were able to co-exist with other cultures and peoples in the region peacefully and amicably. The problems that Muslims face as citizens of their respective countries have always been a function of the interplay of many factors beyond their control. However, the Muslims have also never been a monolithic group. They have always been and continue to be characterized by diversity, but within this more pluralistic setting they also share common characteristics and have developed overlapping networks to reinforce their collective religious and cultural identity which cuts across different countries.

The Muslims of mainland Southeast Asia are an integral part of the Jawi tradition that has emerged to give Islam in Southeast Asia its distinctive feature.[5] Symbolically and functionally the Jawi tradition developed its own identity which was distinctively indigenous without undermining its Islamic character and cognitive characteristics. Although the Jawi tradition is often associated mainly with Malay culture, it actually goes beyond this to also include other vernacular cultures like the Cham. Historically, the Jawi network developed in many regional centres, but for centuries the Patani region on the Malay peninsula was one of its principal centres. It is partly the attempt to try to sustain the relevance of the Jawi tradition in its new form that appears to have aggravated the political difficulties for Muslims in that part of Thailand today.[6] For the Muslims of southern Thailand today, not to try to keep that tradition alive would be tantamount to rejecting their past existence and cultural heritage. Their problems have been compounded by the fact that recent political developments have made it extremely unlikely that they would be able to set the agenda for educational change independently without the political sanction of the state and its agenda. The nature of the new nation-states that have emerged in mainland Southeast Asia as well as their political systems, regimes and policies have become critical factors in determining the options that are available to the Muslim minorities in their attempts to preserve their religion and their socio-religious identity.

This chapter discusses the comparative national contexts within which the role of Islam has evolved in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos. It surveys the various dimensions of the Islamic educational scenario in the region. The significance and symbolism of the Jawi tradition will then be evaluated. The concluding part of the chapter will consider the most pressing educational problems that confront the Muslim minorities today, and the options that they may have before them.

COMPARATIVE NATIONAL CONTEXTS

The nation-state in mainland Southeast Asia is a recent phenomenon. The way it has evolved, especially in its early formative years, has greatly affected the position of Muslims in their respective countries. In terms of size, population, ethnic composition, political system, and recent history there are significant differences between Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. The position of Theravada Buddhism is dominant in Thailand and Cambodia.[7] Both have a constitutional monarchy and practise a form of parliamentary democracy. Both Laos and Vietnam also have a large Buddhist population (the former Theravada Buddhist, the latter predominantly Mahayana) but it is the atheistic doctrine of communism which is the sole political ideology of these states. With a population of over 80 million people Vietnam is the most populous country in mainland Southeast Asia, followed by Thailand with approximately 65 million, Cambodia with about 13.5 million, and Laos with almost 6 million. Each of these countries is multi-ethnic and multi-religious.

The national experiences of the countries of mainland Southeast Asia appear to differ from one to the other, but all experienced the political turmoil that affected the region during the Cold War. Today, although Thailand and Cambodia have adopted parliamentary democracy, their political development has been significantly different. For most of its modern history Thailand has wavered between military dictatorship and democracy. Only between 1992 and 2006 did Thailand enjoy an uninterrupted period of democratic rule, although from time to time there were rumours of an impending military coup. In September 2006, democratic rule was indeed dislocated by a military coup. Following the adoption of a new constitution in 2007 and a new general election, Thailand reverted to civilian rule. But for over one year subsequently Thailand had to go through a period of intense political turbulence which saw three Prime Ministers until the most recent appointment of Abhisit Vejjajiva, the leader of the Democrat Party, as Premier in December 2008.[8]

Cambodia was a democratic constitutional monarchy from the time of its independence in 1954 until 1970. Following a military coup the monarchy was abolished and a democratic republic was declared, before the Khmer Rouge came to power in 1975 and implemented a severe form of revolutionary communism. It was the Khmer Rouge that adopted and pursued the genocidal policy towards the Muslims in Cambodia. Tens of thousands of Muslims were massacred, representing almost half of their total population. A whole generation of Cambodian *'ulama* was eliminated, tens of thousands of Muslims made destitute and turned into refugees, and the Islamic educational infrastructure in the country was destroyed.[9] In the last week of December 1978 Vietnam invaded Cambodia and installed a puppet regime, throwing the country into civil war for over a decade. Following the United Nations interim administration and supervised Constituent Assembly elections parliamentary democracy was restored to Cambodia and the constitutional monarchy reinstituted. The resuscitated democratic system in Cambodia also underwent political turbulence in its first decade of revival and was still fraught with problems. In the post-1993 era there have been three general elections, with the latest one held in mid-2008 returning the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) to power with a greater majority than ever before. The political turmoil that the country went through from the 1970s to the 1990s destroyed much of the country, devastated its economy, killed millions of its citizens, impoverished its people and resulted in hundreds of thousands of Cambodians fleeing the country as refugees.

While Laos and Vietnam are now communist states both Laos and South Vietnam at one time experimented with democracy. Historically, the present Socialist Republic of Vietnam which was established in 1975 following the unification of North and South Vietnam has never been territorially and politically integrated in this manner in the past. Even in terms of government policies there have been noticeable changes to the situation three decades ago. In reality Vietnam is now not only unified but also communist. What is even more important, perhaps, is not just the political system that it has adopted but the violent path that it has had to negotiate to reach its current status. The two major wars that erupted, first between the Vietnamese and the French and then between the North Vietnamese and the South Vietnamese, supported by the Americans, brought about not only widespread physical destruction to the country and the near collapse of its economy but also the deaths and displacement of millions of Vietnamese, including those of the Muslim faith.

It is against the backdrop of these dramatic and traumatic political developments that the role of Islam in mainland Southeast Asia in the contemporary period

has been defined. The Muslims in all of the above countries, like their counterparts from the other religions, have been directly affected by the events that had unfolded before them. They have had to re-adjust their role accordingly to take into account the changed and changing realities. Muslims have had to be continually sensitive and responsive to such change to ensure that their interests were safeguarded. Thus the educational dilemmas of the Muslims are also attributable to the changing contexts of their immediate realities.

Historically, numerically and politically, the Muslims of Thailand are the most significant group in all of mainland Southeast Asia. Islam is given both royal and official patronage in Thailand today and the Muslims have, by and large, become an integral part of Thailand.[10] Islam has been embedded in Thai public life in a variety of ways such that its compatibility with predominantly Buddhist Thailand is never under serious doubt. There are now over 3,000 mosques throughout Thailand.[11] The fact that Thailand enjoys observer status at the Organization of Islamic Conference is ample testimony to the respect it has been accorded by the 56 or so Muslim member countries that make up the organization.[12] Estimates of the Muslim population in Thailand vary. Most sources believe that there are between 3 and 5 million Muslims in Thailand spread throughout the kingdom.[13] Therefore, by any calculation Muslims represent a very large national constituency in Thailand. Thailand's Muslims, in fact, comprise many ethnic groups although the official designation given to all of them is 'Thai Muslim'. A close scrutiny of Thai Muslim society will reveal that broadly speaking they can be categorized into two groups[14] The first is the well-integrated Thai Muslims who unquestioningly give their political and cultural loyalty to Thailand and who are in most respects virtually indistinguishable from the other Thais except for their religious belief and practice. The other group is Muslims of Malay ethnicity, who socialize principally in the Malay language and whose attachment to the Jawi tradition is still strong. They are found primarily in the provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat in the extreme south of the country, contiguous to the northern states of Malaysia, where the primacy of Malay language and culture is still much in evidence.[15] The distinction between these two groups of Thai Muslims adds a complex dimension to the national characteristics of the Muslim population in Thailand. In fact, the boundaries between the two Muslim groups have become more permeable in recent years. Politically, the Muslims as a whole have benefited greatly from the democratic development in Thailand. It was the democratic decade of the post-1992 period and the political liberalization it ushered in that has enabled Thailand's Muslims to acquire a highly visible public profile.[16] It was also the process of democratization of that period that witnessed a proliferation of educational in-

stitutions in the Malay-Muslim provinces, which aimed not only to develop Islamic education but also to promote the Malay language and the Jawi tradition.[17]

Thailand's Malay south has been tainted by a long history of chronic unrest that is attributable to a mix of separatist insurgency, local banditry, crime and political violence, endemic corruption, ethnic prejudice, bureaucratic tyranny, and poor governance.[18] The lack of democracy and hence avenues for the redress of perceived injustices and bureaucratic wrong-doings have also contributed to the problem in the south. The renewed outbreak of conflict in the region that has occurred since January 2004 is also traceable to the constriction of the democratic space. As a result of this there now exists a high level of mutual suspicion and distrust between the government – especially the local officialdom – and the local Muslim population.[19] The domination of the local bureaucracy by Thai-Buddhists from other provinces of Thailand, who are unfamiliar with the local history, customs, culture, and language of the Muslims of the deep south, has created a wedge between them and the locals. On their part the Muslims in this region tend to cling to their traditional Malay-Muslim identity in a manner that often raises official anxieties about their political loyalty to Thailand. The extensive kinship and other links that the Malays of the southern border provinces maintain with their ethnic cousins across the border in Malaysia tend to give the wrong impression of their real intentions. Islam is not necessarily the cause of the friction or the suspicions between the Muslims and the Thai State, but it certainly has been used and abused by both parties to advance their respective interests.

After Thailand, Cambodia has the largest number of Muslims in mainland Southeast Asia. It is estimated that Muslims make up approximately 5 percent of the population of the kingdom, representing about 650,000 people.[20] There are now about 400 mosques in Cambodia, most of which have been reconstructed only in the last decade or so.[21] The significance of Islam in Cambodia is not just the high number of its adherents today but also because it has historically been an integral feature of Cambodia for many centuries. The Muslims in Cambodia are characterized by diversity but the Chams are indeed the most important ethnic category because in the context of Cambodia all Chams are Muslims. The Chams are, however, made up of two major groups, namely the *Cham Shariat* (i.e. Chams who observe the *Shari'ah*, or Islamic law in the *Shafi'i* school of Islam) and the *Jahed* or "*Kaum Hakekat*", also known as "*Kaum Jumaat*" or "*Cham Bani*". It is the *Cham Shariat* which is the dominant and dynamic group.[22] The principal denominators of their identity are basically knowledge of the Cham language, continued practice of Cham culture, a common Cham ethnic ancestry, and a strong sense of attachment to or-

thodox Islam. Their Islamic identity has become an inseparable part of their ethnic identity. Perhaps more importantly the persistence of the traditional cultural and religious ties that continue to connect the Cambodian Muslims in general and the Cham Muslims in particular with their co-religionists in the wider Southeast Asian Jawi networks have given them a critical cultural lifeline in the region.[23] During the Khmer Rouge period it was their distinctive Islamic and ethnic identity that made them the target of the regime's genocidal policy. Their traumatic experiences under the Khmer Rouge and during the period of the Cambodian civil war have critically affected the way in which the Cham have tried to reshape their lives today. Like the situation in Thailand it was also in the post-conflict era of democratization in Cambodia since the 1990s that the Cham and Cambodia's Muslims generally have been able to reorganize themselves, in the process assuming an enhanced political role and visibility.[24] It was also this period which stimulated the re-generation of the Jawi tradition in Cambodia.

Despite the fact that Vietnam is a communist state whose official policy relegates religion to the private sphere Islam in Vietnam today is in fact rather dynamic. This is due to at least two reasons. The first relates to Vietnam's successful diplomatic maneuvering since the early 1990s to improve relations with Arab and Muslim countries, with the result that it now maintains excellent relations with the Muslim world. The second is due to the fact that since the overwhelming majority of the estimated 100,000 or so Muslims in Vietnam are Chams, and constitutionally the Chams are recognized as one of Vietnam's 54 officially recognized ethnic minorities, the position of Islam as an indigenous culture has also become legitimized.[25] This is further helped by the existence of Vietnamese Muslims. The biggest concentration of Muslims in Vietnam is in Chau duc, An Giang province, in the Mekong delta close to the Vietnamese-Cambodian border.[26] There are also Muslim settlements in the provinces of Ninh Thuan, Dong Nai, Tay Ninh, Binh Duong, Binh Phuoc, as well as in Ho Chi Minh City and its vicinity. In all of Vietnam there are about 38 mosques and 24 *suraus*. Vietnam's policy of economic liberalization and its membership of ASEAN since 1995 have enabled the Muslims of Vietnam to revive ties with their co-religionists in the region. The old Jawi network which used to link Vietnam's Muslims to the Muslim world of Southeast Asia has also been resuscitated. Nevertheless, the religious activities of the Muslims in Vietnam, including in the sphere of education, are closely monitored by the state and the Communist Party, whose attitude towards Islam remains one of caution and suspicion.

Laos has the smallest number of Muslims amongst Southeast Asian countries, believed to number only slightly over 10,000. In the capital, Vientiane, there are

only two mosques.[27] Half of the Muslim population in Laos is made up of ethnic Chams with links across the border in Cambodia and beyond. They thus constitute a part of the wider Cham and Jawi world of mainland Southeast Asia. Like Vietnam, Laos does not condone the public role of religion but does officially recognize ethnic minorities, including the Chams. Although the Muslims of mainland Southeast Asia constitute a sizeable group numerically and enjoy varying degrees of official recognition, their socio-economic status is generally low. The situation in Thailand may be a little different from that of the other countries, but only marginally so. As the overwhelming majority of the Muslims in this region are dependent on agriculture, fishing, vendoring, and more recently, factory employment, their income level is generally low. This situation has undermined their capacity to fully develop even the basic infrastructure required for a decent standard of living, which thus makes them disproportionately dependent either on state support or the generosity of others.

THE SCENARIO OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Islamic education in mainland Southeast Asia has been primarily determined by a combination of political, economic, cultural and social factors briefly sketched above. Yet despite the inherent and obvious handicaps the region's Muslims face in their daily lives, Islamic education is still given utmost priority. To the Muslims of mainland Southeast Asia Islamic education is viewed as obligatory as it is seen as the primary vehicle of their religious socialization. It is only through Islamic education that Islamic values and lifestyle can be transmitted to the younger generation and Islamic identity protected and preserved. But essentially the level of Islamic education acquired in mainland Southeast Asia is very basic.

The most important institution at the base of the Islamic educational structure is the home. Islamic socialization takes place in Muslim homes all over mainland Southeast Asia with parents or other family members helping to reinforce the basic teachings of Islam through formal as well as informal instruction, including group participation in obligatory rites like prayer and fasting. Recitation of the Qur'an is a regular religious activity that is undertaken in Muslim homes for all kinds of occasions and purposes. Generally Muslims keep the *Muqaddam* or at least the *Surah Yasin* (Chapter 36 of the Qur'an), if not the Qur'an itself, in their homes.[28]

Although the home is the basic pillar of Islamic socialization and education, it is actually the mosque or the *surau* that serves as its communal nerve-centre.[29] The mosque in particular is usually used for a whole range of religious activities includ-

ing the conduct of daily congregational prayers; Friday prayers; prayers during the month of Ramadan (*tarâwih*); funeral services; Qur'anic classes; religious instruction; religious festivities, and even marriage ceremonies. It is, however, its socializational or educational function that stands out. As almost invariably the mosque will also accommodate a *madrasah* either within the outer section of its main prayer hall or in a separate building in close proximity to it, formal religious instruction assumes a routine function in practically every mosque or *surau*. Children of various ages, usually beginning from five to six, learn to recite the Qur'an at the local mosque or *surau*. They are usually initially introduced to the Arabic alphabet which they must learn by heart. Normally too, the principal and exclusive text used for this purpose is the *Muqaddam*, which essentially contains the basic Arabic characters and the method of reading and forming words with them, followed by *Surah al-Fatihah*, the opening chapter of the Qur'an, short Surahs beginning from *Surah An-Nas*, the last chapter of the Qur'an, Chapter 114, to *Surah An-Nabaa*, Chapter 78 and finally, pictorial illustrations of both the rite of *wudhu* or ablution and the rite of prayer or *salah*. These short *Surahs* together with *Surah al-Fatihah*, are known collectively as *Juz Amma*, the thirtieth section of the Qur'an, which contains all the short verses that are supposed to address miscellaneous issues. Since mastering the *Muqaddam* is considered essential before proceeding to the Qur'an proper it is the *Muqaddam* lessons given in mosques and *suraus* throughout mainland Southeast Asia that serve as the basic pillar of Qur'anic education. Students learn by rote to recognize the 29 alphabets of the Arabic script and to read them with a combination of different vowels. Once they are able to establish basic Arabic literacy they will then be able to read the *Muqaddam*. After they complete the *Muqaddam* stage of learning if they demonstrate an acceptable level of fluency in reading they will be allowed to proceed to the Qur'an proper.[30]

In the Cham enclaves of Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos it is usually at this new level of instruction when students begin to learn to recite the Qur'an proper that they will also be introduced to the written Jawi language using the basic Arabic letters which they have already learned combined with an additional 6 improvised letters which are not available in Arabic. Students learn to spell words in Cham and Malay (or sometimes both) depending on the enclave they come from. As the backbone of the Muslim community in Cambodia the Chams find it easier, more practical, and even desirable to learn the Cham language.[31] Others may have a preference for Malay or even both. But, the fact that not all Muslims are Cham-speaking indicates that it is not the common or preferred language in certain quarters. Once reading proficiency in Cham and Malay is achieved then the fundamentals of Islam or *fardhu*

ain, will be taught. Cham is widely used as the oral as well as written language of instruction in the Cham enclaves. Among the non-Chams Malay assumes the above role, although increasingly Khmer too has emerged to become an important language of basic Islamic religious instruction in Cambodia.[32] In Vietnam, Vietnamese has assumed this role among the non-Chams. Thai has already been established as a language of Islamic religious instruction in most of Thailand outside the Malay cultural belt in the south.

Essentially it is the mosque and to a lesser extent the *surau* that create the environment in which Arabic and Jawi are seen to be continually relevant, practical and useful. The mosque and the *surau* invariably also serve as a library for Islamic literature which is essentially Jawi-based in the broad sense of the term. It would be inconceivable for a mosque anywhere in the region not to have copies of the Qur'an and other basic religious reading materials like the *Surah Yasin*, kept within its premises for public use. *Surah Yasin*, which is usually produced in a booklet form, would usually also contain a Malay translation along with the Arabic text. In Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, Islamic literature is severely limited although a Vietnamese translation of the Qur'an has been published by an American of Vietnamese-Cham background.[33] Thailand, by contrast, has a growing corpus of Islamic literature written in Thai, as well as a substantial literature in Malay. In most cases the religious books that are found in most mosques throughout mainland Southeast Asia are usually donations from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and other Muslim countries.

In addition to the institutions of the home and the mosques or *suraus*, proper *madrasahs* or Islamic religious schools have also been established to cater to the special needs of the Muslim students who want to go beyond the basics of Islamic education. The *pondok* school system in Thailand is perhaps the most developed indigenous educational system that caters to the needs of the Muslims. It is within the *pondok* system that related Islamic educational concepts and practices have been developed, such as the *halaqa* method of teaching and the residential system of education which emphasizes holistic learning. In Thailand since the 1960s the *pondok* system has been adapted to accommodate the Thai-language although the original Malay or Jawi-based system continues to exist, albeit under more demanding conditions.[34]

A landmark development for Muslim minorities in the region has been the development of Islamic schools or *madrasahs* which have tried to blend the holistic Islamic educational model with modern approaches to educational organization and management. These fully-fledged religious schools which are managed in a modern way in terms of infrastructure, financial resources, curricula, staff training, and

selection of students, show that a systematic and sustainable level of institutional development of Islamic education has been achieved in Thailand and to a lesser extent also in Cambodia. It also demonstrates that a new, pluralistic educational scenario is evolving in the region which tries to meet the needs of special communities. Educational reform is one of the clearest signs of innovation taking place among the Muslim minorities. In Thailand particularly, this type of institution has also facilitated the greater use of the Thai language as the principal medium of instruction, which has resulted in the increasing acceptance of Thai among a wider section of the Muslim community in Thailand. In Cambodia, the growing use of the Khmer language is also noticeable. At the same time the place of Arabic in the Islamic educational curriculum has also been reinforced. This development of the *madrasah* system has paved the way for the emergence of tertiary Islamic educational institutions, whose graduates are of a sufficiently high standard that they are able to enter colleges and universities abroad.[35] In 1998 a Saudi-based Muslim group established a formal Islamic boarding school, Ummul Qura, in Kandaal Province, Cambodia, complete with modern facilities and foreign-trained teachers, using Arabic, Khmer, and English as the medium of education. The Ummul Qura Islamic School was to serve as a feeder institution for universities in the Middle East and the Muslim world, and was opened with great fanfare by the Prime Minister of Cambodia, Hun Sen. Initially this development represented a breakthrough for the Cambodian Muslim community.[36] However in 2003 the school was closed. Three of its teachers, an Egyptian and two Thais, were detained, and all the other expatriates sent home to their countries for their alleged involvement with the Al-Qaeda-affiliated regional terrorist organization, Jemaah Islamiyyah.[37] At around the same time in Thailand similar accusations were made by the government against many *pondok* and other Islamic religious school teachers.[38]

Notwithstanding the above development it is obvious that the role of Jawi script has been instrumental in the educational empowerment of the Cham communities in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. It has helped to elevate the status of the Cham language as an Islamic language with its own script and to promote the wider usage of Malay. Education in the medium of Jawi has also made it possible for Muslims to pursue their further education in *pondoks* located in other countries in the region outside of Cambodia, especially in Thailand. The growth in the demand for *pondok* education in Cambodia, and to a lesser extent also in Vietnam and Laos, means that *pondok* education in southern Thailand continues to be relevant to Muslims in the region. It has reinforced the importance of Malay as a medium of Islamic religious instruction. Although the Thai language is increasingly used to teach and

disseminate Islamic knowledge, because the Thai script is unrelated to Jawi and also due to the continued friction between the Thai government and its Malay minority in the south, as a medium of religious instruction the Thai language continues to have significant limitations in terms of its appeal to the Malay-Muslims. It is interesting to note that the National Reconciliation Commission of Thailand which was established to explore ways to understand and overcome the escalation of violence in the Malay-Muslim region of Southern Thailand specifically identified the need to declare Patani Malay as an additional working language in the southern border provinces, acknowledging its indispensability in that part of Thailand.[39]

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND SYMBOLISM OF JAWI

Originally the term 'Jawi' had a limited meaning, basically referring to the Arabic script. However, the expanding symbiotic relationship between Jawi, Arabic, and the vernacular languages of the Muslims of mainland Southeast Asia means that Jawi has a special significance in the development of the Islamic traditions of Southeast Asia. The use of the Jawi script in mainland Southeast Asia represents the phenomenon of the localization of Islam. It therefore acquires a potent relationship with Islam often emerging as the symbol of Islam in the local context. Among the Malays and the Chams of Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos, Jawi has emerged as a core feature of their religious and cultural identity. This is even more true for the Malay-Muslims of Southern Thailand who perceive Jawi as their definitive and irreducible historic identity.

Historically, culturally, socially, and politically, the Jawi tradition has always been intrinsically connected to Islam. It is principally Islam that is Jawi's *raison d'être* in Southeast Asia. The traditional links between the various Muslim groups in the Muslim world of Southeast Asia constituted a region-wide Jawi network which has been principally inspired and facilitated by Islam. Jawi continues to be perceived as being relevant and useful for the following reasons:

1. It is the basic tool to acquire reading proficiency in Arabic with a view to achieving Qur'anic literacy. As it is incumbent on every Muslim to be able to recite the Qur'an, Jawi-literacy, which in its most fundamental sense simply means the ability to recognize and read basic Arabic letters, is universally seen as a desirable and even mandatory goal of every Muslim family. Proficiency in Jawi will also enable one to recite *do'a* [supplications]

and other Qur'anic expressions which are obligatory in Muslim prayers, which must be learned in other ways, usually through prescribed texts. For the overwhelming majority of Muslims in Southeast Asia Qur'anic literacy has traditionally been achieved through literacy in Jawi. Usually once basic Arabic literacy is acquired it becomes almost natural to proceed from that point to achieve, through a measure of improvisation, literacy in the other vernacular languages of the Muslims. Literacy in the Arabic letters emerges as a bridge to literacy in the vernacular languages which are otherwise becoming increasingly marginalized in the era of narrow language nationalism.

2.   The function of Jawi goes beyond facilitating basic Qur'anic literacy. It also assumes the role of the formal medium of Islamic religious instruction. This is particularly true in the case of Malay, which is still seen by various indigenous Muslim groups as the main medium of Islamic religious instruction – as it used to be in the past. Many of the Islamic texts that are circulated and used in mosques, *suraus* and *madrasahs*, in areas of Muslim Southeast Asia are Jawi texts. Thus, mastery of Jawi will lead to the educational empowerment of the Muslim minorities in Mainland Southeast Asia.

3.   As the main corpus of Islamic religious literature in many areas of Southeast Asia is still essentially Jawi-based, and as the overwhelming majority of Islamic religious leaders in Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, and the Malay provinces of southern Thailand today were Jawi-trained, Jawi is still widely viewed as the official script of Islamic scholarship. The use of Jawi here is accepted as the main vehicle of Islamic knowledge.

4.   Although the Chams do have their own ancient script its use has been very limited. In fact, that ancient script is becoming antiquated, like Latin or Sanskrit. It is Jawi that has been used to re-invent the written Cham language and give it a practical function. Since Jawi-Cham has now become a widely recognizable script for the majority of the Cham Muslims in particular, it is now also used as a medium of formal/written communication.

Jawi has evolved among the Malays and Chams of mainland Southeast Asia to constitute an intrinsic part of the Muslim psyche and identity. It is the definitive

Islamic character of Jawi that has helped preserve its revered status, enhanced its viability and guaranteed its sustainability in the region. The cultural and socio-religious links that Muslim minorities in mainland Southeast Asia have historically maintained with the wider Muslim world of Southeast Asia have been facilitated by their common heritage of the Jawi tradition and culture. The transnational ties that continue to exist between Muslim minorities and the Malay world have essentially been supported by regional Jawi networks that have been in place since the early days of Islam in the region.

MAJOR EDUCATIONAL ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

The debate about the relationship between Islamic education and modern/secular education seems to be polarized along two opposing premises.[40] Proponents of modern/secular education argue that Islamic education, especially in its traditional form, reinforces the fear of modernity. Proponents of Islamic education, on the other hand, contend that modern/secular education disconnects and uproots people from their own identity by separating their spiritual from their material needs. Like their counterparts all over the Muslim world the Muslims of mainland Southeast Asia have had to tackle these issues head-on. Unlike Muslims elsewhere, however, they have to resolve this dilemma under extremely imperfect conditions, among them the following:

1. Their status as minorities, often marginalized and weak, in overwhelmingly non-Muslim nations;
2. The internal divisions and schisms within the Muslim communities due to numerous differences including competing and conflicting interpretations of Islam, as well as their limited understanding of Islam;
3. The profoundly disruptive effects of violence, conflict, political turmoil, and war which have caused unnecessary deaths, displacements, and destruction in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, and acute uncertainty and insecurity in Thailand's southern border provinces;
4. The generally low socio-economic status of the overwhelming majority of Muslims all over mainland Southeast Asia;
5. The suspicions and prejudices that states, governments, and non-Muslim majority populations hold towards the Muslim minorities;

6. The existence of a competitive educational environment which is dominated by the secular state school system;

7. The absence or lack of educational and political leadership;

8. The collective inability of Muslim minorities to effectively relate to the changes taking place as a result of the phenomenon of globalization and the ICT revolution; and

9. The persistent negative media portrayal of Islam that has heightened their anxieties and concerns.

Notwithstanding the above limitations and challenges Muslim minorities in mainland Southeast Asia will need to make the difficult but necessary educational, social, cultural and political adjustments to help them escape from their current state of poverty, isolation, and indignity. Yet it is likely that whatever they decide to do will have to be attempted and achieved in such a way that it will not undermine their commitment to the Islamic faith and their duties as citizens. In this endeavour they will definitely need considerable help from both Muslims and non-Muslims to negotiate the challenges of modernity.

Endnotes

1 This is a revised version of a paper originally presented at an International Symposium on "The Voices of Islam in Europe and Southeast Asia" organized by the Institute of Liberal Arts, Walailak University, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Thailand and the Department of Asian Studies, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, from 20 to 22 January, 2006. I would like to place on record my thanks to Patrick Jory of Walailak University, first for inviting me to the conference and subsequently for encouraging me to update and submit the paper for publication.

2 For a concise and comprehensive discussion of the place of Islamic education and its reform imperatives, see Ibrahim Ahmad Bajunid, "Reform Imperatives in Islamic Educatiion in the Developing World" in *International Handbook of Education and Development: Preparing Schools, Students and Nations for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by William K. Cummings and Noel F. McGinn (Kidlington, Oxford, U.K. and New York: Pergamon, Elsevier Science, 1997), pp. 417-439.

3 Surah Al-Zumar, 39:9 of the Holy Quran states, "Are those equal, those who know, And those who do not know? See A Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Brentwood, Maryland: Amana Corp., 1989), pp. 1239.

4   Although geographically Burma or Myanmar is usually considered part of mainland Southeast Asia, in this paper I have taken the liberty to focus only on Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam which tend to share many similar socio-cultural characteristics in terms of traditional Muslim networks and *pondok*-based Islamic religious education. For practical reasons too, since in recent years I have been able to conduct meaningful fieldwork everywhere else except Burma, I feel that I should omit Burma to avoid any misrepresentation. I suspect, however, that like the rest of mainland Southeast Asia where the Muslims constitute a minority, the educational dilemmas of the Muslims in Burma are also not significantly different.

5   By Jawi tradition here I mean the existence of a socio-religious culture based on the familiarity and use of the Arabic script. This familiarity not only enables access to the Quran and other Islamic religious sources such as the Hadiths, but also empowers vernacular languages like Malay or Cham to emerge as an accepted Islamic mediums of knowledge and instruction, distinctive in their own right but yet symbolically and functionally allied to all the other Arabic-based language traditions. Although the Jawi script is principally defined by the Arabic script, its importance lies beyond the script. Jawi incorporates a sizeable number of Arabic terms, idioms and expressions, all of which are connected to each other to reinforce a common Islamic worldview. The importance of the *Kitab Jawi* tradition has been highlighted by Hasan Madmarn who sees it as the foundation for Islamic education linking the *pondok*, or traditional school system, with the local *ulama* and the corpus of Islamic knowledge that they have produced for the Patani region and beyond. See Hasan Madmarn, *The Pondok and Madrasah in Patani* (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2002), pp. 49-50 and Ibrahem Narongraksakhet, "Pondoks and Their Roles in Preserving Muslim Identity in Southern Provinces of Thailand", in *Knowledge and Conflict Resolution: The Crisis of the Border Region of Southern Thailand*, edited by Uthai Dulyakasem and Lertchai Sirichai (Nakhon Si Thammarat: School of Liberal Arts, Walailak University 2005), pp.107-109. See also Ismail Hamid, "Kitab Jawi: Intellectualizing Literary Tradition", in *Islamic Civilization in the Malay World*, edited by Mohd. Taib Osman (Kuala Lumpur and Istanbul: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and The Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 1997), pp. 211-212.

6   Practically every major analysis of the recent problem in Thailand's Malay-Muslim areas has tried to address the issue of Jawi in the context of the on-going cultural tussle between Malay and Thai culture. See for example, Gothom Arya, "Local Patriotism and the Need for Sound Language and Education Policies in the Southern Border Provinces", in *Understanding Conflict and Approaching Peace in Southern Thailand* (2nd ed.) edited by Imtiyaz Yusuf and Lars Peter Schmidt (Bangkok: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2006), pp. 38-48 and the *Report of the National Reconciliation Commission, Overcoming Violence through the Power of Reconciliation* (Bangkok: The National Reconciliation Commission, 2006), p. 100.

7   Interestingly, in Thailand's latest constitution promulgated in 2007 by the military-backed regime, like its predecessor which was formulated in 1997, Buddhism is not explicitly identified as the state religion although the King is required to be a Buddhist. See Office of the Election Commission of Thailand, "Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand" (Approved by Referendum 19 August 2007) Unofficial Translation (Bangkok: ECT, 2007), pp. 1-98. In Cambodia, the situation is different since Article 43 of the present constitution which was adopted in 1993 specifically stipulates that "Buddhism shall be religion of the state." See Sok Siphana, ed. *Laws of Cambodia* (Phnom Penh: Cambodian Legal Resources Development Center, 1998), p.14.

8   After the general election of December 2007, Samak Sundaravej of the People's Power Party be-
     came Prime Minister on 29 January 2008. He served until early September when he was replaced
     by Somchai Wongsawat who served until 2 December, 2008. Chaovarat Chanweerakul then took
     over as Acting Prime Minister for about two weeks before Abhisit Vejjajiva was appointed Premier
     on 17 December 2008. Throughout this period Thailand was rocked by political uncertainty.

9   For a detailed treatment of the impact of Khmer Rouge rule on Cambodia's Muslims see Ysa
     Osman, *Oukoubah: Justice for the Cham Muslims under Democratic Kampuchea* (Phnom Penh: Docu-
     mentation Center of Cambodia, 2002), pp. 2-6 and also Ben Kiernan, The Pol Pot Regime: Race,
     Power and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979 (Chiangmai: Silkworm,
     1997), pp. 252-288.

10   Omar Farouk, "Islam, Nationalism, and the Thai State" *Dynamic Diversity in Southern Thailand*,
     edited by Wattana Sugannasil (Chiangmai: Silkworm Books, 2005), p.10.

11   According to the 1993 Mosque register [*thabian masyid*] there were 2,799 mosques in the whole
     kingdom of Thailand, but I understand from various sources that the number has increased
     since. Michel Gilquin suggests that there are 2,918 mosques; see Michel Gilquin, *Les Musulmans
     de Thailande* (Paris and Bangkok: L'harmattan and Institut de Recherche sur l'Asie du Sud Est
     Contemporaine, 2002), p. 60.

12   Thailand was accepted as a permanent observer of the OIC in 1996 with the assistance of Ma-
     laysia. This information was obtained from Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, a former Foreign Minister of
     Thailand.

13   There is no consensus on how many Muslims there are in Thailand. For perspectives on this
     problem, see Omar Farouk, "Islam, Nationalism, and the Thai State", p. 4. Michel Gilquin
     cites a much larger figure for the Muslim population of 7,391,235 for all of Thailand; see Michel
     Gilquin, *Les Musulmans de Thailande*, pp. 55 – 60.

14   Omar Farouk, "Islam, Nationalism, and the Thai State".

15   *Ibid.*

16   *Ibid.*, p. 11.

17   See Ibrahem, "Pondoks and their Roles in Preserving Muslim Identity in Southern Provinces of
     Thailand", pp. 69-128.

18   Omar Farouk, "Islam, Nationalism, and the Thai State".

19   On the issue of mutual suspicion between the Malay-Muslims and the Thai officials, see Warayuth
     Sriwarakuel, "Building High Trust Cultures for Peace in the South of Thailand" in *Understand-
     ing Conflict and Approaching Peace in Southern Thailand*, edited by Imtiyaz Yusuf and Lars Peter
     Schmidt, pp. 75 -91.

20   Figures vary but most researchers suggest a figure of around 5 % of the total population. No exact statistics are available.

21   According to the Mosque register kept by the Office of the Mufti in Cambodia, as of 2006.

22   Omar Farouk," The Reconstruction of Islam in Cambodia" in *An Empirical Survey of Muslim Networks in Northeastern Thailand, Laos and Cambodia*, edited by Seiji Imanaga (Hiroshima: Monbusho, 1998), pp.1-80.

23   Omar Farouk "The Place of Jawi in Contemporary Cambodia" in *The Journal of Sophia Asian Studies*, No. 20, (2000): 134.

24   Omar Farouk "The Reorganization of Islam in Cambodia and Laos" in *Islam at the Margins: The Muslims of Indochina*, edited by Omar Farouk and Hiroyuki Yamamoto (Kyoto: Center for Integrated Area Studies, University of Kyoto, 2008), pp. 76-77.

25   Rie Nakamura, "Ethnicity of the Chams in Vietnam" in *Jurnal Pusat Pengajian Sejarah, Politik dan Strategi, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*, No. 32 (2005): p. 117.

26   See Philip Taylor, *Cham Muslims of the Mekong Delta: Place and Mobility in the Cosmopolitan Periphery* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007), p. 29.

27   Omar Farouk, "The Reorganization of Islam", p. 81.

28   Omar Farouk, "The Place of Jawi", p. 132.

29   *Ibid.*

30   *Ibid.*

31   The revival of the Cham language using the Arabic script has evolved in this way. A typescript Cham-Malay dictionary has been compiled and the Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka of Malaysia is also in the process of publishing a Cham-Malay dictionary.

32   On the Khmerization of Islam see Omar Farouk, "The Place of Jawi", p. 138.

33   Hassan Abdul Karim, *Kinh Qur'an* [Translation of the Holy Qur'an into Vietnamese] (Hanoi: Nha Xuat Ban Ton Giao, 2001).

34   See Ibrahem, "Pondoks and their Roles in Preserving Muslim Identity in Southern Provinces of Thailand", pp. 87-91, and Hasan, *The Pondok and Madrasah in Patani*, pp. 68-79.

35   Feeder schools based on the curriculum of religious schools in Malaysia made it possible for Cambodian Muslim students to further their studies in Malaysia and other Muslim countries. Islamic secondary schools in Cambodia like An-Nikmah and Muhammadi follow the Malaysia Secondary

Religious School [*Sekolah Menengah Ugama*] curriculum and sit for the Secondary Certificate of Religious School Examination set by the Kelantan Religious School Board. In the examination the script used is Jawi and Arabic but this is just for religious studies. Every year about 30 to 50 graduates from this school system who pass this examination will proceed to study in Kelantan, Perak or Perlis in Malaysia, They usually enroll at the following schools, Madrasah Maahad Tarbiyah Al-Islamiyah, Tanjung and Maahad Fi'ul Ulum and Maahad Al-Ummah. They go to study for the Malaysian Higher Certificate for Religious Education [*Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia*]. After obtaining this certificate they can easily gain admission to either Malaysian universities or those in other Muslim countries. The Islamic Center of Cambodia school, restructured from the former Ummul Qura School which was closed down, has a dual system. In the morning religious education is offered while in the afternoon the national system is given. The school has six years of primary education and six years of secondary education. The secondary school curriculum is based on the Saudi system. All the textbooks are in Arabic and are from the Saudi system. Arabic proficiency is emphasized here. The textbooks of the national system are from the Ministry of Education. Malay is taught in the school for one hour a week using a textbook published in Johor, Malaysia.

36   I managed to visit the school several times and was able to witness its remarkable progress. One fascinating feature was the fluency of its students in Arabic after studying for only a few years at the school. This school would have emerged as a major feeder institution to Islamic universities in the Middle East if not for its sudden dislocation in 2003 due to political intervention.

37   The accusations were never proven in court and the accused were acquitted three years later but the incident created immediate tensions between the Muslim community in Cambodia and their leaders and caused great resentment towards the United States government which was widely believed to have been behind the arrests. The United States Embassy in Phnom Penh had to go to great lengths following this incident to re-assure the Muslims in Cambodia that they were not being targeted as an enemy. American gestures towards the Muslims began to emerge in various ways including the holding of *iftar* for Muslim leaders by the American Ambassador at his official residence. The Cambodian Government, too, acted swiftly to return the seized premises to the Mufti and his team. Ummul Qura was subsequently renamed the Islamic Center of Cambodia and a new school started two years later.

38   Ibrahem, "Pondoks and their Roles in Preserving Muslim Identity in Southern Provinces of Thailand", pp. 114-115.

39   *Report of the National Reconciliation Commission, Overcoming Violence through the Power of Reconciliation*, p. 100.

40   See Omar Farouk "Islamic Resurgence and Scholarship in ASEAN: *Prospects and Challenges" in Islam and the Quest of Social Science*, edited by Chaiwat Satha-Anand (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1989), pp. 24-47.

CHAPTER TEN

MAINTAINING RELIGIOUS TRADITION IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM: INSPIRATION AND CHALLENGES

Iik A. Mansurnoor

"... [T]he responsibility for religious education has been returned to the Ministry of Religious Affairs ... You should implement it properly based on proper research and planning and not just by trying things out, even though the predicted results are still unclear to us. ... You should learn from previous mistakes and experience while implementing it. What happened to the previous science stream in Arabic schools and also the 'integrated' system should be enough to teach us.... A perfect religious education is what we aim for" [*Titah* (Royal Address) 2005].[1]

INTRODUCTION

In appreciating the strength of the religious foundations in Brunei instead of limiting our examination to the conservative nature of the prevailing discourse and school of thought we ought also to examine the intellectual and ideological backdrop of Islamization in this country. Before its decline in the nineteenth century

Brunei had succeeded in establishing itself as a powerful polity with a rich religious and intellectual tradition. The character and expression of Islam in Brunei reflects and at the same time is molded by the religious education in the country.

In addressing the perceptions, study, and propagation of Islam in modern Brunei this chapter looks at three modes in which Islam has been understood: public consumption, basic religious education, and more specifically, the advanced study of Islam at higher learning institutions. It will discuss the relationship between the current religiosity and understanding of Islam in Brunei as exemplified in the education system and how Islam has been studied and propagated. I shall elaborate on government designs and the policies that have been successful in bringing both stability to the nation and legitimacy to its leadership. Crucial to the production of this legitimacy has been the hegemonic discourse of MIM – "Malay Islamic Monarchy" – and within this discourse education has undoubtedly played a strategic role.

Beyond the hegemonic discourse, however, current debate over education policy including how Islam should be studied also demonstrates the presence of an endeavour that strives to domesticate, if not claim "independence" over, the mode of education as a means both of pursuing knowledge and of developing the country's human resources. In an earlier study one Brunei educator has insisted that education policy and the country's school system remain a mere copy of the colonial model, despite attempts to move away from this dependency. In his words, "…political independence did not bring with it educational independence, as the Brunei Darussalam case-study has revealed".[2] This sense of educational dependence is directly related to debates about Islam. As one prominent religious scholar, Pehin Yahya, maintains, the only solution to the confusion of education policy in the country is a "return to Islam", i.e. giving Islam a commanding position in the management and administration of education.[3]

The predominance and ever-present nature of the state in Brunei has led to close interaction between education – including the study of Islam – and the political establishment. Not surprisingly the Brunei government has consistently attempted to mold education as a means of perpetuating its domination while at the same time providing opportunities for competition and change which it views as relevant both to the country's political structure and to a culture of learning and professionalism.[4] Indeed, education policy toward the study of Islam has been pursued ingeniously and persistently so as to produce the desired outcome: dedicated citizens who are loyal to the ruler, moderate in their religiosity, and who uphold the much-valued Malay culture. These elements can all be traced throughout policies on education produced in 1962, 1972, 1985 and 2003.

THE STUDY OF ISLAM AND ISLAM IN PRACTICE

As a discipline Islamic Studies in Southeast Asia has developed very rapidly. Based on the models proposed by Fazlur Rahman[5] and Aziz al-Azmeh,[6] Chaiwat Satha-Anand suggests that a distinction exists between Islamic Studies and Muslim Studies.[7] The former is "the study of Islam which takes into account at least three types of sacredness: the Qur'an as Islam's sacred text; Islam's three holy cities...; and the sacred duties of Muslims which include sacrificing everything for the sake of Allah, Almighty".[8] Muslim Studies, on the other hand, seeks to examine the lives of Muslims and their living societies. Muslim Studies does not focus on the scholastic study of the Qur'an, the Hadith, nor Islamic Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), all of which require profound religious knowledge as well as a high level understanding of the Arabic language, not to mention the fact that these are the domains of authority of religious scholars. Although the second definition is clearly debatable Chaiwat has opened the door wide enough for social scientists and historians to study Islam in history and society. Other students of Islam have preferred to distinguish the object of Islamic Studies into that which belongs to normative-doctrinaire teaching, and that which develops in history or can be observed empirically in social contexts.[9] In characterizing the changing pattern of Islamic Studies in Malaysia Ibrahim Abu Bakar suggests a stimulating construct of different chronological phases: the religious, the linguistic and the pragmatic-liberal.[10]

Approaches to Islamic Studies in Brunei have undergone numerous shifts and metamorphoses. As earlier studies such as those of 1979, 1982, 1995 and 2000 have suggested,[11] an enumeration of approaches can be presented, from the traditional to the radical. Until quite recently the study of Islam or the offering of Islamic Studies programs in Brunei focused primarily on disseminating the core Islamic teaching, the revealed knowledge and the religious sciences which fall into the category of individual duty (*fard ʿayn*). Following Ibrahim's categorization the study of Islam in Brunei has remained heavily "religious", with some exceptions. Since a number of detailed summaries of the development of the study of Islam in Brunei have already been written[12] in the following discussion I shall only highlight certain details and focus more on a number of relevant issues today. The opening of religious classes since the 1930s was geared to providing school children with a basic knowledge of the Islamic faith, ethics and practices. In the 1960s a secondary religious school was established to prepare students for higher education. Only in 1983 did this school receive recognition by al-Azhar University when its leavers were successful in entering that university. A more advanced Islamic Studies program, the Institute of Islam-

ic Studies, was founded in 1989 under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Students who passed all the study requirements over three years in the Institute were given the opportunity to enter the fourth year program at al-Azhar. These two educational institutions closely applied the syllabi of al-Azhar. Interestingly, some of the students who graduated from the Institute of Islamic Studies were sent to Islamabad's International Islamic University and also universities in Kuala Lumpur.[13]

The foundation of Brunei's first university in 1985, the University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD), led to the opening of the Department of Islamic Studies. The Department's function was primarily to prepare education students specializing in the teaching of Islamic subjects in school. In addition, it also trained students specializing in religious disciplines such as Islamic law, theology, and history. The syllabi were mainly adapted from the Department of Islamic Studies at the University of Malaya and that of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.[14] The Department experienced a metamorphosis in 1992 when it was promoted to a full-fledged Faculty. The three departments under the Faculty offered programs in Arabic. The curricula and syllabi were increasingly attuned to established Islamic departments at the Middle Eastern universities, especially al-Azhar.

When the Institute of Islamic Studies merged with the Faculty of Islamic Studies at UBD in 1999, three departments were created. Instruction was conducted fully in Arabic and a large proportion of its faculty came from al-Azhar. Although the syllabi at the three departments reflected a strong Azhari influence, a few innovations were also made. For example, as can be seen in their course offerings in Figures 5, 6 and 7, such subjects as philosophy, modern ideologies, Orientalism and missionary work were introduced. The innovations of the 1990s reflect the Malaysian model in many respects.

Islamic Studies at the University of Brunei has gone through three major stages during its young life of just over two decades. During its formative years from 1985 to 1993 Islamic Studies was organized within a Department under the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS). The major characteristics of this period can be seen in the use Malay as the medium of instruction[15] and the offerings of Islamic Studies courses in the context of the BA program majoring in Islamic Studies and the BA Education program majoring in Islamic Studies. The latter survived until the last batch of students graduated in September 2005.[16]

Figure 1: The Structure of Islamic Studies Programs* at
the University of Brunei Darussalam 1985-2005

Year	Program	Main Courses	University and Other Courses
1985-1992	Bachelor in Islamic Studies (Malay)	See Figure 2	English, Critical Thinking, National Philosophy, and a package of minor subjects (at least 4-5 courses) in non-Islamic Studies disciplines
1996-1999	Bachelor in Islamic Studies (Arabic), Majoring in *Shari`ah* or in *Usul ad-Din wal-Dakwah*	See Figures 3, 4 and 5	English, National Philosophy, and a package of minor subjects (at least 4-5 courses) in non-Islamic studies disciplines
1999-2005	Bachelor in *Shari`ah*, *Usul ad-Din* or Arabic Language	See Figures 6, 7 and 8	English and National Philosophy

Note: *BA Education Programs (in Arabic, English, and Malay) are not specifically mentioned since the Islamic Studies content in these programs does not differ from that offered in pure BA programs.

Figure 2: Islamic courses offered by the Department of Islamic Studies:
BA Islamic Studies in Malay (1985-92)

Component	Subject	Note
Language	Arabic, *al-Nusus wal-Balagha*, English, Logic/Critical Thinking	These are taught in the early years of study, except *al-Nusus wal-Balagha*

Theology	*ʻAqidah, ʻIlm al-Kalam*, Islamic Thought, *Tasawwuf*	
Study of the Qur'an	Qur'anic exegesis, *ʻUlum al-Qur'an*	
Jurisprudence	*Fiqh al-ʻibadah, fiqh al-muʻamalah, usul al-fiqh, fiqh al-ahwal al-shakhsiyah, fiqh al-jinayah, siyyasah sharʻiyyah*, Administration of Islamic law	These subjects are taught in succession until graduation
Prophetic Tradition	Hadith, *ʻUlum al-hadith*	
History	Islamic history, Islamic civilization	
Academic Exercise	Minor thesis undertaken during the final year of study	Focusing on topics related to Islamic issues in the country and Southeast Asia

From 1993 Islamic Studies programs came fully under the administration of the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FIS). This period saw the formation of new departments such as the *Shariʻah*, Arabic Language and Islamic Civilization, and *Usul al-Din wal-Dakwah*, as well as the establishment of Arabic as a language of instruction. A BA Program (Arabic) in Islamic Studies (majoring in *shariʻah* or *usul al-din*) was introduced in 1996. This program survived until 1999 when the Institute of Islamic Studies (previously managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs) was merged with the Faculty of Islamic Studies becoming the Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien Institute of Islamic Studies (IPISHOAS).

Despite the changes introduced in 1993, 1996 and 1999, the BA Education (Malay and English) program majoring in Islamic Studies (Malay and Arabic) continued to be offered as before. From 1996, students who entered the BA program in *Shariʻah* and *Usul al-Din wal-Dakwah* took the same subjects and courses for the first four semesters (see Figure 3). Specialization started at semesters five until eight (see Figures 4 and 5).

Figure 3: Islamic courses offered for Year One and Two: B.A. Islamic Studies in
Arabic (majoring in *Shari`ah* or *Usul al-Din wal-Dakwah*) 1996-99

Component	Subject/Course	Note
Language	Arabic, Malay language, Qawa`id al-'Arabiya, English, Logic/Methodology in Islamic thinking	
Study of the Qur'an	*'Ulum al-Qur'an*, Memorization of the Qur'an	
Jurisprudence	*Fiqh al-`ibadah, Fiqh al-mu`amalah, al-Nuzum al-Islamiyah, Usul al-fiqh*	
Prophetic Tradition	`*Ulum al-hadith*	
Islamic History	Biography of the Prophet Muhammad and History of the First Four Caliphs	
Minor Package	Four courses within the first six semesters, taken from department/faculty outside FIS, especially FASS (history, geography, economics, literature or linguistics)	A student normally passes these courses by the time she/he starts the seventh semester

Figure 4: BA Islamic Studies in Arabic (majoring in *Usul al-Din wal-Dakwah*)
1996-99: Year Three and Four

Component	Subject/Course	Note
Research Methodology	*Asalib al-Bahth al-`Ilmi wa-Masadir al-Dirasat al-Islamiyah; Dirasah Nassiya min Kutub al-`Aqidah*	

Theology	*'Ilm al-Kalam*, Comparative Religion, *al-Firaq al-Islamiyah*, Ethics (*Akhlaq*), *Tasawwuf*, *al-Falsafah al-Islamiyah*, Modern Ideological Schools, Contemporary Islamic Thought	
Study of the Qur'an	Qur'an on Faith and Ethics	
Missionary Work	*'Usul al-Dakwah*, Methodology and techniques of Islamic Missionary Work, Contemporary Islamic Missionary Movement	
Prophetic Tradition	Ahadith on Faith and Ethics	
Islamic History	Contemporary Muslim World, Financial and Administrative Systems in Islam	
Academic Exercise	Minor thesis undertaken during the final year of study	More topics chosen from the pre-modern period

When the IPISHOAS was formed and officially came into operation in 1999 major organizational changes took place, as can be seen in Figures 6, 7, and 8.

Although the core Islamic subjects did not experience a major shift throughout this period the details and combination of the different disciplines did undergo some interesting changes. Osman Bakar's observations about the two centers of Islamic Studies at the University of Malaya can also be used as a starting viewpoint for looking at Islamic Studies at the University of Brunei.[17] Since the very beginning until 1999 the Department/Faculty of Islamic Studies (D/FIS) fully shared the overall policy of the University, intensive interaction and inter-department/faculty relations developed smoothly. For example, when the DIS was under FASS from 1985-93 students taking undergraduate programs at the DIS had to take a minor package in non-Islamic studies disciplines such as literature, linguistics, history, English, geography, or economics. This meant that, in a sense, students during this

period had access to a variety of subjects beyond the purely Islamic discipline. In addition, students also took university- and faculty-required courses such as English, critical thinking, research methodology, and national philosophy. I have yet to conduct a survey on how such a combination of subjects affected the overall personal and educational learning process of students compared to the post-1999 intake who had less access to non-Islamic studies disciplines. I would dare to surmise, however, following Osman's observations, that access to other disciplines may have helped to widen the horizons of their thought and learning. My own observations of earlier batches of Brunei graduates from al-Azhar confirms this assumption. Indeed, they were more articulate in diverse fields beyond purely Islamic Studies.

As can be seen in Figures 6, 7, and 8, students who enroll in the IPISHOAS undertake a more in-depth study of various aspects of Islamic Studies, taking additional subjects such as philosophy, comparative study of religions, and modern thought; however, they do not enjoy the option of taking a minor package of courses beyond the wall of the Islamic Studies discipline offered at IPISHOAS. Moreover, compared to those who entered the 1996-1999 program they are more exposed to other disciplines in Islamic Studies throughout their four years of undergraduate study.

Figure 6: BA in *Usul al-Din* 1999-2005, IPISHOAS

Component	Subject/Course	Note
Language	Arabic, English, Logic/Methodology in Islamic thinking, *Dirasah Nassiya*	These are taught in the early years of study, except *Dirasah Nassiya*
Theology	*Tawhid, al-Milal wal-Nihal, Ethics (Akhlaq), Tasawwuf, al-Falsafah*, Modern Ideological Trends, Modern Islamic Thought	
Study of the Qur'an	Qur'anic exegesis, *`ulum al-Qur'an*, Memorization of the Qur'an, *Tajwid al-Qur'an*, Analytical exegesis, Topical exegesis, Methodology of Exegesis, Non-Islamic elements in Exegesis, Study of Exegetical texts	

Jurisprudence	*Fiqh al-`ibadah, Fiqh al-mu`amalah, Usul al-fiqh*, Islamic political systems, *Fiqh al-ahwal al-shakhsiyah*	
Missionary Work	*al-Dakwah al-Islamiyah*, Oratory and Call to Islam, Orientalism and Missionary Work	
Prophetic Tradition	Hadith, `*Ulum al-hadith*, Study of spurious hadith	
History	Islamic history, Contemporary Muslim World	
Academic Exercise	Minor thesis undertaken during the final year of study	

EDUCATION: WHICH SERVES ISLAM BEST?

For some years scholars and leaders in Brunei have been discussing the concept of comprehensive and integrated education (*sekolah sehari suntuk* and *pendidikan bersepadu*) which would end the duality of schooling in the country. The idea is not new among many proponents of Islamic education and intellectual discourse. What is novel is that Brunei is perhaps the first modern state which formally implemented the synthesis, even if only for two years, 2004-2005.[18]

Since the 1970s the opening of elite schools resulted in the sending of home-grown students to pursue higher education at renowned universities in Egypt and England. Certainly, they were not the first Bruneians to join and later graduate from the University of London or al-Azhar University. However, they represented the pioneers of successful Brunei elite schooling, both in the secular and religious streams respectively. Indeed, in 1966 an ambitious and admirable education plan manifested an early attempt at amalgamating the best modern school practice and excellence in the *madrasah* tradition. By 1967 separate schools for boys and girls (*Sekolah Arab Menengah*) had admitted the best pupils to pursue both general and religious instruction at the secondary level. In addition, Malay, Arabic and English became major media of instruction. Interestingly this initiative had been taken by men of religion,

the `ulama'. As Brunei gradually assumed full responsibility for its domestic affairs, the initiative for the foundation of such an institution can also be located within the larger national context. General education obviously had some colonial legacy – it had been a British initiative. Thus the decision to establish a model of comprehensive schooling was a political statement about national education. An alternative educational paradigm was created to buttress self-reliance and independence. Indeed, in 1971 Brunei launched its major National Education Policy.

The Arabic Secondary School (*Sekolah Arab Menengah*) was lauded for its success in preparing well-trained candidates for al-Azhar University and, to some extent, other universities offering non-religious degrees. However the fact that the school was more successful in winning the recognition of al-Azhar as its students were granted direct admission to all its religious faculties but not in other fields raised some doubt whether the philosophy behind this initiative had missed its target. Not only were those who opted for non-religious specializations small in number but they also failed to compete with those of other well-known schools in the country. The aim of producing all-round students immersed in both disciplines did not fully materialize. It is thus not surprising that the school has focused more on the preparation for students to pursue higher education at al-Azhar, even though the general program aiming at preparing students for GCE 'A' levels has been maintained.

To elucidate the earlier point about the polarization surrounding elite education we may examine the case of the elite secular school, the Science College. The Science College (*Maktab Sains Paduka Seri Begawan Sultan)* which began classes in 1978 caters for the secondary and pre-university education of the best Brunei pupils from primary school.[19] They are prepared to take the top positions in all the non-religious professions available in the country. Provided with generous scholarships and the promise of lucrative future positions many parents and pupils have taken the challenge seriously.

In 1990 the school offered a full days' schooling for its first year intakes. This means that Muslim pupils need not leave the school compound to join the common Islamic classes after school in the afternoon, as is normally the case with Muslim pupils at lower secondary. They take the same religious classes offered at the school in the afternoon. Although the school then operated two systems of education, general and religious, the administration of these systems remained separate. Concomitant with the reorganization of the education system in the country in the late 1990s serious thought was given and attempts made to reform education. For example, an education convention was held in 1998 to address the issue of integrated education. The dissemination of "revealed knowledge" and "worldly sciences", to use the terms

commonly used at the International Islamic University, had to be integrated within the whole package of the curriculum.[20] The Convention produced the following resolution:[21]

1. Integrated education, based on Brunei's national identity, should be developed in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and other parties, especially the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which have a stake in education;

2. The state philosophy of education based on the Islamic philosophy of education and the Malay-Islamic-Monarchy (MIM) philosophy should be formed in the near future in order to produce Bruneians who are committed to the *fard `ayn* and the *fard kifayah* tasks;

3. The concept of integrated education should be formulated in the context of the nation, and should be widely disseminated to all Bruneians, particularly educators. Only then should further steps be taken in the direction of implementing the concept of integrated education in the aims and objectives of education, the curriculum and co-curriculum, teaching, assessment, and examination;

4. The curriculum for teacher education in the 21st century should emphasize the deepening of knowledge, skills, and values of prospective teachers so that not only are they immersed in pedagogy but they also inspired by the MIM philosophy in particular as well as the Islamic worldview in general. Therefore it is necessary that programs for teacher training and teacher specialization are reexamined and revamped to develop integrated education.

5. The curriculum of integrated education must strictly and consistently maintain a balance between the elements of revealed and intellectual knowledge in order to achieve human dignity and wellbeing.[22]

EDUCATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS POLICY:
ISLAMIC STUDIES AT SCHOOL

Until the 1990s post-World War Two Brunei, like many other Muslim countries, had implemented dual educational systems: general education and religious education. The first falls under the wings of the Ministry of Education (MoE) while the second is under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Interestingly,

general education is a derivative and extension of the British educational legacy in the country (1906-1959). It is important first to examine the development of religious education.

Sekolah Ugama and *Sekolah Arab* (Fully Islamic Classes)

A reform of religious education was undertaken in 1956 when a specifically designed religious school was founded. Religious education had been traditionally offered at various venues such as the mosque, *surau*, *balai*, and the home. From the 1930s extra classes in the afternoon for Islamic knowledge were organized at various schools. Not surprisingly traditional instruction also declined. However, it was discovered in the mid-1950s that extra-classes for Islamic knowledge had not been successful in disseminating basic religious requirements among the pupils. After further studies and considerations a full religious school (*madrasah*) was founded, based on the Johor model of religious schooling. The major objective of the school was to nurture mature Muslim pupils. This can be seen in the guidelines and the curriculum. The major emphasis of the curriculum was on providing a foundation for pupils to live correctly as Muslims. Religious subjects (*fiqh, tawhid, akhlaq, religious practice, Islamic history, Arabic reading and writing* and *Qur'an*) formed the core of the study at this *madrasah*.

The 1962 rebellion left an important moral lesson, paving the way for more attention to be given to religious education. Various schemes of religious instruction for all citizens were intitiated. Religious classes for adults were intensified. In 1965 a package of religious instruction was designed for pupils at all levels of education. This was mainly directed at those pupils who had failed to attend the religious school.

Islamic Studies as a Subject at General School

The second half of the 1960s witnessed the beginning of an Islamic resurgence in the country. First of all, the Islamic contents of the 1959 Constitution were intensively and seriously re-examined and propagated. Moreover, religious education emerged as a strategic means to establish order and stability after the political crisis of the early 1960s. In fact, Islamic Studies as a subject had been introduced to the schools as early as the mid-1930s. Classes were normally offered in the afternoon at the same public school buildings. The practice survived until the mid-1950s when the proper *madrasah* (*sekolah ugama*) was introduced in 1956. Surprisingly Islamic Studies as a

subject at the general schools ceased to be taught until 1965 when certain schools began to again offer such a subject. Later a package of basic knowledge about Islam, including theology, law, ethics, the Qur'an, Prophetic tradition, Sufism, and Islamic history, was inserted into school syllabi at all levels. The package was given a teaching period comparable to any other major subject at school.

Integrated Education

Since the early 1990s studies and attempts have been made by the MoE to accommodate religious classes in the general system by introducing full-day schooling. Although the introduction of the new system has not put an end to the polarization in Brunei's education it has opened up the opportunity for closer cooperation, exchange, and communication.

The original idea of integrated education can be traced to two sources: one administrative and one philosophical. In a small state like Brunei, all educational matters can be more effectively handled through a centralized body. In other words, the idea sprang from practical considerations. The revivalist agenda since the 1970 that sought to bring all affairs under Islam, including the concept of the Islamization of knowledge, seems to have inspired Brunei leaders to introduce an 'integrated education system'. Indeed, the 1972 National Education Policy emphasized the importance of making Islamic Studies a part of the school curriculum at all levels of education. The revised National Policy on Education of 1985 again placed the Islamization of knowledge as the main agenda for national education through the harmonization of teaching and the content of most subjects studied at schools with the teachings of Islam.[23]

After some years of experimentation in January 2004 an integrated system of education was implemented at the kindergarten and lower primary grades. During the period 2005-2006 the system was extended to the upper primary grades (4, 5, and 6). By 2008 it is planned that the system will be introduced at the secondary levels (lower and upper: 1-5). By 2012 higher education institutions are expected to endorse the system. However, for various reasons, particularly the official decision to revamp the national education plan in mid-2005, the system was terminated by the beginning of 2006.

By the time the integrated system of education was in full swing in early 2005, its aims, objectives, long and short term action plan, syllabi, and schedule were spelled out:[24]

1. Aim of the system: the unification of current Islamic and general strands of education, practically integrating the core revealed knowledge with intellectual knowledge.

2. The objective:

-   to enhance the practice and understanding of Islam;
-   to uphold and implement national values;
-   to synchronize education with pupil's abilities and interests;
-   to produce pupils well-equipped to face the modern world;
-   to improve achievements in literacy, numeracy, scientific literacy and functional literacy
-   to broaden extra-curricular and co-curricular activities.

3. Long and short term action plan:

-   to integrate the contents of all three curricula of Islamic Studies, that is the *madrasah* curriculum, the curriculum of Islamic Studies as a subject in the primary schools, and the curriculum of Qur'anic recitation and Islamic knowledge, into one curriculum in the new system;
-   to disseminate and absorb Islamic values as well as launch the Islamization of knowledge at all levels of education;
-   to integrate general knowledge, including Islamic knowledge, into all curricula through the concept of immersion and synthesis;
-   to synthesize all aspects of knowledge, comprehension, skill and values, paving the way for intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical integration.

MODERN EDUCATION AND THE STUDY OF ISLAM IN BRUNEI: VIEWS OF PROMINENT SCHOLARS-CUM-LEADERS

To have some comparative perspective on the debate about how the study of Islam can be best undertaken in Brunei's national education system it is useful to examine views on this issue as expressed by three prominent scholars in the country. These views may help shed light on the recent introduction, and almost at the same time, termination of, the "integrated system of education".

Pehin Jamil's Concept of Comprehensive Education

Some years before independence Pehin Jamil Al-Sufri, head of the Language and Literature Bureau, wrote a commentary and guide to the Executive Plan for Education Policy, a report by the Brunei Education Commission in 1972. The policy consists of eight major components, including Islamic education. Since Islam had been endorsed in the 1959 Constitution as the official religion of Brunei, Islamic education at all levels of education was necessary. Education in the country should specify the offering of proper Islamic education in school from the earliest stages so that children could be expected to be citizens dedicated to religion, nation, and monarchy.[25] For him, the knowledge acquired by students was incomplete without an education based on Islam. Only through proper education and the knowledge of Islam could citizens be expected to behave and act correctly and in an Islamic way. All Muslims needed to study Islam whether in general or in detail depending on their duties and responsibilities in society. Yet, Muslims were also encouraged to excel in worldly life in the pursuit of general knowledge, science, and technology (*fard kifayah*) within the context of the worship of God.[26]

Islamic education offered instruction in several fundamental disciplines (*fard `ayn*) such as Islamic jurisprudence, theology, ethics, and Sufism.[27] In ensuring that the will and aim of the Constitution to make Islam the way of life was truly achieved knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence was indispensable for Muslim pupils from their earliest schooling as well as the population in general.[28] Any idea that Islamic education, including instruction in law, was trivial and unimportant had to be discarded outright. Islamic education must be soundly grounded in theology, providing pupils with a genuine belief in God. Moreover, sound belief and correct actions should be ornamented by honesty and submission to God based on Islamic mysticism (*tasawwuf*). Pehin Jamil argued that since Islam had been unanimously accepted as the way of life in the country (as embodied in the Constitution), it was necessary to ensure

that the study of Islam be included in all levels of education, whether partially or fully.[29] The curricula and syllabi of Islamic education had to be implemented and supported by textbooks and practical application. Guidance and leadership in implementing Islamic education must be undertaken as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Pehin Mufti Ismail's Articulation of Islamic Education in the Modern Era

When Pehin Ismail was State Mufti he issued and wrote many treatises on social issues, including Islamic education. However, in 1982 he wrote a treatise specifically on national education viewed from an Islamic perspective. For Pehin Ismail, Brunei, like any other modern independent country, should have its own national education policy, paving the way for the stability, order and progress of the country and its citizens. He offered some general observations and comparisons with education policy in the United States (secular), Saudi Arabia and Pakistan (Islamic, in varying degrees), and the Middle East under diverse socialist regimes (an eclectic and mixed approach). For Pehin Ismail, "modern education always shifts and changes adjusting to the needs and character of each nation".[30] Consequently, it was vital for Muslims, Pehin Ismail insisted, to determine and strive to develop modern education based on the trodden path of Islam (*berusaha hendak balek dan hidup chara Islam, menerusi sekolah2, universiti2, pertubohan2 dan akhbar2…*).[31]

In order to guide Muslim leaders and planners in national education, Pehin Ismail, as a Muslim legal expert, understandably divides knowledge into two: religious knowledge (*`ilm al-shara`*) and non-religious knowledge (*ilmu yang bukan shara`*). Religious knowledge has three categories: the individual responsibility for knowing/learning religious duties (*fard `ayn*), group responsibility for knowing/learning religious duties (*fard kifayah*), and the non-obligatory (*nafl*) task of knowing. Non-religious knowledge may be permissible (*mubah*), reprehensible (*makruh*), or prohibited (*haram*). In a sense, education based on an Islamic concept should proceed through a pyramidal structure where the higher it advances the more it deals with religious knowledge. Knowledge of *fard `ayn* should be given priority, and more space and time at the earlier stage of education. The other two branches of knowledge should follow in order of priority. Curiously, the examples provided for non-religious knowledge are restricted to morality and literature.[32]

Pehin Ismail considers the role of the teacher as the most crucial in education. After all, the best teacher, he maintains, is one who keeps a low profile (*ghayr i`jab*) despite his depth of the knowledge and who submits all educational works to God.

More specifically, he maintains that knowledge should not be 'prostituted' for personal gain.[33]

Muslim scholars should continuously pursue research and publish their work carefully and with confidence (*muhaqqiq mujtahid*). Research should be conducted in unexplored fields and relevant subjects. Educational activities and scientific research are considered one of the best professions in Islam since the spread of knowledge is indispensable in human society.[34]

National education should encompass the Islamic way of life as well as national components of patriotism, culture, and tradition.[35] Brunei has ample opportunities to bring Islam into classrooms at all levels of education.

Pehin Yahya's Argument against Brunei's 'Integrated Education'

The core thought of Pehin Yahya's thesis on education and the study of Islam comes from the idea that the fundamental knowledge in Islam springs from God (revealed knowledge), and manifests itself in the knowledge of individual religious duties (*fard `ayn*) for Muslims.[36] Complementary knowledge and the sciences belong to the category of collective duties (*fard kifayah*), which should buttress Muslims' knowledge of *fard `ayn*.[37] Quoting Al-Attas, Pehin Yahya argues that *fard `ayn* means "knowledge of prerequisites that must form the basis of all education".[38] These prerequisites cover all the important core values in religion and life in general. Since non-Islamic systems do not have such a category (*fard `ayn*), modern education, as advocated by the colonial regimes and which continues to be upheld by many in the newly independent states, potentially leads to the de-Islamization of Muslim minds.[39] *Fard `ayn* education, which forms the foundation of all knowledge and learning, thus suffers from underdevelopment and remains at an 'infantile level.' For Pehin Yahya, *fard `ayn* education should be emphasized throughout all levels of education, especially until the secondary level.[40]

As Chaiwat has suggested with his concept of the "three sacreds",[41] Pehin Yahya argues that religious commands should be excepted from experimentation and reasoning, and in fact lie beyond rational capacity. He is convinced that nothing on earth can comprehend such complex issues as faith and belief (*iman dan taqwa*). He argues that Islamic education and, to an extent, the study of Islam itself, should be independently pursued free from secular Western principles. The latter have no permanence let alone eternalness; they constantly change and shift. The key issue for Pehin Yahya is that secularism has nothing to offer for worship (*`ibadah*), especially in the context of education, whereas worship in Islam brings about a cascade

of human knowledge, education, and action. He remains highly suspicious of attempts by Muslim societies to cover up secular education with "Islamic symbols" (*cat berkilauan dengan istilah merapong*), which lead nowhere as far as Islamic education is concerned.

Pehin Yahya identifies two major problems facing Islamic education today. First, the influence in the new, independent Muslim nations of the Western concept of education, as represented by John Dalton (d.1844), Maria Montessori (d.1952), and John Dewey (d.1952), cannot be responded to simply by making minor changes to the education system. The real problem is that Islamic education has been looked down upon and even considered anti-modern, with the consequence that some Muslims find themselves detached from their own religion. Pehin Yahya's criticism of Brunei's "integrated education" scheme should be located in this context. The concept of "integrated education" can be traced to a hesitation to fully endorse an Islamic system of education. The proponents of the scheme do not understand and do not appreciate the value of the Islamic system. For Pehin Yahya the scheme suffers from a symbolic approach to Islamic concepts, while in reality it is a total endorsement of general – read: Western – education. Pehin Yahya's main contention focuses on the duality of the scheme: the "general", which is the more dominant, and "religious" components. "Islam does not enjoy a commanding position vis-a-vis the general sciences. The general sciences do not aim at buttressing and enhancing *fard `ayn* education, as argued by Muslim scholars. The norm should be that the general sciences form only a discipline within academic activities which are determined by Islam and pave the way for the empowerment of the *fard `ayn*. They should not be placed in an equal, let alone superior, position".[42] After all, revealed knowledge is the only eternal truth, whereas acquired knowledge or rational science is only considered valid if it is relevant to and bolsters divine truth. Non-revealed knowledge is value- and methodology-oriented, and thus ephemeral. Value-systems are never universal and methodology always differs. Pehin Yahya clearly adopts a religionist position here.

The integration of knowledge and science in Islam should not mean duality or compartmentalization; for Pehin Yahya revealed knowledge should predominate and inspire acquired knowledge. The latter should help Muslims understand the meaning and spirit of the divine truth, including individual and societal development. "Acquired knowledge should follow the perfection of revealed knowledge, not *vice versa*".[43] Interestingly, a diagram used by Pehin Yahya[44] to elaborate his concept of integrated knowledge and its impact on Muslim society is similar to those used by the Malaysian scholar Kamal Hassan[45] and Brunei's Ministry of Education.[46]

The second problem according to Pehin Yahya is the pauperization of *fard `ayn* knowledge among modern Muslim scholars, despite their Ph.D. titles from well-known universities. Since many of these scholars pursue their studies in disciplines other than the core Islamic disciplines of Islamic jurisprudence, the principles of jurisprudence, theology, Qur'anic studies and the Prophetic traditions, they cannot be expected to address major Islamic issues, particularly the *fard `ayn*. Their in-depth study of civilization and thought, indeed, has limited use and relevance to the actual lives of Muslims today. He refers to models taken from the great Muslim thinkers such as Avicenna (d.1037), Averroës (d.1198), and Ghiyath al-Din al-Kashi (d.1436) (who ironically have little relevance to religious thought in Brunei's religious establishment). It is thus imperative that Islamic education should be free from the Western secular approach to religion.[47] Pehin Yahya then enumerates factors in the disparity or imbalance of Islamic knowledge:

- Fragmentation and extreme specialization of modern study and disciplines;
- Reliance on secondary sources;
- Weaknesses in the use and mastery of Arabic language;
- Emphasis given to studying the differences of legal opinion in Islamic schools (*madhhabs*), instead of searching for authentic and trusted opinions (*tarjih al-madhhab*).

Despite the differences in their views of the dissemination of knowledge, all three scholars agree that the study of Islam should be given priority at all levels of education. In the present context of the study of Islam in Brunei, and perhaps also in the context of continuing Muslim-European dialogue and exchange, Pehin Yahya's thesis and its ostensible rival, indeed, deserve more thorough examination.

EDUCATING THE PUBLIC TO LIVE ISLAMICALLY

In simplistic terms the study of Islam in Brunei, including its education policy, may be viewed as a means of maintaining the hegemonic discourse of the state. This is reflected in, for example, the fact that the state, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, enjoys full control over all religious activities, mosques, and *madrasahs*. No less important has been the role given to the national philosophy, "Malay Islamic Monarchy" (MIM), in generating a particular perception of the relationship between

religion and state. After all, Brunei continues to uphold the monarchy as the paramount Islamic institution.

Seen from recent *salafi* perspectives Brunei and the state of Islamic Studies there may be simply categorized as conservative and stagnant. Indeed, its small population, its monolithic polity, and its heavy reliance on non-renewable hydrocarbons, have made Brunei unique in the region. Does the enterprise of Islamic studies in the country merely perpetuate the status quo? How can the population smoothly adhere to the long-held approach to Islam? Does the contiguity of social activities with religious tradition make commonality and continuity, including Islamic Studies, the perfect choice? Many other teasing questions may be raised to place Brunei's religious tradition and its approach to Islam into perspective.

At a glance, Islamic Studies in Brunei might be regarded as merely the extension of the official dissemination of correct practice and sound faith – as initiated from the earlier stages of children's education with the opening of religious classes for kindergarten and primary pupils. This would especially appear to be the case if one looks at the emphasis given to developing having Islamic Studies programs in higher education which are attuned to and in accordance with highly respected institutions like al-Azhar University. More specifically, seen from the perspective of religious policy, an emphasis on well-structured and well-defined religious approaches serves the status quo of domination and stability. Brunei's relatively small population and its recent resumption of full political independence (1982) have made it keen to assert its presence in the community of nations by means of, among other things, asserting its Islamic identity. Islam as practiced in the country has thus been specifically identified and clearly categorized: accordance with the Shafi`i school of Islamic jurisprudence or law and the *ahl al-sunna wal-jama`a* belief system. Consequently, Islam in Brunei has been studied mainly to facilitate the implementation of such an approach.

Others may argue that the dominant position of religion in the public discourse and life of the nation is open to manipulation for the purpose of silencing the vociferant and recalcitrant. More specifically, given Islam's position as the official religion and the backbone of the state philosophy it can be used to undermine other voices. In reality, Brunei has been a member of the world community and, closer to home, also the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In other words, despite its uniqueness in several respects Brunei fundamentally shares with many other Muslim societies the intention of making Islam its principal guide and reference in dealing with modern life. Brunei has always attempted to make its approach to Islamic Studies consistent with its Islamic adherence and relevant to the dynamics

of state and society. Not surprisingly, when the need emerged following the end of the Pacific War for more professional scholars and functionaries in Islamic subjects, formal religious schooling was initiated for the first time in 1956. Other more advanced educational institutions for Islamic studies then followed.

In many ways, these newly introduced Islamic institutions of learning were derivatives of models and forms from elsewhere. The 1956 school was copied from the Johor *madrasah*, the Arabic Secondary schools from the Singapore and Klang colleges, and the Institute of Islamic Studies from al-Azhar. Yet, all of them increasingly underwent domestication and bore the marks of the national vision and interest. The most vociferous example that can be referred to might be the 2003 initiative to form the Center for Shafi`i School Studies. While many other centers have pursued a broader and more accommodating approach, Brunei seems to have opted for exclusivism.

In spite of its rather conservative approach to Islamic interpretation and practice Brunei seems to move comfortably within international *fora*. I have previously argued that the firm choice in taking this particular religious stand has facilitated confidence and commonality in initiating broader policy.[48] In other words, much energy has been conserved for other more pressing issues. Yet, it is increasingly apparent that the focus and emphasis on Islamic discourse also compensate for other concerns and decisions.

In addition to serving religious demands for proper praxis and correct belief, Islamic Studies has been geared toward buttressing the state and the nation. For example it is undeniable that the 1956 founding of the religious school and the expansion of various schemes of Islamic instruction after 1962 were socially and politically significant. The ability of the state to sponsor and monopolize "the service of the public," including the administration and management of Islamic affairs, provides it with a legitimacy in almost any undertaking.

In surveying the present religious constellation in Brunei one can conveniently point to a continuing pattern of Southeast Asian *mandala*. Religious officials or functionaries and intellectuals fall under the royal umbrella. Southeast Asian rulers, as Geertz illustrates, need no intermediate in linking themselves to god, even though the presence of brilliant scholars and religious figures are considered adornments for the rulers.[49] Can we trace some Islamic model or paradigm in such a close association between religious scholars and state? Early Islamic history has been identified as having produced autonomous scholars of caliber, including the four founders of the legal schools (*madhhab*), not to mention the emergence of non-mainstream schools.

However, Muslim rulers used many different means to centralize the polity and place religious scholars under the central government's umbrella, if not control, as can be seen clearly in the concept and system of Islamic governance proposed by such leading scholars as al-Mawardi (d.1056) and al-Ghazali (d.1111). If the early rulers including the Umawis and the 'Abbasis failed to control the religious scholars, later regimes including the Ottomans (1289-1924) and the Safawis (1501-1722) successfully co-opted them within a centralized religious bureaucracy, the *'ilmiye*. Since the formation of Islamic polities in the Malay archipelago was contemporary with the last two great empires it is not surprising, especially given the background of the Indic tradition in the region, that religious scholars found themselves closely associated with the court. The appropriation of Islam by the state and the Islamization of the Malay court went hand-in-hand with the bureaucratization of Islamic institutions, including religious scholars. Originally the Malay Muslim courts emerged as patrons of Islamic centers and education.

In Brunei the continuity of Malay Islamic monarchy meant the preservation of the patterned relations between the court and the religious scholars (*'ulama'*). The best expression of religious bureaucratization in the country can be seen in the pre-20th century formation of religious functionaries (*manteri ugama*). They formed a fixed religious hierarchy based on a rigid system of promotion awarded by the ruler through titles and ceremonies. In this sense religious functionaries were closely linked to, and in a sense subordinate to, the court and the ruler. Not surprisingly, Islamic education in the country has been patronized by the state and centralized. Almost all present religious figures and officials have been sent to pursue higher education under government schemes, including scholarships and promotions.

In examining the historical development of a corps of *'ulama'* in Southeast Asia and particularly Brunei I have been inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's generalizations on the relationship between knowledge, education, and power:[50]

1 The dominant classes use education to reproduce their influence in society as well as to create new modes of domination as the society becomes more complex;

2 Political and social order is maintained through two broad means: material and symbolic force. Material force is represented in the physical capacity of the state, the police or military, for example. Symbolic force, in a Gramscian sense, is traditionally perpetuated in the field of religion. In modern industrial societies schooling has taken the place of religion. Both religion and education, indeed, can be analyzed as systems of symbolic violence.

> Through schooling the dominant elite in society reproduce themselves, obtain access to multiple fields of power, and reassert their authority;

3   The relationship between the dominant elite in society and cultural reproduction is very intricate. The dominant elite acquires the social habit of distinction and differentiation on the basis of their access to education, defined in a broader sense. With their acquired educational power and the relationships that it implies, they acquire the ability to differentiate (to distance and control at the same time) themselves from other classes. Social distinction or recognition is the final objective of the dominant classes;

4   There is a polarization of the elite into the bourgeois elite that owes its power to education, and the aristocratic elite that derives its power from its inherited forms of cultural and material power.

For Abu Rabi', the religious intelligentsia in the Middle East has either to ally it self with the state or to opt to refuse to play the game of the power elite, thus leading to its marginalization.[51]

Ironically, if rapid change and socio-political uncertainty in the Middle East have caused the elite to look beyond traditional local education, even al-Azhar,[52] in Brunei and other parts of Islamic Southeast Asia al-Azhar continues to enjoy influence as a source of prestige and sophistication. Explanations for such a proclivity have been offered by scholars and the actors themselves, including those graduates from Brunei. Numerous studies have shown how the prestige of al-Azhar University is responsible for assisting its graduates to occupy key positions and high status in Indonesian Islamic institutions and the Muslim community generally for most of the second-half of the twentieth century. Howard Federspiel believes that the specific educational background of leading Muslim leaders and scholars during the period of the Soeharto regime is an important factor in explaining their prominence.[53] In contrast to Abaza's findings[54] those of Federspiel emphasize the diversity of their educational backgrounds, especially at the university level. Unlike the Muslim leaders in Indonesia, however,[55] those in Brunei come almost exclusively from religious backgrounds.

Culture, power, and economics are interconnected. The strength of the economic and political players significantly determines the dissemination of knowledge in a society and the type of education pursued. The choice of education by the Middle Eastern elite – American degrees ideally taken at universities in the United States – has perpetuated and indeed increased the power of this elite.[56] As Eickelman has argued, "[c]ontinual struggle among competing groups within society, each of which

seeks domination or influence, may result in changes in ideas of knowledge and the means by which such ideas are transmitted".[57] Indeed, the dominant view which relegates or ignores traditional Muslim leaders and scholars at a time of profound change has been under attack since the success of the Iranian revolution. In fact, the *'ulama'* do respond to change, but based on their own rhythms and perceptions.

Although the major focus of this chapter is the contemporary religious establishment in Brunei, in order to place the present configuration in the perspective of the country's religious development one must not overlook the legacy of religious education and ideological patterns in the country.

RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE AND NATION-BUILDING

Brunei has developed a religious atmosphere that has been instrumental in producing moderation. First of all, the small size of its population made radical innovation and controversies impractical and self-defeating. The British administrative reforms which were attuned to certain political ends also produced an environment of conservatism in religious administration and, to a large extent, a moderate form of Islamic expression.[58]

How were the al-Azhar graduates and newly educated Brunei *'ulama* able to assume religious leadership from the mid-1960s? What were the conditions which allowed them to do so? Was there no rivalry between the old religious order and the new generation of *'ulama*?

Let us first look closely at the sending of the first batch of students to the al-Junied Islamic School in Singapore. Although the sending of Brunei students abroad in 1950 was not a novelty, it was a new venture since the earlier study missions were oriented toward general education rather than Islamic education. A few Brunei students had been studying abroad before 1950 pursuing Islamic studies, as evidenced by Pehin 'Abd Mokti bin Nasar, who stayed in the Hijaz around the turn of the nineteenth century.[59] The first batch in 1950 involved three boys who had just completed their primary education.[60] Since the instruction in al-Junied was fully in Arabic, Brunei students did struggle from the start to catch up to the educational level at al-Junied, especially in mastering the language.

The circumstances surrounding the sending of this first batch need some elaboration. Why al-Junied and why at that time? Only in the mid-1950s did major reforms in the administration of Islam and Islamic education intensify as the country's Islamic Council, Islamic Law Acts and Islamic schools were formed and established.

The usual explanation for the major reform at this time is the determination of the energetic new ruler to accelerate the country's modernization. The administration of Islam was included in this scheme. Thus, the sending of students to pursue higher learning in Islamic studies was part of the response to the ruler's development plan. Obviously al-Junied was chosen for its excellent training in Arabic and basic Islamic discipline, as well as its emphasis on "acceptable and moderate" Islamic teaching. At the same time, Brunei had expected its sons to go beyond al-Junied. Al-Azhar was chosen, not Saudi universities for example, for straightforward reasons – to guarantee the teaching of the *ahl al-Sunnah wal-jama'a* in theology and the Shafi'i school in law.

The new environment in which Brunei found itself in the second half of the twentieth century was conducive to major reform. Strong leadership was provided by Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien from 1950 and a national awakening was stimulated by diverse factors socially, economically, and politically after the end of the Pacific War. In the religious field the pressure to provide more sophisticated services to the community required modern education, the formation of new institutions, and skilled functionaries. What was crucial in the sending of students to *madrasahs* in Singapore, Malaysia, and al-Azhar in Egypt was the design and vision of particular religious scholars-cum-leaders and the style and quality of their scholarship. Seen in the context of the larger reform movement in the Malay world of the period, it is not surprising that the Bruneian religious establishment was determined to preserve its religious style and heritage, the *ahl al-Sunnah wal-jama'a* in theology and the Shafi'i school in Islamic jurisprudence and law (*fiqh*). In other words the future experts in Islamic discipline were being trained to fill a designated niche in the state structure and society at large. In this sense, the sending of students to al-Junied, Klang Islamic College, and al-Azhar University had been precipitously anticipated and thoroughly implemented. In response the religious *homines novi* seemed to adjust to the prevailing conditions while pursuing their own agenda of religious revivalism or simply reform. In this light foreign observers should not be surprised to see that various facets of Islamic reform did take place in the country without the negative impact of the "notoriously silly conflict" between the old and new proponents of Islam (the *Kaum Tua – Kaum Muda* division).[61]

Modern religious education carried new prestige and scholarly sophistication. The return of Bruneian graduates to the country was usually followed by employment in public office. For example, since the mid-1960s al-Azhar graduates have joined the Department of Religious Affairs (DRA).[62] Although these graduates were soon preoccupied with office duties and responsibilities, many continued to devote

part of their time to writing and preaching. As can be seen in the religious column of the *Pelita Brunei* of the period, these graduates contributed highly informative and refreshing views of Islam and society. More specifically, under the sponsorship of the DRA the religious publications became more frequent and regular. For example, the DRA has published a quarterly journal, *Majalah Jabatan Hal Ehwal Ugama*, since 1962. Its contents include various religious topics, the Mufti's views, and features of the DRA's activities. In 1964 another series, *Sinaran Suci*, was published. It was designed to respond to the popular need for religious teachings. During the 1970s more publications were introduced by the DRA, including a religious journal, *al-Huda*, and a series on Qur'anic exegesis, *Tafsir Darussalam*. The role of the newly graduated Bruneians in these undertakings was obviously significant. Interestingly, a score of books on Islamic literary works by Bruneians were published during this period. Among them was *Puisi Hidayat*. Several books and monographs were published after 1979 in conjunction with the celebration of the fifteenth century of the *Hijra*. Moreover, during the 1980s a number of religious seminars were organized in the country. They brought together experts in specific fields from around the country to discuss various religious topics. On several occasions the participants were international experts. The proceedings of such seminars were mostly published by the DRA. Yet the fast growing publications of religious materials cannot be separated from the general trend of Islamic revivalism in the country and beyond. The impact of Islamic revivalism can be seen clearly in the speeches and actions of the leaders, the political elite, and religious scholars of the country.

The Brunei graduates of al-Azhar University increasingly gained influence and popularity. For example, the predominance of the Azharis in the DRA was structural and consequential. The official adoption of a "moderate" version of Islamic practice restricted contact with certain educational centers. Al-Azhar continues to enjoy the highest position in the list. Since the majority of the religious leaders had been educated at al-Azhar it only followed that future cadres should be sent to the same institution. Evidently publications on religious subjects came from the works of the al-Azhar graduates. This can be seen in the writings of the former Mufti, Pehin Mohd. Zain, Pehin Abd Hamid, Pehin Yahya, Pehin Abd Aziz Juned, Dato Abdul Saman, and Pehin Badaruddin. All belonged to top religious officialdom. It should also be mentioned here that in addition to religious training at al-Azhar, all these leaders-cum-scholars had studied at religious schools in Singapore and Malaysia. Some spent time in higher learning institutions in the West. For example, Dato Saman and Pehin Dato Mohd. Amin completed post-graduate programs at the University of Birmingham following their graduation from al-Azhar. Indeed, several

other students who had originally been sent for further religious study at well-known Islamic *madrasah*s ended up being sent to universities in England, Malaysia, and Singapore.[63]

After independence an idea was circulated to locate some Azhar graduates and those who had undergone intensive Islamic education to certain non-religious offices in order to inspire higher discipline and morality. Although the experiment had mixed results the image and prestige of the Azhar graduates were quite high. As a senior officer with an Azhar degree acknowledges, Azhar did not provide him with an *'ulama'* label however it gave him authority in religious matters.

The prestige of 'authentic' Islamic learning, like that at al-Azhar University, bred a unique scholarly tradition in Brunei. The division of scholarly labor in the field of Islamic studies, for example, is worth noting. Despite the strong expression of Islam in public life, writing on Islamic subjects in Brunei since the 1980s has become the sole domain of fully-trained religious scholars. It is true that some Brunei students who had completed secondary religious school opted to pursue non-religious careers. Nevertheless, it is exceptionally rare for Bruneians who have not had religious training to write on religious issues.[64] The emergence of numerous writers on Islam in other countries who have no higher religious education seems not to have encouraged their counterparts in Brunei. I do not see that this predilection has anything to do with the type of religious practice and understanding held in Brunei. It has more to do with the formal regulations about the spread of Islamic teaching. A teacher of Islam is required to have a teaching license. It can be argued that the present arrangement has positively contributed to the religious harmony and stability in the country. Religious innovations are discussed internally and if necessary, introduced slowly and quietly. Open religious polemics and debates have never taken place.

Open Opportunities and Religious Careers

When the first batch of Bruneian students was sent to al-Junied, the Klang Islamic College, and then al-Azhar University, all three countries – Singapore, Malaysia, and Egypt – were in the process of rapid change and nation-building. Singaporeans, Malaysians, and Egyptians were determined to build independent and progressive nation-states. Competing ideologies and parties emerged to win public support, among them Muslims, who also asserted their presence and influence to find a proper place in society and state. Language was one area in which the Malays found the best way to express their thought and vision, as can be seen in the holding of diverse language

and literary activities at schools attended by Brunei students at al-Junied and the Islamic College. They wrote poems, participated in art and drama performance, and competed in debates held for schools. Several Bruneian students did excel in composing poems and writing drama scripts and a number of them became regular visiting writers for cultural magazines.[65]

The hunger at home for spiritual nourishment and healthy entertainment also played an important role in encouraging these early missionary students to uplift their artistic and cultural works, in addition to excelling in their religious studies. On the occasions of their return to Brunei during school holidays they took an active part in making relevant Islamic holiday celebrations great occasions for Islamic art and cultural performances. They directed plays, worked on stage decoration, participated in Qur'an recitation competitions, and organized debates and public speeches. One of these early students who always took the role of a popular singer later occupied one of the key religious positions in the country, Chief Qadi. When one of his seniors from Selangor later visited him he recalls how he was ridiculed, that someone who had used to sing on the stage could later occupy the Chief Qadiship.

Interestingly, the multifaceted skills achieved by these early batches of students seem not to have been followed up by those who began their university study after the 1970s. However, a new trend emerged when those who had finished their secondary school religious education at al-Junied or the Islamic College were sent to England for their first degree. Upon graduation most of them were assigned to non-religious posts. They were expected to disseminate their religious knowledge and discipline while being professional in their respective fields of expertise.

If the early batch produced some of Brunei's great play writers, poets, and orators, later students seem to have shifted their attention to pursuing a strictly professional career. None of them achieved any importance of note in the arts or literature.

Religio-Political Stability: Out of What?

Brunei's Islamic identity has evolved to face external challenges and distinguish it from 'suspected' interpretations such as Wahhabism and other radical forms of scripturalism. Consonant with most other Malay states in the Peninsula which opted to discard the Wahhabi and Kaum Muda movements, Brunei has been consistent in closing its doors to such movements. Although some may argue, as Roff and Yegar have suggested,[66] that such a religious policy can work better toward maintaining the

religious and political status quo, it is clear that the prevailing religiosity and Islamic discourse in the country favors the maintenance and implementation of the moderate, which means the *jama`i* approach to Islamic teachings. How was such a policy so successfully implemented? Did public education or rather "indoctrination" play a major part in this?

Brunei has been particular in maintaining its well-established religious approach and practice. It did not allow the development of religious conflict between the *Kaum Tua* and *Kaum Muda*, experienced in other Muslim communities in the Malay world. The well-known argument on this issue can be found in the Mufti's address concerning Wahhabism or its derivatives and origins. "It is useless to repeat [the call] propagated by Ibn Taymiyyah [to oppose] the religious innovations (*bid`ah*)".[67] The emphasis on religious understanding and practice focuses on the pursuit of Islamic teachings taken from authoritative (meaning acceptable) teachers. Wayward scholars have no place in such a religious structure. For instance, in rejecting the opinions of the reformist Rashid Rida (d.1937) and his predecessor Ibn Taymiyyah, the former Mufti argues[68] that the two well-known scholars were never known to have studied under authoritative teachers (*tiada mempunyai guru*) and thus heavily depended on their own ideas without referring to the standard Islamic books (*hanya ia membaca kitab-kitab dengan sendiri dan menggunakan akal berlebih-lebih*). The *Kaum Muda* were strongly criticized for their dismissal of other opinions and for being more concerned with promoting themselves as true Muslims at the expense of coexistence and pluralism.

The uniformity of the religious elite and their control over major religious institutions, including the centralization of religious schooling and mosque organization, and the crucial single national version of the Friday sermon, ensure stability and the continuity of religious tradition. Indeed, several factors have worked to buttress the centralized management of Islamic affairs:

- Brunei has enjoyed stability and prosperity, especially after the oil boom period from the mid-1970s. Although, or rather due to the fact that, the country continues to maintain its emergency status following the 1962 rebellion, it has succeeded in keeping peace and order without any major political upsets, let alone unrest;
- An effective welfare system has been universally applied in the country since the 1950s. Despite a relatively low oil output, Brunei's oil wealth suffices to implement a generous welfare system for its population, which reached about 329 000 in 2000, including some 30% expatriates;

- Centralization in various aspects of society, religion, and state has been effectively pursued;
- Moderate religious practice: In implementing Islamic law, Brunei has been consistent in maintaining the strict application of the Shafi`i school. For example, as stated in the Undang-Undang Ugama Islam of 1955, only in specific cases when public welfare (*maslihat*) necessitates emergency actions can the endorsement of non-Shafi`i opinions be considered. According to the former Mufti, based on al-Kurdi (d.1194/1780), any *fatwa* and legal decision should be based on the unanimity of the Shaykhan, al-Nawawi (d.676/1277) and al-Rafi`i (d.623/1226), and for less informed scholars (*laysa min ahl al-tarjih*) decisions should refer to either the works of Ibn al-Hajar al-Haytami (d.973/1565) or those of al-Ramli (d.1004/1596).

Oil Money and Islam in Brunei

There has been common talk among scholars concerning the trickling down of oil money from the Middle East to Southeast Asian Muslims aiming to spur on a process of Islamization, which often meant the spread of a particular approach to Islam: the puritanical or Wahhabi movement (*salafi*).[69] In many parts of Southeast Asia such financial and ideological support did bring new vigor to local communities which pursued the puritanical movement enabling it to establish new roots, and more significantly, to establish symbols of material modernity and sophistication, such as concrete multi-storey buildings and ICT facilities. These trends can be observed among Muslim minorities throughout the region and in particular among certain urban Muslim communities in Malaysia. In Indonesia the impact of such oil money-related development is so obvious that enumeration is redundant. However Brunei has been resilient toward the *salafi* challenge, despite its ongoing quiet and eclectic internal change.[70] How could this process revolve? Being financially and religiously strong Brunei could simply close its doors to the *salafi* offer. For example, no Brunei student has ever been sent on a Brunei government scholarship to any higher educational institution in Saudi Arabia. In the mid-1970s when Bruneian students were withdrawn from Malaysian campuses following a diplomatic row, an envoy led by the incumbent Mufti was sent to Egypt and Saudi Arabia to observe and seek out study opportunities.[71] Curiously toward the end of the 1980s, higher religious officials were sent to study in the "Westernized" IAIN of Jakarta (see Chapter 3 in this volume). Normally Brunei graduates in Islamic Studies complete their master

or doctoral programs in Malaysian universities, and especially al-Azhar in Cairo. Put differently, through a mixture of design and strength in the second half of the twentieth century Brunei managed to overtly reject the puritanical onslaught in its diverse manifestations.

The control of education and thereby influence over the potential religious leaders it produces has thus tended toward administrative centralization. Many Bruneians have been sent abroad to complete degrees in Islamic studies. The intellectual training undergone by the Bruneians in various Islamic educational centers has formed a strong link between the Muslim world and Brunei. After the Pacific War they joined al-Azhar University for their university education in Islam. Indeed, it is interesting to note that the leadership of the Department of Religious Affairs, and later the Ministry, has been dominated by Azhar-trained scholars. Following the revival of the Wahhabi movement during the 1920s al-Azhar with its open approach to *madhhab*ism provided a more appropriate environment for study for Bruneians.[72] Indeed, the Bruneian graduates of al-Azhar continued to influence the prevailing religious system and uphold the status quo while introducing changes from within.

These Azhar-trained scholars had no difficulty in building ties with other Muslim scholars internationally. Bruneian scholars completing their first degree at al-Azhar enjoyed access to a diverse academic circle due mainly to their previous study in Singapore and Malaysia. The years of interaction with different colleagues have made them more open-minded and provided them with a broader international vision. Such students brought home with them outlooks nurtured by diverse social, intellectual, political, and cultural exchanges during their long stay in Egypt. Indeed, a Brunei student in Cairo reported in 1961 that his stay in Cairo not only introduced him to purely religious subjects but also to diverse disciplines, even nationalism, and military drills.[73] Again, collections of writings and poems written by Brunei students abroad, including Cairo, indicate that they read widely and participated in current scholarly debates. Nevertheless, the strongest link maintained by these graduates was with their *alma mater*. Talented students continued to be sent to Cairo and, lately, also Amman for higher religious studies. Again, the experts in the different religious disciplines have come mostly from al-Azhar University, whereas middle-rank officials generally complete their higher studies at religious institutions in Malaysia and more recently at home.

Despite their erudition in religious scholarship Bruneians who graduated from al-Azhar have opted for an evolutionary approach to reform in the religious field. It is interesting to note here that in 1953 a religious organization, Ikhwan al-Muslimin, was founded in Brunei – in the new booming oil town, to be more precise. However,

it had obviously nothing to do with the Ikhwan Muslimun (Muslim Brotherhood) of Egypt.

Brunei's NGOs and the Study of Islam

In the second half of the 1990s local economists noted that the role of the state in Brunei's development began to progressively decrease giving more space to the private sector.[74] The pervasive and ubiquitous presence of the state in every aspect of life, however, gives little space for other societal elements to actively pursue and realize their own contribution to society. The formation of the Religious Council was designed as early as 1955 to assist the ruler in religious matters. Yet its membership is limited strictly to males over 21 years old and civil servants. Moreover, in order to assist the Mufti in performing his duty to issue the *fatwa* there is a legal committee. Again, its membership must come from among civil servants.[75]

The organization of mosques shows how the government has meticulously tackled religious activities in the country. By putting all mosques under the aegis of the Religious Council the government enjoys direct control over the mosques. All private mosques must thus be registered with and its management transferred to the Council.[76] Any approved private-property-cum-mosque automatically becomes a public endowment (*waqf*). All mosque functionaries, including the *imam* and *khatib*, are appointed by the government and given a license (*tauliah*). As such the functionaries may be dismissed at any time by the authorities.[77] The duties of the mosque functionaries include the maintenance of order, good conduct, and standard Islamic practice among the surrounding Muslim population, as well as the provision of any necessary information to the Religious Council for attention and action.

Strict control over the provision of Islamic education through the possession of the license has limited the possibility of novel teaching, let alone religious controversy.[78] Religious orthodoxy and the *status quo* have thus prevailed. Interestingly, some attempts to disseminate such controversial ideas have materialized, as can be seen in the emergence and even popularity of such movements as Jama`ah al-Arqam, Silat Lintau, and certain transient teachers.

Since Islamic orthodoxy (*ahl al-Sunnah wal-jama`a*) has become the official version of religion, it needs to be defended, elaborated, and propagated. The propagation of Islam is carefully and centrally undertaken through formal education and public institutions. Almost all Muslim children are provided with religious instruction regardless of their formal education. In addition, specifically designed religious schools and courses are offered. The Islamic Da'wa Center, formed in 1985, aims at

the propagation of Islam internally and externally, including research and publications on Islamic issues and current affairs.[79]

Interestingly, the ruler openly declared that the duty of providing religious education and pursuing Islamic propagation should not be dominated or limited to religious officials. All segments of the Muslim community are encouraged to take part in such endeavors.[80] However, the ubiquity of state power and patronage offers little to non-state actors in Islamic education.

In recent years the mosques have been supplied with internet access which is expected to be used as a means to disseminate useful information and to protect Muslims from negative ideas.[81] Concomitant with the call for more public and private participation in development, mosque functionaries are urged to upgrade their religious knowledge and their dedication to educate society. Mosques should be supported with libraries for public use.[82]

The Movement of Brunei Literati, Asterawani, has emerged as an active NGO in promoting Malay culture, literature, and language. Ideally, for Asterawani, the government and people (NGO) should work together for the implementation of Islam: "*Dalam konteks negara ini dapat dianggap bahawa gerakan dakwah dan tarbiyah adalah dimonopoli oleh kerajaan, kerana ruang yang ada tidak diisi oleh gerakan rakyat*" (In this context the *da'wa* and education are controlled by the kingdom because there is no space for society).[83] Only Iqra', an Islamic foundation, has actively offered its educational and religious services. The absence of informal channels and occasions for religious leaders and scholars to meet the people may have played a role in the lackadaisical development of in-depth Islamization. For Hashim, Islamization must be pursued through the education system. The *status quo* wanted to maintain Western education since it has proven its success while it doubts the viability and suitability of Islamic education. Graduates from the Islamic education system are believed to be too narrowly oriented.[84]

The Friday sermon, which is centrally managed, serves as an indirect and informal institution to guide Muslims. Its use extends beyond calling for purely religious piety but also touches upon many aspects of societal and state matters. In this respect the Friday sermon is consciously and carefully used as a medium of modernization in accordance with Islamic precepts. For example, the focus of the sermon ranges from showing the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the context of neighborhood solidarity, respect for others, or visits among family members, colleagues and friends, or explaining the relevance of national and international days or events, social issues and current affairs.[85]

The Center of Islamic Mission (Pusat Dakwah Islamiyah) has emerged as an organized body for the dissemination of Islamic knowledge and public morality. The Center has been very active in disseminating religious knowledge through its publications, TV programs, and radio/public talks. It was set up in 1985 primarily to pursue internal Islamization and the spread of Islamic teachings to other segments of society. Its publications cover religious issues, social questions, and public life in general. In pursuing its mission the Center has fulfilled a key role of socio-religious engineering. As part of a government agency the Center exemplifies how many facets of religious expression and institutions in Brunei have been fully exploited by the state and taken advantage of by religious leaders to advance their respective objectives – which most of the time correspond to each other.

Toward the 21st Century

When ASEAN member countries were plunged into a deep financial crisis in 1997-98, Brunei was no exception. However, the nature of its economy which did not depend on direct foreign investment but heavily on a single export commodity (oil), meant that Brunei suffered less of a shock and a shorter period to recovery. The heavy financial losses that the country experienced at this juncture as can be seen in the collapse of the semi-government owned company Amedio, continue to invite more questions. Yet what Brunei's experience of this period shows is that despite the crisis Brunei continues to be immune from the radical trend in religio-political expression. Some scholars have suggested that since Brunei has no history of nurturing any puritanical movements it can easily eradicate the first signs of the growth of Islamic radicalism in the country. Let us briefly note some relevant undertakings in this regard.

As the number of foreign workers in Brunei dwindled in the late 1990s, due mainly to the slow-down in the economy, the government also tightened its control over illegal workers. Routine checks of possible illegals were intensified as police and immigration officers rounded up and detained those who failed to produce necessary documents, especially passports or visas. Until today, as far as public statements are concerned, no suspected terrorist has ever been detained. In one of the many police operations during 2002 several foreign workers in the construction industry in the capital of Bandar Seri Begawan were caught allegedly in possession of "old bombs". However, they were soon released after expert confirmation was received that the bombs belong to the Pacific War period and were apparently of little military value.

On the religious front the MRA and the Islamic Dakwah Centre reiterated their war against the deviationists. Public lectures at the pulpit and audio- and video-channels in the mass media intensified warning Muslims of the danger of controversial teachings and unauthorized teachers. In cooperation with the police and the immigration officers religious officials hunted down Muslims entering the country on the spot who did not show proper Islamic behavior. Although the operation was ostensibly declared to stop Muslims residing in the country from consuming or purchasing alcohol, the campaign was also effective in detecting the entry of Muslims suspected of radicalism.

CONCLUSION

In Brunei Darussalam, not only has Islamic education maintained and disseminated the officially accepted concept and practice of religion, it has also enjoyed a close structural link to state. This chapter has attempted to show how the three levels of studying Islam – at the school, higher learning institutions, and society at large – are closely aligned with the dominant discourse of the state and its generally accepted version of religiosity. Islamic education in Brunei Darussalam has resulted in the formation of a neatly-structured religious elite which at the same time reflects social reproduction engineered by the ruling class. Although the early model of education in Brunei experienced a major decline after the eighteenth century, Brunei continued to maintain close ties with other Islamic centers which regularly sent teachers to other Muslim countries and which also received Bruneian students. Islamic education in the country underwent a severe decline in the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Brunei did not welcome the reformist movement nor it did not attract the latter's missionaries. Obviously the fixed and elaborate structure of the religious authority under the sultan worked toward favoring the status quo.

Although the systematization of religious education was the *sine qua non* of the fulfillment of religious and bureaucratic needs, in the final analysis the broader scheme of centralization in the context of power maintenance and strategy clearly play a crucial role. First of all, the choice of curriculum and teachers at home was attuned to existing religious practices and at the same time intended to sustain continuity. When reform in Islamic education was launched in the mid-1950s the Johor model of religious classes (*madrasah*) in the afternoon was chosen; the *madrasah* system was supported by teachers from peninsular Malaya and thus began the whole

new tradition of the Brunei *madrasah*. Next, the sending of Bruneians for higher religious education in Singapore, the Malay peninsula, and Egypt, cannot be treated in isolation from the overall religious policy in the country which aimed at intellectual and religious sophistication and ensuring continuity and political and social stability.

The predominance of Azhari graduates in the formation of religious discourse and religious bureaucracy has become a self-reproducing mechanism in Brunei's religious life. By adhering to well-defined religious practices and belief systems Brunei has maintained a relatively stable religious life. The exclusivist approach to Islam has not been given any place to operate. The strength of its religious bureaucracy, dominated by the Azhari graduates, has been effective in limiting the influence of controversial ideas and figures, even though some might argue that despite its success in achieving religious uniformity and stability Bruneians may still be prone to new religious movements. The religious establishment seems to be aware of such challenges as suggested by their positive response to various developments in the Muslim world. Attempts have been made to show that Bruneians are joining their Muslim brethren to live more Islamically within the modern world. Inadvertently radicalism has never found roots among the population in the country.

Since the 1950s the state has effectively centralized the administration of Islam and Islamic education. Islam in post-War II Brunei has experienced the perpetuation of the Azhari model of discourse, education, and style. This was made possible when the state endorsed an orthodox approach to Islamic belief and practice: *ahl al-Sunnah wal-jama`a* in theology and Shafi`i *madhhab* in jurisprudence. Education, and more specifically the study of Islam, has been attuned to the hegemonic discourse of the state which has successfully won legitimacy in amassing Islamic symbols and slogans through an elaborate network of 'organic' institutions and intellectuals.

APPENDIX

Figure 5: BA Islamic Studies in Arabic (majoring in *Shari`ah*) 1996-1999:
Years Three and Four

Component	Subject/Course	Notes
Research Methodology	*Asalib al-Bahth al-`Ilmi wa-Masadir al-Dirasat al-Islamiyah; Dirasah Nassiya min Kutub al- Fiqh*	
Jurisprudence	*Usul al-fiqh*, Islamic political systems, *Fiqh al-ahwal al-shakhsiyah*, Islamic economics, Introduction to Islamic Law, *Fiqh al-Jinayah*, Brunei Laws, Islamic Law in Southeast Asia, System of Government in Islam, *Fiqh al-Qada' wal-Murafa`at*, Jurisprudential Principles in Islam, Comparative Jurisprudence in Islam	Compared to the *Usul al-Din wal-Dakwah* program, this program offers more Specialized courses in jurisprudence; history courses and theology are not listed
Study of the Qur'an	*Ayat al-Ahkam*	
Prophetic Tradition	*Ahadith al-Ahkam*	
Academic Exercise	Minor thesis undertaken during the final year of study	More topics chosen from the pre-modern period

Figure 7: BA in *Shari`ah* 1999-2005, IPISHOAS

Component	Subject/Course	Notes
Language	Arabic, English, Logic/Methodology in Islamic thinking, *Dirasah Nassiya*	These are taught in the early years of study, except *Dirasah Nassiyah*
Theology	*Tawhid*	
Study of the Qur'an	*'Ulum al-Qur'an*, Memorization of the Qur'an	
Jurisprudence	*Fiqh al-'ibadah*, Introduction to fiqh and History of legal codification, Comparative *fiqh*, *Fiq al-kitab wal-sunnah*, *Fiqh al-mu`amalah*, *Usul al-fiqh*, Islamic political systems, *Fiqh al-ahwal al-shakhsiya*, *Fiqh al-mirath*, Jurisprudential principles, Contemporary issues on jurisprudence, *Fiqh al-jinayah*, *Fiqh al-qada' wal-murafa' at* (judicial and appeal system)	
Missionary Work	*al-Dakwah al-Islamiyah*	
Prophetic Tradition	*'Ulum al-hadith*	
History	Islamic history, Contemporary Muslim World	
Academic Exercise	Minor thesis undertaken during the final year of study	

Figure 8: BA in Arabic Language, 1999-2005, IPISHOAS

Component	Subject/Course	Notes
Language	Arabic, English, Logic/Methodology in Islamic thinking, *dirasah nassiyah*, Grammar and Syntax, Fann Kitabat al-Maqal (Arts of Composition), Oratory, Arabic Literature (*tarikh wa-nusus*), Linguistics and Dictionaries, Phonetics and Phonology, Literary Criticism, Dialects and *Qira'at*, History of Andalusian Literature and the Study of Its Texts, Applied Grammar, Qur'anic and Prophetic *Bayan* (Oratory), Modern Arabic Literature, Translation, Modern Islamic Literature	
Theology	*Tawhid*	
Study of the Qur'an	Qur'anic exegesis, *'Ulum al-Qur'an*, Memorization of the Qur'an	
Jurisprudence	*Fiqh al-`ibadah, Fiqh al-mu'amalah, Fiqh al-ahwal al-shakhsiyah*	
Missionary Work	Orientalism and Missionary activities	
Prophetic Tradition	*'Ulum al-hadith, Hadith*	
History	Islamic history, Contemporary Muslim World, Islamic Civilization, Islam in Southeast Asia, Islamic Civilization in Southeast Asia	
Academic Exercise	Minor thesis undertaken during the final year of study	

Endnotes

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1 "...*pendidikan agama telah pun dikembalikan semula kepada Kementerian Hal Ehwal Ugama.... Buatlah apa-apa yang benar-benar telah difikirkan dengan sedalam-dalamnya dan semasak-masaknya. Belajarlah dari kesilapan dan pengalaman lama, umpamanya apa sudah jadi kepada aliran Sains Sekolah Arab dahulu dan juga sistem bersepadu?... Pendidikan agama yang sempurna adalah matlamat kita....*"; Titah, *Pelita Brunei*, November 2, 2005, p. 2.

2 Hisham bin Haji Md. Sum. "Educational Dependency: A Case Study on Brunei Darussalam", Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Reading, England, 1993, p. 449.

3 Pehin Yahya Haji Ibrahim, *Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Tujuan Pendidikan Mengikut Pandangan Islam* [The Science and Aims of Education According to an Islamic World View] (Bandar Seri Begawan: Pusat Da`wah Islamiah, 2004).

4 The question of how 20th-century Brunei has designed, planned and taken action to ensure the maintenance of order and stability, which obviously has nothing to do with a reaction to Gramsci's hegemonic discourse and ideology, can be compared to debates among Ottoman experts whether the slave army and *devshirme* initiated in the medieval period was a strategic response to Ibn Khaldun's cyclical theory of tribal dynasties.

5 Fazlur Rahman, *Islam & Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 1984).

6 Aziz al-Azmeh, *Islam and Modernities* (London and New York: Verso, 1993).

7 Chaiwat Satha-Anand, "Muslim Studies: Radical Social Science and 'Alterity'". In *Islamic Studies in ASEAN: Presentations of an International Seminar*, edited by Isma-ae Alee, Pattani: College of Islamic Studies, Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani Campus, 2000, pp. 89-92.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 91.

9 Charles J. Adams, "Islamic Religious Tradition" In *The Study of the Middle East: Research and Scholarship in the Humanities and the Social Sciences*, edited by Leonard Binder, 29-95. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1976, pp. 29-54.

10   Ibrahim Abu Bakar, "Islamic Studies in Malaysian Universities and Colleges: An Overview". In *Islamic Studies in ASEAN: Presentations of an International Seminar*, edited by Isma-ae Alee, 7-25. Pattani: College of Islamic Studies, Prince of Songkhla University, 2000.

11   See Al-Attas, S.M. Naguib, ed. *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education* (Sevenoaks, Eng.: Hodder and Stoughton; Jeddah: King Abdulaziz University, 1979); Proceedings of the International Seminar on Islamic Studies in Southeast Asia, University of Brunei Darussalam, 26 April 1995; Pehin Mohd. Jamil Al-Sufri, Dato Haji. *Chorak Pendidikan di Brunei pada Masa Hadapan* [The Future of Education in Brunei] (Bandar Seri Begawan: Majlis Pelajaran Brunei, 1982); Mahmud Saedon bin Awang Othman, Dato Hj. "History of Islamic Studies in Brunei Darussalam." In Isma-ae Alee *et al.*, eds. *Islamic Studies in ASEAN: Presentations of an International Seminar*, pp. 27-34. (Pattani: College of Islamic Studies, Prince of Songkhla University, 2000).

12   Mahmud Saedon bin Awang Othman, "History of Islamic Studies in Brunei Darussalam". In *Islamic Studies in ASEAN: Presentations of an International Seminar*, edited by Isma-ae Alee, pp. 27-34 (Pattani: College of Islamic Studies, Prince of Songkhla University, 2000).

13   *Pendidikan Ugama di Negara Brunei Darussalam* [Religious Education in Brunei Darussalam] (Jabatan Pengajian Islam, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Bandar Seri Begawan, 1996), pp. 224-26.

14   The courses were offered in Malay. They include law such as *fiqh*, *usul al-fiqh*, etc.

15   An interesting observation on the use of certain languages and the dilemma involved in Islamic studies can be found in Imtiaz Ahmad, "Teaching Islamic Studies in the Institutions of Higher Learning in the non-Arab World with or without Arabic – a Dilemma, in *Islamic Studies in ASEAN: Presentations of an International Seminar*, pp. 269-81 and also in Ibrahim Abu Bakar, "Islamic Studies in Malaysian Universities and Colleges: An Overview", pp. 7-25..

16   It was expected that the program would be revived from time to time depending on arising needs.

17   Osman Bakar, "Towards a More Holistic, Synthetic and Integrated Approach to Islamic Studies: The University of Malaya Experience," in *Islamic Studies in ASEAN: Presentations of an International Seminar*, edited by Isma-ae Alee *et al.*, pp. 203-204. College of Islamic Studies, Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani Campus, 2000.

18   Experimental classes for such a synthesis have been run since the mid-1990s. However, as can be seen in the above *Titah*, the synthesis was declared void by the end of 2005.

19   A comparable scheme was also developed in the Sekolah Arab to recruit potential candidates from among the best pupils at primary school.

20   Kamal Hassan, "Islamic Studies in Contemporary Southeast Asia: General Observations," in *Islamic Studies in ASEAN: Presentations of an International Seminar*, edited by Isma-ae Alee *et al.*, pp. 479-94. College of Islamic Studies, Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani Campus, 2000, p. 487.

21   *Laporan Prosiding Konvensyen Kurikulum Sekolah untuk Abad ke 21: Ke Arah Kemantapan Kurikulum dan Kesempurnaan Pendidikan* [Proceedings of School Curriculum Convention for the 21st Century: Towards Solid Curriculum and Comprehensive Education], 4-6 Zulkaedah 1418/3-6 Mac 1998, Jabatan Perkembangan Kurikulum, Kementerian Pendidikan, Negara Brunei Darussalam, 1999.

22   See Zanah binti Haji Besar, Hajah Siti. "Tinjauan Pelaksanaan Penerapan Nilai-Nilai Islam dalam Pendidikan Bersepadu di Sekolah-Sekolah Menengah di Negara Brunei Darussalam." [An Analysis of the Implementation of Islamic Values in Integrated Education in Brunei Darussalam's Secondary Schools] Unpublished M.Ed. thesis, University of Brunei Darussalam, 2002, Figure 3.2, p. 44; see also Kamal Hassan, "Some Dimensions of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia," pp.71-89. In *The Proceedings of the International Seminar on Islam in Southeast Asia*, November 15-18, 1986, Jakarta, Lembaga Penelitian IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah.

23   "Education System," Bandar Seri Begawan: Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam 1985, p. 40.

24   "Ministry of Education Briefing," see *Pelita Brunei* (Official Journal) April 27, 2005.

25   Pehin Mohd. Jamil Al-Sufri, *Chorak Pendidikan di Brunei Pada Masa Hadapan*, p. 21.

26   *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26, 36-37.

27   *Ibid.*, p. 30.

28   *Ibid.*, p. 29.

29   *Ibid.*, p. 75.

30   Pehin Ismail bin Omar Abdul Aziz, "Ulasan" (A review of Pehin Jamil's work), in Pehin Jamil, *Chorak Pendidikan di Brunei pada Masa Hadapan*, pp. 95-96.

31   *Ibid.*, p.95.

32   *Ibid.*, pp. 102, 106-7.

33   *Ibid.*, p. 108.

34   *Ibid.*, pp. 111, 126.

35   *Ibid.*, p. 131.

36   *Punca ilmu mengikut Islam bersumber dari Allah, kuasa penentu dan pemberi (Authority) keran dia ada tujuan akhir .... Dan konsep ini tidak wujud dalam pendidikan bukan Islam, atau dengan kata lain tidak ada tujuan "liya`budun" itu* [In Islam, the source of knowledge originates from God, the Powerful

and the Determinant since He is the final destiny.... This concept is absent in non-Islamic education; in other words the latter does not have the destiny of "worshipping God" (*liya`budun*)] Pehin Yahya Haji Ibrahim, Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Tujuan Pendidikan Mengikut Pandangan Islam, pp. 71-72.

37   It should be mentioned here that the major points and arguments raised by Pehin Yahya are referred to in Naguib Al-Attas (1993). Moreover, in the context of Brunei this is not the first time, as I have shown earlier, that the argument of dividing knowledge and education in Islam into *fard `ayn* and *fard kifaya* was raised. For example, during the International Seminar on Islamic Studies in Southeast Asia held at the University of Brunei Darussalam in 1995 several papers address the issue. Again, as early as 1999 the Ministry of Education argued for the importance of integrating Islamic core values as *fard `ayn* in the overall education scheme.

38   Pehin Yahya, *Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Tujuan Pendidikan Mengikut Pandangan Islam*, p. 70.

39   *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 78-79, 93-94.

40   *Ibid.*, pp. 89-93.

41   Chaiwat Satha-Anand, "Muslim Studies: Radical Social Science and 'Alterity'," pp.89-92.

42   Pehin Yahya, *Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Tujuan Pendidikan Mengikut Pandangan Islam*, p. 100.

43   *Ibid.*, p. 102.

44   *Ibid.*, p. 103.

45   Mohd. Kamal Hassan, "Some Dimensions of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia,". In *The Proceedings of the International Seminar on Islam in Southeast Asia* (Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 1986), pp.85-86.

46   See Zanah binti Haji Besar, "Tinjauan," p.44.

47   Pehin Yahya, *Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Tujuan Pendidikan Mengikut Pandangan Islam*, pp. 106-107.

48   Iik Arifin Mansurnoor, "Islam in Brunei Darussalam and Global Islam: an Analysis of Their Interaction". In *Islam and the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Johan Meuleman (London: Curzon Press, 2002), pp. 71-98.

49   Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

50   See Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* (London: Sage Publications, 1990); Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power* (Stanford Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1996). This paraphrasing is mainly taken from Ibrahim

M. Abu Rabi', *Contemporary Arab Thought: Studies in Post-1967 Arab Intellectual History* (London: Pluto Press, 2004).

51   Abu Rabi', *Contemporary Arab Thought*, pp. 33-34.

52   See Martin van Bruinessen, "Global and Local in Indonesian Islam", *Southeast Asian Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999), 46-63.

53   Howard M. Federspiel, *Muslim Intellectuals and National Development in Indonesia* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 1992), pp. 6-7.

54   Mona Abaza, *Islamic Education, Perceptions and Exchanges: Indonesian Students in Cairo, Cahier* d'Archipel, 23. (Paris: EHESS, 1994).

55   Even many Ministers of Religious Affairs in Indonesia have been chosen from individuals who have no "proper Islamic advanced training"; Federspiel, *Muslim Intellectuals*, pp. 22-26.

56   Abu Rabi`, *Contemporary Arab Thought*, p. 33.

57   Dale F. Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power in Morocco: The Education of a Twentieth-Century Notable* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 6.

58   W. Roff, ed. *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State.* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974), and Moshe Yegar, *Islam and Islamic Institutions in British Malaya.* Jerusalem: The Magness Press, 1979, have shown comparable phenomena in Kelantan and Malaya in general.

59   For more details see Iik A. Mansurnoor, "Socio-Religious Changes in Brunei after the Pacific War", *Islamic Studies Quarterly Journal* 35/1 (1996), pp. 47-48.

60   See Mohd. Salleh Abdul Latif, *Menyusur Zaman: Biografi Haji Mohd. Zain bin Haji Serudin* [Tracing History: A Biography of Haji Mohd. Zain bin Haji Serudin] (Bandar Seri Begawan: Minda Kreatif Publishing, 2004).

61   See Pehin Ismail bin Omar Abdul Aziz, Fatwa number 124/MKB/3/1979-2, dated 22 June 1977 Chapter 9, p. 260.

62   Since 1986 the Department has been transformed into a Ministry.

63   Dato Abdul Hamid bin Mohd Daud, *Sepintas Lalu Dermasiswa Jabatan Hal Ehwal Ugama Brunei Darussalam* [Fellowships Awarded by the Department of Religious Affairs of Brunei Darussalam in Brief] (Bandar Seri Begawan: Pusat Da'wah Islamiah, 2004), pp.46, 57, 67.

64   As far as I can recall only Pehin Jamil contributed articles on Islamic topics. This took place in the 1960s when few Azhari graduates could be found, see *Lambaian Islam*.

65   Mohd. Salleh, *Menyusur Zaman*, pp. 159-65.

66   William Roff, ed. *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974); and Moshe Yegar, *Islam and Islamic Institutions in British Malaya* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1979).

67   Pehin Dato Ismail bin Umar Abdul Aziz, *Ringkasan Akidah Ahli Sunnah wal Jemaah* [Summary of the Belief System of the Ahli Sunnah wal Jemaah] (Bandar Seri Begawan: The Mufti Office, 1979), pp. 126-27.

68   *Ibid.*, p. 123.

69   Cf. Sydney Jones, "Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and Terrorism Mostly Don't Mix." *Asia Report* No.83, 13 September 2004. Southeast Asia/Brussels: International Crisis Group, Accessed on December 18, 2004. <www.icg.org>

70   See Iik Arifin Mansurnoor, "Socio-Religious Changes in Brunei after the Pacific War". *Islamic Studies Quarterly Journal* 35, 1 (1996): 45-70.

71   Dato Abdul Hamid bin Mohd Daud, *Sepintas Lalu*, pp. 41, 45-46.

72   It is necessary to note here that during this period Mecca continued to attract many students from Southeast Asia. Some of them, in fact, emerged as prominent scholars at home.

73   *Pelita Brunei* (Official Journal), July 19, 1961, p. 2.

74   Ismail bin Duraman and Abdul Amin bin Hashim, "Brunei Darussalam: developing within its own paradigm" *Southeast Asian Affairs* (1998), p. 53.

75   *Laws of Brunei* (Bandar Seri Begawan: Jabatan Percetakaan Kerajaan, 1984), pp. 25-29.

76   *Ibid.*, p. 63.

77   *Ibid.*, p. 65.

78   *Ibid.*, p. 88.

79   Pehin Md. Zain bin Haji Serudin, *Melayu Islam Beraja: Suatu Pendekatan* [Malay Islamic Monarchy: An Approach] (Bandar Seri Begawan: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Brunei, 1998), pp. 293-98.

80   *Borneo Bulletin* (Daily Newspaper, Bandar Seri Begawan) May 9, 1997.

81   *Muslimin* (Quarterly Journal, published by Ministry of Religious Affairs, Brunei), September 1999.

82   *Pelita Brunei* (Official Journal) February 3, 1999.

83   Hashim bin Haji Abd Hamid, *Cerocok Budaya Brunei* [Discussing Brunei Culture] (Bandar Seri Begawan: Academy of Brunei Studies, 1999), p. 101.

84   *Ibid.*, pp. 198-99.

85   *Pelita Brunei* (Official Journal) January 21, 2000.

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