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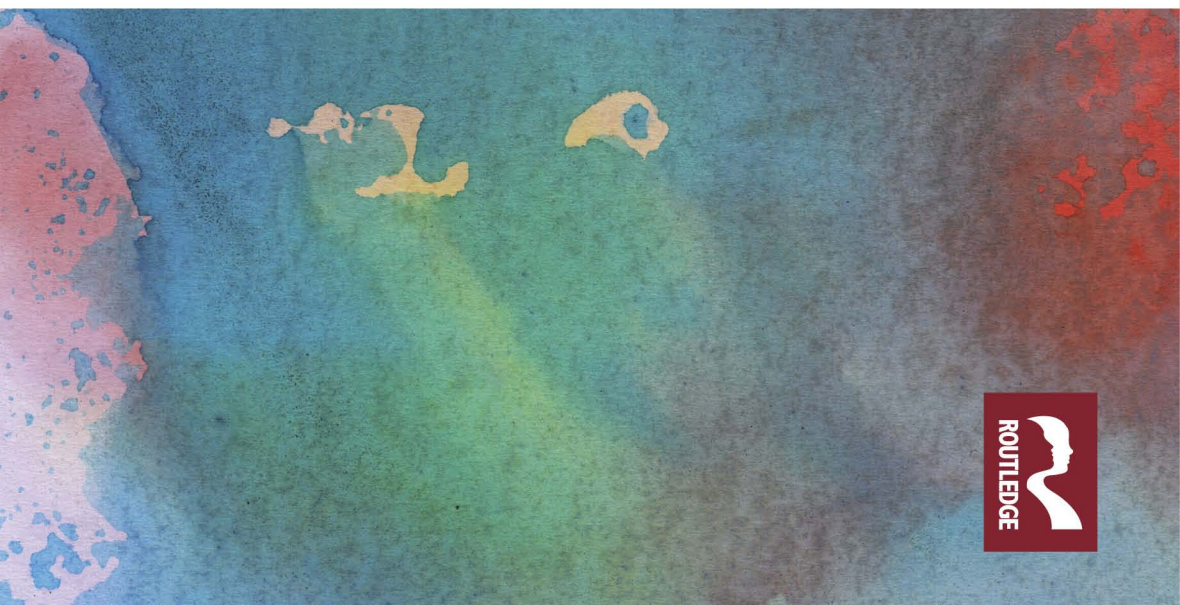
ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA

SHAPING MINDS, SAVING SOULS

Azmil Tayeb



Islamic Education in Indonesia and Malaysia

Despite their close geographic and cultural ties, Indonesia and Malaysia have dramatically different Islamic education, with that in Indonesia being relatively decentralized and discursively diverse, while that in Malaysia is centralized and discursively restricted.

The book explores the nature of the Islamic education systems in Indonesia and Malaysia and the different approaches taken by these states in managing these systems. The book argues that the post-colonial state in Malaysia has been more successful in centralizing its control over Islamic education, and more concerned with promoting a restrictive orthodoxy, compared to the post-colonial state in Indonesia. This is due to three factors: the ideological makeup of the state institutions that oversee Islamic education; patterns of societal Islamization that have prompted different responses from the states; and control of resources by the central government that influences centre-periphery relations. Informed by the theoretical works of state-in-society relations and historical institutionalism, this book shows that the three aforementioned factors can help a state to minimize influence from the society and exert its dominance, in this case by centralizing control over Islamic education. Specifically, they help us understand the markedly different landscapes of Islamic education in Malaysia and Indonesia.

It will be of interest to academics in the field of Southeast Asian Studies, Asian Education and Comparative Education.

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Dedicated to the loving memory of Zaza, whose beautiful, kind soul had left us far too soon. We miss you every single day. May you rest in peace.

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1 Functionalization of Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia

Introduction

There I was sitting among the *ustadzs* (male religious teachers) in the teachers' lounge of a *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in Indonesia's South Kalimantan province, drenched in sweat from the sweltering mid-morning Borneo heat while being plied with an endless supply of piping hot sweet tea and *lumpia* (fried spring rolls), when the moment of research epiphany struck. The television was showing an ever-popular infotainment program when suddenly a story came on about an inter-religious celebrity couple and their recent controversial marriage. The news caught the *ustadzs*' attention and they started to discuss and debate it from wide-ranging theological points of views. As a Malaysian it was quite a scene to behold. In my personal experience, such an "unorthodox" marriage would provoke near universal condemnation from the general Malay-Muslim community, let alone in the deeply conservative environment of an Islamic school. The spirited debates in the teachers' lounge naturally brought questions to my mind: What kind of Islamic education system has allowed for such a discourse to arise? Why are Indonesia and Malaysia so different?

These questions eventually led me to investigate how and why Muslim-majority states use or functionalize Islamic education to further enhance their legitimacy. Through the analyses of the Islamic education systems in Indonesia and Malaysia, I illustrate the varied ways through which states in the two countries have tried to use those systems to promote hegemony. I show that the combined influence of ideological hegemony of state Islamic orthodoxy and a strong centralizing tendency on the part of the state explain the severely restricted discursive space of Islamic education in Malaysia. On the other hand, the broad autonomy enjoyed by Islamic schools and the strong presence of heterogenous values in the state Islamic orthodoxy explain the relatively open discursive nature of Islamic education in Indonesia.

Differences between Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia

There are three key differences between Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia that can shed light on the aforementioned puzzle. First, Islamic schools

in Indonesia greatly outnumber those in Malaysia, even after taking into account the size of the Muslim population. At the latest count, there are 47,221 formal Islamic primary and secondary schools in Indonesia spread out over the vast archipelago (roughly one school for every 4,387 Muslims).[1] In comparison, there are 1,804 Islamic schools within the national education system in Malaysia (roughly one school for every 9,616 Muslims) and they are overwhelmingly concentrated in peninsular Malaysia.[2] In Indonesia, the sheer number of Islamic schools, the country's disparate geography, with its attendant cultural diversity, and inadequate budgets pose logistical and financial challenges to the relevant ministries in Jakarta when trying to implement a coherent Islamic education curriculum and enforce compliance from local educational offices and schools.[3] In contrast, the smaller number of schools coupled with the larger budget of ministries in charge of Islamic education allow the state to strengthen its hold over even supposedly autonomous Islamic schools in Malaysia.[4]

Second, most Islamic schools in Indonesia are privately owned and managed, while in Malaysia, the majority of Islamic schools are either under the management of the Ministry of Education or the State Islamic Councils (*Majlis Agama Islam Negeri*).[5] Private status provides Islamic schools in Indonesia room to operate autonomously, since they are not completely dependent on the Ministry of Religious Affairs for funding. But as we will soon see in subsequent chapters, this operational autonomy comes with the stiff price of not having enough resources to properly manage the schools. The public status of Islamic schools in Malaysia, on the other hand, means that they can be effectively managed by a central authority,

1 *Buku Saku Statistik Pendidikan Islam Tahun 2013/2014*, Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. http://pendis.kemenag.go.id/ebook/saku20132014/ (accessed on 15 October 2015); *Hasil Sensus Penduduk 2010*, Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, p. 130.

2 Data KAFA, Sekolah Agama dan Masjid (Putrajaya: Bahagian Kemajuan Islam, Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia, 2013), p. 30; Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristic Report 2010, Department of Statistics Malaysia: www.statistics.gov.my/index.php?r=column/cthemeByCat&cat=117&bul_id=MDMxdHZjWTk1SjFzTzNkRXYzcVZjdz09&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZklWdzQ4TlhUUT09 (accessed on 12 October 2015).

3 The 2015 budgets for Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religious Affairs are Rp88,3 triliun (US$6.5 billion) and Rp56,4 triliun (US$4.16 billion), respectively. Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Negara Tahun 2015, Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia: www.kemenkeu.go.id/wide/apbn2015 (accessed on 12 October 2015). The Ministry of Religious Affairs announced in 2015 that it is allocating Rp24 triliun (US$1.78 billion) to improve the quality of madrasah education in the next five years. "Kemenag Siap Tingkat Mutu Madrasah", Sinar Harapan, 13 August 2015 (accessed on 15 October 2015).

4 JAKIM's overall budget for 2015 is RM783,256,900 (US$188.8 million), a big part of which is used to fund an elementary Islamic education program called Kelas Al-Quran dan Fardhu Ain (KAFA). Meanwhile, Malaysian Ministry of Education's budget for 2015 is RM40,848,327,200 (US$9.85 billion). Anggaran Perbelanjaan Persekutuan 2015, Kementerian Kewangan Malaysia, pp. 118, 636. www.treasury.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4298:anggaran-perbelanjaan-persekutuan-2015&catid=447&Itemid=2473&lang=ms (accessed on 12 October 2015).

5 95 per cent of madrasah in Indonesia are private. Madrasah @ Indonesia (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, Kementerian Agama RI, 2015), p. 14.

be it the Ministry of Education or the State Islamic Councils, especially when it comes to curriculum content, teachers' certification and appointment, choice of textbooks, examinations, and the like. In short, a streamlined standard can be established for Islamic education, either under the aegis of the ministry or the state religious authorities, with the trend leaning toward increasing centralization by the ministry. We will explore these differences in Chapters 3 and 4.

Third, there is a higher degree of institutional coherency in Malaysia than Indonesia when it comes to educational operations and objectives. Despite the constitution guaranteeing the sultans and by extension, the *Majlis Agama Islam Negeri*, wide latitude in managing Islamic affairs, including Islamic schools, within their jurisdiction, the reality is that Islamic education in Malaysia is overwhelmingly dominated by the federal government in Putrajaya. Despite occasional political differences, state institutions along the horizontal (Ministry of Education and JAKIM) and vertical (*Majlis Agama Islam Negeri*) axes of governance typically work in concert with each other especially in regard to curriculum content, school supervision, teachers' training and placement, and a host of other operational issues. In contrast, in Indonesia, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture have been historically at odds with each other when it comes to the overall nature and future direction of Islamic education in Indonesia, especially with regard to the issue of "single-roof education" (*pendidikan satu atap*). The 1999 decentralization laws further exacerbated the rift between these two institutions. The role played by the Indonesian Ulama Council (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, MUI) and their local offices, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, further complicates the picture. Suffice it to say that lack of institutional coherency within and between the state institutions that oversee Islamic schools in Indonesia means that it is much harder for the state to imprint its ideological stamp on the Islamic education system as a whole. In Malaysia, by contrast, the state has been relatively unified and effective in shaping Islamic education.

Why functionalization and centralization of Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia?

Two main questions drive this book. The first question is comprised of three parts: to what extent and under what circumstances do the states in Indonesia and Malaysia functionalize Islamic education for their own political ends? How do they engage in such functionalization?[6] To what extent have such efforts been

6 Functionalization here refers to the state using Islamic education as an instrument to propagate and enforce a set of ideology on the society as a means to preserve its legitimacy and perpetuate its hold on power. Islamic education can be functionalized through centralized control of Islamic schools, curriculum, teachers' training, textbook content and selection, and teachers' appointments, among others. This book, therefore, strives to explain why the states in Indonesia and Malaysia adopt different approaches when it comes to functionalizing the Islamic education in their respective countries.

successful? A state shapes and controls Islamic education, I will argue in this book, when Islam, in its socio-political iterations, constitutes a potential basis for or threat to state legitimacy. States are likely to functionalize Islamic education when Islam assumes a saliency as a potentially potent organizational and oppositional socio-political force, which the state also has the opportunity to exploit. If outright repression alone is not enough to quell Islamic-based opposition to the state's legitimacy, winning hearts and minds through ideological co-optation can become an important state imperative. The state attempts to gain control of Islamic education through centralizing efforts such as insisting upon standardized curriculum and textbooks, centralized teachers' training, certification and placement, national examinations, appointment of school principals, and so on. Typically, the state also colludes with the religious authorities to establish a set of orthodox values to be instilled through the Islamic education curriculum that, I will argue, buttresses its legitimacy while stamping out competing religious interpretations.

The second research question is: Why has the state in Malaysia been more successful in exerting centralized control over Islamic education than the state in Indonesia? This book argues that the ability of the state in Malaysia to consolidate its control over Islamic education has been due to the state's ability to minimize the influence and centrifugal pull of the Muslim society at large. In particular, the state in Malaysia has been able to gain control over Islamic schools and Islamic education curriculum with minimal pushback from opposing Islamic groups. In contrast, the state in Indonesia has not been able to centralize control over Islamic education even during the highly centralizing period of the New Order regime (1966–1998). There are three factors that determine the state's resiliency and adaptability in interacting with Muslim society in pursuit of its Islamic education prerogatives: (i) the ideological makeup of the state institutions; (ii) patterns of Islamization in the society that necessitate different reactions from the state; and (iii) the control of resources by the central government that influences the interaction between the centre and its periphery.

Let us briefly consider each of these issues in turn. First, less intra-institutional resistance such as disagreements among departments or intransigent staff allows a state institution possessing a clear ideology to be more coherent when organizing Islamic education. Similar dynamics are also applicable to inter-institutional relations between state institutions that are part of the Islamic education system. In Malaysia, there is a high degree of ideological conformity within and between state institutions that manage Islamic education, even at the local level where long-standing traditions and cultural particularities remain pervasive and influential. The case studies of Islamic education in Kelantan and Sarawak in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively best exemplify what I term a "federalized" institutional mindset: local educational agents of the state believe the only way to improve the overall condition of Islamic education locally is through the heavy involvement of the federal government in Putrajaya. In Indonesia, in contrast, the ideological makeup of the institutions that oversee Islamic education is more fragmented and they are regularly at odds with each other. This institutional and ideological incoherency in turn hampers the efforts of the state in

Indonesia to assert more control over the Islamic education system in the country. Case studies of Aceh and Nusa Tenggara Timur in Chapters 3 and 4 best illustrate this shortcoming, as do the discussions of the single-roof education system and funding for Islamic education in Chapter 2.

The second factor is patterns of social Islamization. The wave of Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s hit Indonesia and Malaysia in markedly different ways. The heightened fervour of political Islam that reverberated across the Muslim world at this time did not take on a similar urgency in Indonesia. Suharto's New Order regime did not have to contend with galvanized domestic Islamic sociopolitical forces that could pose a serious threat to its rule. On the contrary, a decade later the regime decided to exploit Islam as a counterweight against the rising challenge of a nationalist faction within the military.[7] While the regime did embark on Islam-oriented projects such as building more mosques and Islamic schools, promoting the MUI and establishing the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals or ICMI, its legitimacy did not depend on being publicly perceived as Islamic, which therefore allowed it to engage less with political Islam without significant political repercussions.[8] Meanwhile in Malaysia, the Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s sparked the growth of a stridently vocal Islamic civil society movement that challenged the legitimacy of the hitherto secular state from an Islamic perspective. Instead of crushing the Islamic opposition and remaining secular, Mahathir Mohamad's regime decided to Islamize the state, co-opt Islamic civil society and actively engage in the religiously charged public sphere, so as to burnish the state's Islamic credibility to rule.[9] In contrast to MUI in Indonesia, which is semi-official and has a narrowly prescribed scope of authority, JAKIM in Malaysia was from the early 1980s until the present day officially entrusted as the main driver of the state's Islamization efforts, replete with significant powers in matters pertaining to Islam. In short, Islamization dynamics in Malaysia posed a credible threat to the state's legitimacy, thus eliciting a reaction from the state to shape the Islamic public discourse in its favour, including by tightening its reins on the hitherto

7 For more details of the New Order regime's flirtation with Islam during this period, see William Liddle, "The Islamic Turn in Indonesia: A Political Explanation", Journal of Asian Studies 55.3 (August 1996): pp. 613–634; Abdul Azis Thaba, Islam dan Negara Dalam Politik Orde Baru (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1996), pp. 318–352; Robert Hefner, Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000); Jacques Bertrand, Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 83–89; Bahtiar Effendy, Islam and the State in Indonesia (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), pp. 149–182.

8 Robert Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class", Indonesia 56 (October 1993), pp. 1–36.

9 For studies on the Islamic resurgence phenomenon in Malaysia, see Judith Nagata, Reflowering of Islam: Modern Religious Radicals and Their Roots (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984); Zainah Anwar, Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia: Dakwah Among the Students (Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, 1987); Chandra Muzaffar, Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti, 1987).

decentralized Islamic education system. No such threat arose in Indonesia, so that the impetus to refashion Islamic discourse was commensurately less.

The capacity to disburse resources to financially struggling Islamic schools is the third factor that contributes to the state's ability to limit the pressure and influence from the Muslim social actors and at the same time increase its control over the Islamic education system. As shown in the previous section, state institutions in charge of Islamic education in Malaysia such as the Ministry of Education and JAKIM have been well endowed with resources, in comparison to their counterparts in Indonesia. Resource superiority allows the central government in Malaysia to overcome the federal system that theoretically provides Islamic schools with some measure of autonomy (Article 3 of the constitution).[10] In contrast, the 1999 decentralization laws in Indonesia further complicate the efforts of the central government in Jakarta to distribute more resources to the Islamic schools, and hence have weakened its position vis-à-vis the Islamic education system. The issue of resource distribution within the federal/decentralized dimension of Islamic education system in Indonesia and Malaysia will be discussed at length in Chapters 3 and 4. In short, the control and distribution of resources affect the dynamics of centre-periphery relations, which, in turn, determines the degree of control the state has over Islamic education in the country.

Chapter organization

The remainder of this chapter contains three main sections. *The first section* engages with a theoretical discussion on why and how states want to control national education systems, particularly Islamic education systems. This section sketches out the importance of ideological hegemony to regime maintenance, whereby moulding the education system into a certain ideological shape serves as one of the means to achieve that end. We contrast states' normative ideas about what they hope to achieve vis-à-vis ideological hegemony with the everyday practice, which occur when a state imposes its values on a society, in this case through a national education system. This discussion leads to an exposition of Joel Migdal's "state-in-society" approach.[11] Delving into the specific focus of this book, the section proceeds to describe the "functionalization" of Islamic education by some Muslim-majority states to serve specific political objectives and how these efforts did not always produce the desired results. Finally, this section explores the relationship between Islamic orthodoxy and the state, namely in the specific orthodox values found in the curriculum. *The second section* discusses how and why state institutions might form their own identities

10 For more details on centre-periphery financial relations in Malaysia, see B.H. Shafruddin, The Federal Factor in the Government and Politics of Peninsular Malaysia (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 48–99.

11 Joel Migdal, State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform Each Other and Constitute One Another (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

and objectives that result in the general structure of a state being incoherent and fragmented. Here, literature on historical institutionalism is used to shed light on the formation and durability of institutional identity and how institutional identity helps or hinders attempts by states to achieve ideological hegemony. *The third section* discusses how the theories of state, institutionalism and orthodoxy fit with the argument of the book. I explain why the state in Malaysia has been more successful in centralizing its control over Islamic education than the state in Indonesia.

State ideological hegemony and national education

Ibn Khaldun, the renowned fourteenth-century Muslim sociologist, states that "both the pen and the sword are the instruments of the ruler to use in his affairs" to stress the equal importance of physical and ideological coercions in maintaining ruling power and legitimacy.[12] According to Michel Foucault, the productive aspect of state power cannot be expressed solely in the context of repression, or what he calls the "juridical conception" of state power. The power of the state traverses through the society, in which it "induces pleasure, forms knowledge, and produces discourse".[13] In other words, a state can only maintain its legitimacy and impose its ideological hegemony through a dialectical relationship with the society. Antonio Gramsci describes the construction of ideological hegemony within the society as

> [t]he phase in which previously germinated ideologies become 'party', come into confrontation and conflict, until one of them, or at least a single combination of them, tends to prevail, to gain the upper hand, to propagate itself over the whole social area, – bringing about not only the unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions around which the struggle rages not on a corporate but on a 'universal' plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups.[14]

Cultural theorist, Raymond Williams, defines hegemony as

> [a] set of meanings and values which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality

12 Ibn Khaldun, The Muqaddimah: Volume 2, translated by Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 46.

13 Colin Gordon, ed., Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977 by Michel Foucault (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 119.

14 David Forgacs, ed., The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916–1935 (New York: New York University Press, 2000), p. 205.

> beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives.[15]

In such conceptions, the ideology of the state has to be perceived as natural in order for state legitimacy to be durable. To this end, the state needs to form what Antonio Gramsci calls "historically organic ideology", where such ideologies have "a validity that is 'psychological'; they 'organize' human masses, they form the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc".[16] In other words, the state's ideology has to be perceived as an integral part of the natural order of life. Therefore, it is imperative for the state to establish "non-repressive" components that are able to socialize the population in its values, generate support through indoctrination and serve as a complement to the blunt repressive arms of the state such as the army, police, judiciary and so on.[17] Louis Althusser terms the non-repressive components of the state as the "ideological state apparatuses", of which the schools, media, civil society, to name but a few, are part. The main function of the ideological state apparatus is to reproduce the dominant values in the society, which Althusser argues are those which legitimate capitalist relations of exploitation.[18] However, domination typically also involves concession. Gramsci posits that

> [h]egemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed – in other words – that the leading group should make sacrifices of an economic-corporate kind.[19]

In short, a state cannot expect to be strong and resilient if it relies only on brute force and stands aloof from society. The state has to become part of the society and instil its values through the aforementioned ideological apparatuses. Among other things, this logic has given rise to the introduction of mandatory mass education over the last 150 years.

The rapid expansion of mass education began in the late nineteenth century as many states around the world started to modernize and implement systematic ways to manage and discipline their populations. The well-being of the nation

15 Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory", New Left Review I/82 (November–December 1973), p. 9.

16 Forgacs, The Gramsci Reader, p. 199.

17 Gramsci states that "the 'normal' exercise of hegemony in what became the classic terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterized by the combination of force and consent variously balancing one another, without force exceeding consent too much". Forgacs, The Gramsci Reader, p. 261. Max Weber observes that "physical force is often the last resort and that every system of legitimate domination attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy". Quoted in Jacques Berlinerblau, "Toward a Sociology of Heresy", History of Religions 40.4 (May 2001), p. 339.

18 Louis Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays (London: NLB, 1971), pp. 145–149.

19 Forgacs, The Gramsci Reader, p. 211.

and its security depended on the control over the minds and bodies of the populace both as a source of legitimacy and as a human resource for the country's economic needs.[20] Mass education served as a means to mould and classify the population from a young age. For example, compulsory schooling for elementary-aged children became mandatory in England in 1880 and France in 1883.[21] Methods of disciplining and classifying students included, among others, creation of uniform timetables and curricula, imposition of mandatory exams and other evaluative measures, and class placement according to test results. Scientific management of national education became part of the state's repertoire to make governance and inculcation of state ideology more efficacious and orderly: "The government, particularly the administrative apparatus, needed knowledge that was concrete, specific and measurable in order to operate effectively".[22] Theoretically, schools serve as institutions of acculturation of young impressionable members of the population by reproducing the dominant cultural and economic norms within the society established by the state ideological hegemony.[23] Standardized curriculum, meanwhile, functions as a means to form a "large-group consciousness" that engenders a homogeneous student body, and subsequently, population. The Third Republic in late 1800s France, for instance, dealt with the socially and culturally fragmented French society at the time by implanting and increasing a sense of unity, patriotism and order under the overarching idea of French nationhood in the elementary school curriculum.[24] In this perspective, homogeneity of worldviews and social behaviours would lead to social stability, which, in turn, reduces the transaction costs of governance.[25] In short, leading officials of the European states began to see a political utility in the expansion and management of mass education to legitimize their rule as they modernized and as the state organs became intertwined with the capitalist economy in the late nineteenth century.[26] Thus the stage was set for national

20 Stephen Ball, Foucault, Power, and Education (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), p. 43.

21 Ibid., p. 42; Eugen Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914 (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1976), p. 309.

22 Hubert Dreyfuss and Paul Rabinow, Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 137. Quoted in ibid., p. 53.

23 A contention also made by Pierre Bourdieu, "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction" in Jerome Karabel and A.H. Halsey, eds., Power and Ideology in Education (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Basil Berstein, Class, Codes and Control, Volume 3: Towards a Theory of Educational Transmissions (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 54–75; Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, "Capitalism and Education in the United States" in Michael Young and Geoff Whitty, eds., Society, State and Schooling: Readings on the Possibilities for Radical Education (Surrey: The Falmer Press, 1977).

24 Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen, pp. 331–338.

25 Michael Apple, Ideology and Curriculum (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 61–81.

26 Foucault contends that similar "production of truth" process is also applicable, albeit with certain modifications, to socialist countries. Gordon, Power/Knowledge, p. 133.

education to become an indispensable part of state-making and nation-building projects throughout the world.

The everyday reality of ideological hegemony in mass education

In practice, however, states' attempts to achieve ideological hegemony through mass education are rarely monolithic. Local state actors such as officers from the local educational offices, school principals and teachers mediate and re-interpret directives and policy prescriptions from apex state officials, according to their own particular experiences and preferences. Ioan Davies notes that:

> The extent to which education is able to counter the political elite's policies will depend in part on its own economic independence, in part on patterns of socialization which are strong enough to resist the norms of the system, and in part on the persistence of centres of local political power which are able to back alternative schemes.[27]

One factor that has the potential to subvert the state's ideological hegemony in the classrooms is the idea of the "hidden curriculum". Michael Apple defines the hidden curriculum as "norms and values that are implicitly, but effectively, taught in schools and that are not usually talked about in teachers' statements of end or goals".[28] In this interpretation, classroom interactions – learning and teaching – can contain unstated yet deeply rooted and unquestioned assumptions that form the perimeter of what one can or cannot discuss in class (a dominant hidden curriculum). They can also nurture "subversive" teaching and learning practices that challenge the dominant assumptions. An example of the dual-sided dynamics of the hidden curriculum can be clearly seen in some "pro-opposition" Islamic schools in Malaysia. Teachers strive to offer their superior version of "truth" in the classrooms and in so doing distinguish the school's ideology from that of the ministry, but this "truth" is dialectically developed within the limiting confines of the conservative ideals embodied in and underpinning the state's own educational visions.[29]

Proponents of the cultural and economic reproductive role of mass education mentioned earlier, such as Michael Apple, Pierre Bourdieu, Basil Berstein and others also claim that hidden curriculum functions as a subtle way to further embed dominant cultural and economic values, which in this context refers to those related to the capitalist mode of production, in classroom learning.[30] The

27 Ioan Davies, "The Management of Knowledge: A Critique of the Use of Typologies in the Sociology of Education" in Michael Young, ed., Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1971), p. 275.

28 Apple, Ideology and Curriculum, p. 84.

29 Interview with the principal of SABK al-Fitrah, Tanah Merah, Kelantan, 31 July 2013.

30 Henry Giroux, Theory and Resistance in Education (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983), pp. 48–50.

state institution in charge of national education and its local agents, in short, tolerates differences of ideas in the classroom as long as the disagreements are delimited within this invisible discursive boundary. To illustrate, in the Malaysian Islamic education system, heavily dominated by state orthodox values (discussed later in this chapter), "deviant" Islamic beliefs such Shia and Ahmadiyah are discussed in the classroom, but only within the immutable context that these beliefs are completely wrong and that only the dominant version of Sunni Islam is acceptable. It is this immutable context that forms the invisible discursive boundary allowed by the dominant hidden curriculum.

On the flip side, teachers and students can also use the hidden curriculum as a counter-hegemonic means to defy the dominant narrative of the state as embodied in the national curriculum. Social actors such as students and teachers are not simply passive automatons but endowed with personal agency shaped by the particular values of their local community, group identity or the school itself.[31] For example, despite official attempts to instil values such as punctuality, conformity and obedience, some students purposely show up late to class, goof off and make fun of their teachers while at the same time satisfying the school's minimum requirements. Such students are carrying out acts similar to what James Scott terms "everyday forms of resistance".[32] In most cases, state hegemony as projected through the dominance of national curriculum – hidden or otherwise – is simply too powerful for teachers and students to confront in a more forceful or direct manner. As such, the employment of a hidden curriculum by teachers and students as an act of resistance typically serves as an empowering tool on an individual or small-group scale but is rarely enough to inflict serious lasting damage on the overall system. In the case of Malaysia, the hidden curricula of the state and the schools generally revolve around similar conservative Islamic ideals, even for schools that are known to be pro-opposition. Therefore, pro-opposition schools can claim moral victory by possessing the "higher" truth than the state but in a practical sense these schools still remain under the firm control of the state due to their precarious financial situation, as we shall see in Chapter 3. Even Islamic schools that are somewhat financially autonomous from the state also find it more acceptable to frame their political opposition via the conservative ideals promoted by the state Islamic orthodoxy as evidenced by the case of integrated Islamic schools in Chapter 5. In Indonesia, on the other hand, the use of hidden curriculum as a means of resistance in the classroom is moot due to the multifaceted Islamic values propagated by the state, which allow schools to openly teach and practice their own religious ideals, be they progressive or conservative. Examples of ideological openness allowed by the state in Indonesia are amply illustrated by the pluralist

31 Michael Apple, Education and Power (Boston, London, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), pp. 91–134; Giroux, Theory and Resistance in Education, pp. 107–111.

32 Scott gives the examples of peasant resistance to everyday forms of injustice and repression in rural Malaysia in acts such as sabotage, boycott, theft, and others. James Scott, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 248–273.

Islamic school in Nusa Tenggara Timur in Chapter 4 and the deeply conservative integrated Islamic school in Depok in Chapter 5.

A state's projection of hegemony onto the national education system is not always coherent and totalizing. Instead of looking at a state exercising its power as an autonomous entity, existing above and outside the social realm with its own prerogatives,[33] a state should be studied through its dialectical relationship with the society. In analysing the function of power within the state–society relations, Foucault avers that:

> Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application.[34]

In the context of state hegemony in national education, ideological dissemination simply does not flow unilaterally from the state to the society. As Eugen Weber illustrates in his densely detailed and vivid study of French society in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Third Republic's ideological project to instil a strong sense of French nationhood among the socially and culturally divided population through the national education system only became successful when the majority of French people began to see the utility of attaining education beyond the rudimentary level, in order to pursue job opportunities in the expanding national economy, bureaucracy and the military, and to increase their social prestige by being educated. Also crucial was the state's heavy investment in improving public infrastructure such as roads and school buildings and making education free, all of which made attending school a more accessible and pleasant experience for many rural children.[35]

The state and the society, according to Joel Migdal, constitute each other as their components interact with each other at various levels of governance. Migdal treats the state as just another social organization, which is to say that the state is not immune to contestations between various social groups. He then posits a new definition of the state, which expands on the traditional notion coined by Max Weber. Migdal argues that the state is "a field of power marked by the use and threat of violence and shaped by (1) *the image of a coherent, con-*

33 Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds. Bringing the State Back In (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

34 Gordon, Power/Knowledge, p. 98.

35 Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen, pp. 303–338.

trolling organization in a territory, and (2) *the actual practices of its multiple parts*" (emphasis in original).[36] The significant feature of this definition is the distinction between the state's image and its actual practices. The image of the state is one of coherency and the projection of a unitary whole; in practice, however, the state consists of multiple parts that might not work in harmony and might even act in contradiction to the overall goals set by the state's apex leaders. The multiple parts of the state can be influenced by various social forces, political interest groups, religious organizations and others, situating them in the midst of a tug-of-war between the normative aims of the "unitary" state and the actual demands of the society. In the context of projecting ideological hegemony via mass education, the ideology of the state is first shaped at the top by the apex officials' interaction with social forces at the centre of power. A good example is when top state officials formulate policies based on electoral calculations in order to further entrench their political incumbency, as we shall see in Chapter 2, which explains how Malaysian policymakers flip-flopped over the policy to teach Science and Mathematics in English. As the ideology wends its way to the periphery through various levels of governance, it is further reshaped by the state's local agents and local social forces that might be influenced by unique local cultures and political dynamics or even by an individual school's long-standing traditions. Therefore, the analytical lens must be trained on the process in which state ideology is shaped and contested through dialectical interactions between components of the state and the society, rather than merely focusing on the endpoints (state and society as two separate mutually exclusive wholes).

According to Migdal, there are four levels of governance where contestation of state authority can take place.[37] First are the *trenches*, i.e. the lowest rung of the institutional bureaucracy; second are the *dispersed field offices* (one step above the trenches), staffed by "implementors" or essentially mid-level bureaucrats; third are the institution's *central offices*, most likely in the capital and staffed by upper-level bureaucrats; and finally the *commanding heights*, which is where the image of the state is crafted and projected for public consumption. The interactions within and between these four levels of state organization in conjunction with their engagement with various social forces present what Migdal calls "pressure points": arenas of domination and opposition in state–society relations that in the end shape the capacity of the state to effectively assert its ideological hegemony.[38] In regards to mass education, the so-called "trenches" are the local schools; "dispersed field offices" are the local educational offices; "central offices" are the high-ranking officials at the Ministry in charge of formulating the educational policies; and last "the commanding heights", consist of top national politicians who see the political utility of mass education and wish to instrumentalize it. In regard to the argument of the book,

36 Migdal, State in Society, pp. 15–16.
37 Ibid., pp. 117–124.
38 Ibid., pp. 126–134.

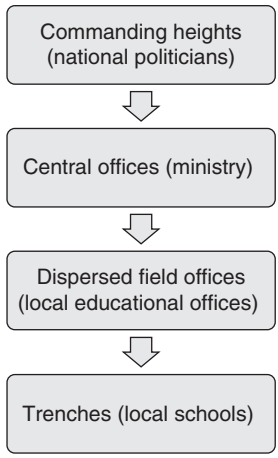

Figure 1.1 Joel Migdal's "pressure points" in the national education system.

the pressure points chart the flow of the state's hegemonic control of Islamic education, starting from the formulation of values that are part of the Islamic education curriculum at the apex (commanding heights and central offices) to the implementation and enforcement of the curriculum at the local level by central offices and dispersed field offices, and finally to schools' compliance in the trenches. I will argue throughout this book that, compared to Indonesia, the state in Malaysia at the apex (the national politicians, the Ministry of Education and JAKIM) has been more successful in exerting its ideological dominance on the local levels as represented by the local educational offices and schools by exacting near total compliance with state Islamic orthodox values (to be explained in detail later in this chapter). In Indonesia, by contrast, the state Islamic orthodoxy is characterized by diversity of values, which result in local educational offices and schools having a broad autonomy in practising their own Islamic ideals.

Overview of the post-colonial states in Indonesia and Malaysia, 1950–present

Since the end of World War II, the nature of the post-colonial state in Indonesia has undergone more changes than the post-colonial state in Malaysia. The post-colonial state in Indonesia can be divided into four eras: the brief flirtation with the federal system in the first half of 1950s; the Guided Democracy period (1959–1966); the New Order period (1966–1998); and the Reformasi period (1998–present). The first government formed in 1950 was federal in nature, as a way to unite various disparate and politically autonomous regions under a single form of governance. Weak cabinets, intense political rivalry

between various mass organizations and the then President Sukarno's proclivity for a unitary state undermined the federal system, which resulted in rebellions on the Outer Islands, namely in parts of Sumatra and Sulawesi. The federal system finally broke down in 1959 when Sukarno declared Indonesia to be a "Guided Democracy" and consolidated power in the hands of the President.[39] The centralizing tendency of the state became more intense during the era of the New Order regime as the state expanded its reach over every aspect of Indonesia's social, political, and economic life.[40] After the fall of Suharto and the New Order regime in 1998, the Indonesian state underwent a massive decentralization process that transferred control over matters such as education and economic activities to the local level.[41] The state in Indonesia, even at the height of its centralizing drive during the New Order period, has never been able or simply unwilling to assume control over the predominantly private and autonomous Islamic schools and shape the Islamic education curriculum into a regime legitimizing one; in other words, functionalization of Islamic education. The state throughout the Indonesian post-independence period, regardless of its nature, simply does not rely on being perceived as Islamic in order to be legitimate.

Meanwhile, the post-colonial state in Malaysia has been from its inception in 1957 a federal one. Despite being federal in nature, the state in Malaysia has always been highly centralized and unitary, with the political and economic power overwhelmingly concentrated in Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya.[42] Moreover, the state in Malaysia has always been under the control of the UMNO-led federal government since independence, which sees no reason for changing the system that has managed to sustain it in power thus far. The centralizing juggernaut of the Malaysian federal government first reared its head when it abolished local government elections in 1965.[43] A year later the federal government interfered in the internal politics of Sarawak, which had just joined the Malaysian federation in 1963, by helping to engineer the ouster of Sarawak's first Chief Minister and a vocal advocate for autonomy, Stephen Kalong Ningkan (more

39 Herbert Feith, The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia (Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur: Equinox Publishing, 2007). See also J.D. Legge, Sukarno: A Political Biography (Singapore: Archipelago Press, 2003), pp. 268–379.

40 R. William Liddle, "Regime: The New Order" in Donald Emmerson, ed. Indonesia Beyond Suharto (Armonk and London: An East Gate Book, 1999), pp. 39–70.

41 Greg Fealy and Edward Aspinall, eds., Local Power and Politics in Indonesia: Decentralisation and Democratisation (Singapore: ISEAS, 2003).

42 Francis Loh Kok Wah, Old vs New Politics in Malaysia: State and Society in Transition (Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2009), pp. 16–20; Mohamad Agus Yusoff, Malaysian Federalism: Conflict or Consensus (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2006); Francis Loh Kok Wah, ed., Sabah and Sarawak: The Politics of Development and Federalism (Penang: Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1997); Shafruddin, The Federal Factor.

43 Report of the Royal Commission of Enquiry into the Working of Local Governments in West Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1972).

details on this particular episode in Chapter 4). From the constitutional point of view, the oversight of Islamic affairs solidly resides within the authority of the sultan and the State Islamic Council (*Majlis Agama Islam Negeri*) in each state in Malaysia. Nevertheless, as we shall see throughout this book, the federal government's dominance over Islamic affairs is unmistakably apparent, even in a state such as Kelantan, which has long prided itself on its unique Islamic traditions and legacy (see Chapter 3). The centralizing efforts over Islamic affairs took on an acute sense of urgency in the late 1970s as the hitherto secular state faced strident opposition from Islamic political activists who questioned its legitimacy. Instead of quashing the Islamic dissent and remaining secular, the already highly centralized state decided to bring Islamic affairs under its control as a way to mould the Islamic discourse into a version that buttressed its legitimacy. Islamic affairs, the final preserve of state autonomy in Malaysia, has now been subsumed by the federal government hell-bent on burnishing its religious credibility to govern.

Functionalization of Islamic education in the Muslim world

Historically, attempts by Muslim rulers in the pre-nation state era to co-opt Islamic education as a means to strengthen their legitimacy were complicated by the nature of traditional Islamic education, which was decentralized, informal, and highly autonomous. The advent of modern state-making in the late nineteenth century, which included a comprehensive attempt at codifying syariah laws by the Ottoman Empire, led to a major revamp of traditional Islamic education across the Middle East.[44] Throughout most of Islamic history, Islamic

44 The pedagogical method in traditional Islamic education is generally similar across the Muslim world, which, among others, places heavy emphasis on rote memorization and recitation of seminal texts, oral transmission of knowledge with a clear intellectual genealogy (teacher-focus), no regular exams, and no fixed curriculum and schooling term. For an overview of traditional Islamic learning, see Jonathan Berkey, "Madrasas Medieval and Modern: Politics, Education, and the Problem of Muslim Identity" in Robert Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, eds., Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 40–58. For a vividly detailed account of traditional Islamic learning in Yemen, see Brinkley Messick, The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 75–98. For Morocco, see Dale Eickelman, Knowledge and Power in Morocco (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). For Indonesia, see Zamakhsyari Dhofier, The Pesantren Tradition: The Role of Kyai in the Maintenance of Traditional Islam in Java (Tempe: Monograph Series Press, Program for Southeast Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1999), pp. 1–13; Karel Steenbrink. Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam dalam Kurun Moderen (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986); and Azyumardi Azra, Surau: Pendidikan Islam Tradisional dalam Transisi dan Modernisasi (Jakarta: Logos, 2003), pp. 97–106. For Malaysia, see William Roff, "Pondoks, Madrasahs and the Production of 'Ulama' in Malaysia" in William Roff, Studies on Islam and Society in Southeast Asia (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2009) and Rosnani Hashim, Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2004), pp. 21–28.

jurisprudence has been a wide-open field replete with diversity of opinions and vigorous debates among jurists; the existing four Sunni *madhhabs* (schools of thought) – Hambali, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanafi – are a prime example of this long-standing tradition of scholarship. The interpretive authority, defined as the intellectual and moral credibility to clarify and shed meanings on Islamic precepts contained in the Quran and Hadith (reported sayings and practices of Prophet Muhammad), was widely dispersed and decentralized throughout much of Islamic history, with no group holding sway over others.[45] But the late nineteenth century saw rapid codification of syariah law, particularly within the realm of the Ottoman Empire.[46] This codification served as a means for the Empire to streamline administration across its vast and disparate territories, and was a desperate attempt to beat back the encroaching Western colonialism by "modernizing" its legal system to make it less capricious, so as to prevent the Western powers using it as a pretext to interfere in the Empire's internal affairs.[47] The European-influenced positivist nature of the codification of syariah law within the realm of the Ottoman Empire, in turn, spurred the establishment of Islamic educational systems that produced Muslim scholars who were well-trained in the workings of the newly established syariah codes called *Majalla*.[48] The power to interpret Islamic tenets, at the turn of twentieth century, shifted significantly from the jurists of yore to the graduates of this newly established education system. The codified syariah law required its practitioners to possess a specific set of skills to interpret and enforce the law that was unavailable to the students of the traditional learning system. The field of Islamic jurisprudence, which previously had been wide open and dynamic, was now circumscribed within the limiting confines of the codified syariah law and its practitioners by the early decades of the twentieth century. Therefore, the Islamic education system unwittingly became a battleground in which supremacy over the Islamic religious interpretive authority was fought. Since Islamic matters were decided through this newly codified syariah law system, the graduates of the Islamic education system who were trained in understanding and discharging these laws became the holders of the religious interpretive authority. Thus, the newly standardized Islamic education system became an arena of ideological contestation as

45 Khaled Abou El-Fadl, Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women (Oxford: Oneworld Press, 2001), pp. 23–69; Gudrun Krämer and Sabine Schmidtke. Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), pp. 1–14.

46 At this point in history the Ottoman Empire was the de facto ruler of the Muslim world, a caliphate that spanned from Central Asia to North Africa. Its reach, though, was uneven and it ruled mainly through indirect means, which made it futile to impose uniform rule across its huge swath of territory.

47 El-Fadl, Speaking in God's Name, pp. 16–17; William Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), p. 84; Messick, The Calligraphic State, pp. 54–66.

48 Berkey, Madrasas Medieval and Modern; Clark Lombardi, State Law as Islamic Law in Modern Egypt: The Incorporation of Shari'a into Egyptian Constitutional Law (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Messick, The Calligraphic State, pp. 55–58, 101–107.

the state and various social actors tried to shape its content and pedagogical culture, and consequently determine the type of graduates that the system produced.[49]

Since the advent of modern state-making in late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, all modern Muslim-majority states have deemed the functionalization of Islamic education to be integral to regime maintenance and legitimacy as they confront the challenges of modernization, post-colonial nation-building, and presently, the forces of globalization.[50] Functionalization refers to "processes of translation in which intellectual objects from one [Islamic] discourse come to serve the strategic or utilitarian ends of another [Islamic] discourse that is amendable to the state".[51] In this case, the implications that state-making and regime maintenance have for Islamic education have generally been in the shape of structural changes: the abolition or radical overhaul of the traditional Islamic education or its incorporation into a more coherent and homogenous national educational system. Notably in Oman, which was the focus of his study, Dale Eickelman lists three effects as Muslim states in the Middle East have embarked on the grand project of standardizing and nationalizing mass education, including Islamic education, among their population since the 1950s.[52] These effects result in the creation of authoritative discourse through selective access to texts and teachers; the transformation of religion as a concrete system and its ideas reified and objectified; and last, standardized language and ideas of mass education that encourage a sense of affinity among the students, not unlike the notion of "imagined community" put forth by Benedict Anderson in his seminal work on nationalism.[53] In a nutshell, Eickelman contends that the post-colonial mass education project in the Middle East has turned Islamic intellectual tradition from its aforementioned autonomous, amorphous and fluid character to something that is concrete, rational, and systematic (objectified and reified). The objectification of Islam and Islamic learning narrowly circumscribes Islamic discourse into this newly delimited space and creates a clearly defined standard of ideals promoted by the post-colonial state. In practice, however, states' attempts at functionalizing Islamic education for the purposes of regime maintenance often do not attain their desired results, which is to shape public opinion in the regimes' favour. In the same study of Islamic education trends in selected Arab countries, Eickelman observes that "even when mass

49 For an example of the modernization of Islamic education in Yemen, see Messick, The Calligraphic State.

50 Robert Hefner, "The Politics and Cultures of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia" in Robert Hefner, ed., The Making of Modern Muslims: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), pp. 42–43.

51 Gregory Starrett, Putting Islam to Work: Education, Politics, and Religious Transformation in Egypt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 9–10.

52 Dale Eickelman, "Mass Higher Education and the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Arab Societies", American Ethnologist 19.4 (November 1992), pp. 646–647.

53 Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (London and New York: Verso, 1983).

higher education is used to sustain old patterns of belief and authority, its very structure engenders new 'authoritative' ways of thinking about self, religion, and politics".[54] The new "authoritative" way, in this context, can either lead to the strengthening of a state's ideological hegemony or the empowerment of countervailing ideological forces hostile to the state. Both outcomes will be illustrated in some detail in the next section.

State functionalization of Islamic education in the Muslim world

In the wake of the objectification of Islam and the conversion of syariah principles into positive law, beginning in the late-nineteenth-century Middle East, mass education has become a hotly contested arena for interpretive authority between the modernizing Muslim-majority state and various religiously inspired socio-political movements. In Egypt, for example, in the 1950s, the Free Officers' Revolution led by Gamal Nasser replaced the traditional educational system, long known for its polyvocality of Islamic knowledge and interpretive authority, with the attempted hegemony of a single national educational system. This attempt aimed to fuse the state's interpretation of Islam, Arab nationalism and socialism into a single ideology.[55] In the aftermath of the Six-Day War with Israel in 1967, which resulted in the defeat of the Arab forces, the general public mood in Egypt soured on Nasser's Arab nationalism project and many people began to turn to Islam for a political alternative. Nasser's successor, Anwar Sadat, promptly capitalized on the Islamic resurgence trend within Egyptian society by actively promoting Islamic symbols in public (along with releasing many Muslim Brotherhood activists from prison and, in light of the heightened Cold War, re-orientating the regime's political and economic compass to the West and capitalism).[56] However, as Gregory Starrett shows, the state's initiative in fact had the unintended consequence of diminishing its authority and control of public discourse over the years, giving rise to Islamist movements that were opposed to the state, which, in turn, led to their violent repression.[57] In short, the state's attempt at functionalizing Islam and Islamic education, both during the Nasser and Sadat eras, did not achieve its desired results.

The same can be said for Iran, where the modernizing efforts carried out by the Shahs, which also included a major overhaul of the traditional education system and marginalization of Islamic education, failed to keep the monarchy in power and prevent the 1979 revolution, which was in large part fuelled by the students of the Islamic schools or *hawzah*. In the Shah's case, he underestimated the potency of Islamic opposition to his rule, particularly in the traditional Shiite

54 Eickelman, Mass Higher Education, p. 645.

55 Starrett, Putting Islam to Work, pp. 77–80; Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 30.

56 Starrett, Putting Islam to Work, pp. 80–86.

57 Ibid., pp. 220–33.

educational centres such as Qom, which ultimately contributed to his downfall.[58] The Imamate leadership that succeeded the Shah realized early on the sheer importance of using schools to inculcate the young Iranian minds with revolutionary ideals and reinforce the political socialization the students received outside of the school. The religious leaders of the 1979 revolution cast it as an "ideological revolution", which aimed to shake up the cultural foundation of the country, as opposed to a "non-ideological revolution" that only seeks change in political leadership.[59] The republic's leadership promptly revamped the national curriculum and textbooks to include new normative ideals of what a citizen of the new Islamic republic should be.[60] According to one author, the state's effort to instil revolutionary ideals through the education system has been generally successful, partly due to the Imamate leadership enjoying a high degree of legitimacy from the public. The schools serve as a complementary socializing agent, which helps to reinforce values learned through families, mosques, and workplaces. In other words, there is a high ideological congruity between what is going inside and outside of the schools, which leads to a relatively seamless process of values inculcation.[61]

Turkey, despite its staunchly secular nature throughout most of the twentieth century, has also tried to functionalize Islamic education to further strengthen state legitimacy since Islam remains a vital component of the daily lives of most Turkish people. Secularism, in the Turkish context, does not mean the complete separation of religion and state; instead, the state allows a role for religion in the public sphere as long as the state controls and defines what the proper functions of the said role are.[62] In other words, the Turkish state arrogates to itself the interpretive authority to articulate and enforce what it deems to be "Turkish Islam", which is comprised of three components: Islam that is devoid of "superstitious" and

58 David Menashri, Education and the Making of Modern Iran (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992). Bassam Tibi speculates, "If the Shah had had the Shi'i clergy [most of them were also heads of the traditional Islamic schools] as allies, the Westernized intellectuals could not have succeeded in polarizing the country and ousting him". Bassam Tibi, The Crisis of Modern Islam (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), p. 109.

59 Golnar Mehran, "Ideology and Education in the Islamic Republic of Iran", Compare 20.1 (1990), p. 53.

60 The author, who was a high-ranking officer of the Iranian Ministry of Education, states that some of the main ideals propagated by the state include "strengthening the beliefs of students with respect to: a) oneness to God; b) prophethood and revelation; c) resurrection and its constructive role in the journey of human beings toward God; d) justice of God; e) Imamate and the leadership of the pure Imams; and f) the dignity of humanity, its superior role, its freedom and its responsibility before God". Bahram Mohsenpour, "Philosophy of Education in Postrevolutionary Iran" Comparative Education Review 32.1 (February 1988), p. 85. See also Mehran, "Ideology and Education", pp. 61–62; M. Mobin Shorish, "The Islamic Revolution and Education in Iran" Comparative Education Review 32.1 (February 1988), pp. 59–60.

61 Shorish, The Islamic Revolution, pp. 72–75.

62 Kim Shively, "Taming Islam: Studying Religion in Secular Turkey", Anthropological Quarterly 81.3 (Summer 2008), p. 684.

"backward" elements; modernism; and nationalism.[63] The ideals of "Turkish Islam" saturate the curriculum content of religious studies in state schools, which the state hopes is enough to mollify those Muslims who seek an Islamic education within the state school system. Nevertheless, as Kim Shively vividly demonstrates in her ethnographic study of the informal Quranic study group in the suburb of Ankara in the late 1990s, the state's instrumental efforts at repurposing Islamic education for its own ideological ends were met by pious Muslims with deep suspicions and dissatisfaction at the inadequacy and overly general content of the religious studies curriculum. Muslims in search of more substantive and meaningful religious education increased enrolments in the state-sanctioned Imam-Hatip schools and private Islamic schools such as the ones in the Fethullah Gülen educational network.[64] In short, the secular state's effort to co-opt and remake Islamic education in its image throughout the twentieth century had failed, and similar to the aforementioned case in Egypt, spawned a galvanized Islamic oppositional force within the society, which culminated in the electoral dominance of the Islamic party, Justice and Development Party (AKP) since 2002.

Mass education in Pakistan has seen a significant philosophical overhaul since the late 1970s when then President, Zia-ul-Haq, utilized Islamic discourse to buttress the legitimacy of his presidency and win public support for Pakistan's role in the Soviet-Afghan war. Pakistan's National Educational Policy in 1998 stated that "the ideology of Islam forms the genesis of the state of Pakistan. The country cannot survive and advance without placing the entire system of education on sound Islamic foundations".[65] The state's Islamic ideology here conflates the national identity of being a Pakistani and the Islamic faith. The identity of a Pakistani Muslim, a redundancy in the official view, is defined against others who do not fit the ideals laid out by the state, be they foreigners (namely Hindu Indians), non-Muslim Pakistanis or fellow Muslims who happen not to share a deeply conservative religious outlook.[66] The intensification of conservative Islamic influence in the Pakistani society during the Zia-ul-Haq period also resulted in the preservation and growth of traditional madrasah. Some of these madrasah housed many of the Afghan refugees fleeing across the border and also

63 Jocelyne Cesari, The Awakening of Muslim Democracy: Religion, Modernity, and the State (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 88–89; Richard Tapper and Nancy Tapper, "Religion, Education and Continuity in a Provincial Town" in Richard Tapper, ed., Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular State (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1991), pp. 62–74; Bahattin Akşit, "Islamic Education in Turkey: Medrese Reform in Late Ottoman Times and Imam-Hatip Schools in the Republic" in Richard Tapper, ed., Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular State (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1991), pp. 162–164.

64 The increasing enrollment rate in Islamic schools in turn led to the state crackdown to reverse the trend. Shively, Taming Islam, pp. 697–705.

65 Quoted in Naureen Durrani and Máiréad Dunne, "Curriculum and National Identity: Exploring the Links between Religion and Nation in Pakistan", Journal of Curriculum Studies 42.2 (2010), p. 222.

66 Ibid., pp. 224–233.

produced students who went to fight the Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Many of these madrasah students later ended up forming the highly repressive Taliban government in the newly liberated Afghanistan while still maintaining links with some of the traditional madrasahs in Pakistan.[67]

The obvious overall pattern here is that despite the best effort by states to manage the Islamic education system and co-opt the Islamic discourse, the highly Islamized public sphere that stems from state-sanctioned religious education might unintentionally result in the strengthening of countervailing Islamic social forces, which can put a damper on the states' efforts to use Islamic education as a means for social control and maintaining their legitimacy. As discussed previously, the relationship between the state and the society is a dialectical one in which components of both constantly influence and reconstitute one another. The question then is what are the ways that allow the state to gain an upper hand in this dialectical interaction, at least within the realm of Islamic education, where it can exert its ideological hegemony while minimizing the pressure from the social forces. When it comes to Islamic education in Malaysia, the state has been powerful and adaptable enough so that it is able to shape the nature of social resistance against its attempts to promote its version of Islamic values and principles in the curriculum. For example, Islamic schools that are suspicious of the state's Islamization effort in the educational arena might still appropriate the state-issued curriculum and pedagogical methods and make them more genuinely Islamic as an act of defiance against the state's claim of interpretive authority, a form of hidden curriculum mentioned in the previous section.[68] Nevertheless, it is a resistance that is shaped by the discursive boundary set by the state Islamic orthodoxy. In Indonesia, on the other hand, no such dynamics occur since the pluralist nature of the state Islamic orthodoxy allows Islamic schools a broad autonomy in interpreting the national curriculum based on their ideals, not the discursive boundary set by the state. In short, the state's ability to functionalize Islamic education as a means to exert its ideological hegemony depends on how effective it can manage the Islamic discourse without resorting to full-on repression.

Islamic orthodoxy and the functionalization of Islamic education

In order to better elucidate the notion of functionalization of Islamic education in a Muslim-majority country we need to discern the values and norms the state

67 Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Tradition and Authority in Deobandi Madrasas in South Asia" in Robert Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, eds., Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 71; Ahmed Rashid, Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 22–24.

68 Fida Adely and Gregory Starrett, "Schools, Skills, and Morals in the Contemporary Middle East" in Bradley Levinson and Mica Pollock, eds., A Companion to the Anthropology of Education (Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 351.

wants to propagate in the Islamic education curriculum, how and why these values make their way into policymaking, and how embedded and influential their role is within the state institutions overseeing Islamic education. In other words, we need to identify what is the state's *Islamic orthodoxy*. This book contends that the different state Islamic orthodoxies one can find in Indonesia and Malaysia influence the three factors that shape these states' ability to deal with pressures from social groups. As mentioned before, functionalization of Islamic education is part of the state's attempt to monopolize religious interpretive authority especially when the state's legitimacy precariously rests on having a religiously favourable image in the eyes of the Muslim public, which is the case in Malaysia but not Indonesia. The conventional notion of orthodoxy proposes the state to develop its own interpretation of Islam, socialize that interpretation widely among the public through mass education, and mete out proscriptions and punishments against alternative interpretations. The idea that a state Islamic orthodoxy is essentially a form of power dynamic is described by Talal Asad:

> Orthodoxy is not a mere body of opinion but a distinctive relationship – a relationship of power. Wherever Muslims have the power to regulate, uphold, require, or adjust correct practices, and to condemn, exclude, undermine, or replace incorrect ones, there is the domain of orthodoxy.[69]

To merely explain orthodoxy in terms of a linear power relationship where the state unilaterally imposes its ideological will on the society at large is to overlook the complex process that gives shape and substance to the orthodox values and norms. Foucault's comment in the previous section regarding the web-like structure of power relations between the state and the society and the production of "truth" forms the basis on which the idea of orthodoxy is developed. One very detailed definition of orthodoxy describes it as

> [a] superordinate compulsory organisation composed of a leading class in cahoots with other classes and social groups that 1) controls the means of material, intellectual, and symbolic production; 2) articulates "correct" forms of belief and praxis through the work of rationalizing and consent-generating intellectuals (and/or priests); 3) identifies "incorrect" forms of belief and praxis through these same intellectuals; 4) institutionally manages deviant individuals and groups through coercive mechanisms (e.g., physical and symbolic violence, excessive taxation, ostracism, etc.) or through "re-education," compromise, accommodation, and so on.[70]

69 Talal Asad, The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam (Washington, DC: Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1986), p. 15.

70 Jacques Berlinerblau, "Toward a Sociology of Heresy, Orthodoxy, and Doxa", History of Religions 40.4 (May 2001), p. 340.

This definition of orthodoxy is only partially complete when applied to the context of this book's argument as religious orthodoxy is not necessarily related to dominating and controlling other religious points of view, as we shall see in the Indonesian case. As stated before, state functionalization of Islamic education assumes different shapes and meanings depending on the political exigencies of the particular time and place in history. Therefore, it is also instructive to analyse Islamic orthodoxy in a similar light, namely in construing orthodoxy and its contents "[a]s fluid, as developing in a dialectic with heterodoxy".[71] Orthodox values and norms change over time in direct relation with the prevailing pluralist ideas and practices, and with regard to state functionalization of Islamic education; these changes can be seen in official policies, the contents of curricula, textbooks and teachers' training manuals, and the types of enforcement at the local level.

In the case of Malaysia, the critical juncture that is the start of the Islamization wave in the late 1970s, entailed abrupt institutional change, resulting in the reconfiguration of orthodox values and the rise of conservative brand of state Islamic orthodoxy. The Islamized society since the late 1970s presented a potent challenge to the state's legitimacy by framing the public discourse in an Islamic context, and thus prompted the state institutions to change and adapt. Similar institutional dynamics did not happen in Indonesia. The state Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia remains moderate and is still shaped by plurality of Islamic practices in the society. In Malaysia, the state leaders determined they needed to co-opt or quash competing values and norms with co-optation being the preferred strategy as it lowers the cost of governance; highly repressive strategies tend to generate hostility and resentment in society. In Indonesia by contrast, the Islamization of the society that occurred in the 1980s did not pose a similar threat to the legitimacy of the New Order regime. The Islamic resurgence mostly made its presence felt in the socio-cultural sphere, which in turn strengthened the pre-existing ideological diversity within the Indonesian Muslim society.[72] It is the dominance of diversity of values in the society that ultimately shape the character of state Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia.

In addition, state institutions are also not immune to significant changes within the society. Change agents can infiltrate into the state institutions at the same time that the institutions are undergoing change in values and norms, in which case, the presence of change agents (a topic we return to below) within the institutions can hasten the institutional identity transformation process. Institutional complexity, a concept that will be discussed later in this chapter, also plays a crucial role in determining the ideological cohesiveness of a state institu-

71 Ibid., p. 332.

72 See Aswab Mahasin, "The Santri Middle Class: An Insider View" in Richard Tanter and Kenneth Young, The Politics of Middle Class Indonesia (Clayton: Monash University Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990); Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society", pp. 8–12; Hefner, Civil Islam; Effendy, Islam and the State in Indonesia.

tion. In a nutshell, the more complex the inter- and intra-relations between and within state institutions the less ideologically cohesive the state is, which this book argues lead to the formation of a more moderate and multifaceted state Islamic orthodoxy, such as the one we see in Indonesia. The opposite argument can also be used to explain the formation and strength of the state Islamic orthodoxy in Malaysia.

To illustrate, the Malaysian educational policies during the first twenty years after independence in 1957 were predominantly secular in orientation but underwent a drastic change in the late 1970s and early 1980s during the early years of the Islamic resurgence trend in the society (more discussion on this in Chapter 2). This was a point of critical juncture that upset the existing institutional ideology and identity, and made state institutions become more conservative and Islamic. The values and norms of the state Islamic orthodoxy were developed in the 1980s by the policymakers within the government, spearheaded by the chief architect of the Islamization process, Anwar Ibrahim, whom the former Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, recruited away from the opposition-friendly Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement (*Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia*, ABIM). This process occurred in a constant discursive engagement with the Islamic ideas and principles of PAS, the opposition Islamic party that was challenging the regime on the grounds that it lacked religious legitimacy to govern.[73] As the interplay of religious discourse between the state and its Islamic opposition produced more conservatism, so did the official orthodoxy which it engendered.[74] These orthodox values and norms were then incorporated into the mass education system as the state tried to employ every means at its disposal to gain an upper hand in its battle of religious discourse with the opposition. The monolithic character of the state Islamic orthodoxy in Malaysia in turn allowed the state to exert more centralized control over Islamic education.

Meanwhile in Indonesia, the Islamic revivalism that radically altered the socio-political landscape in Malaysia in the late 1970s barely made a ripple in the society, at least not until about a decade later. Even then, the identity and

73 Maznah Mohamad contended that rising Islamization of Malaysian bureaucracy should not only be seen from the perspective of political rivalry between UMNO and PAS but also the Islamic bureaucracy's own rational objective to monopolize the way Islam is practised in Malaysia. Maznah Mohamad, "The Ascendance of Bureaucratic Islam and the Secularization of Sharia in Malaysia", Pacific Affairs 83.3 (September 2010), pp. 505–524.

74 Maznah Mohamad, "Legal-Bureaucratic Islam in Malaysia: Homogenizing and Ring-fencing the Muslim Subject" in Hui Yew-Foong, ed., Encountering Islam: The Politics of Religious Identities in Southeast Asia (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013), pp. 106–109; Joseph Liow, Piety and Politics: Islamism in Contemporary Malaysia (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 43–72; Joseph Liow, "Political Islam in Malaysia: problematising discourse and practice in the UMNO-PAS 'Islamisation race' ", Commonwealth and Comparative Politics 42.2 (2004), pp. 184–205; Kamarulnizam Abdullah, The Politics of Islam in Contemporary Malaysia (Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Press, 2003), pp. 180–211; Farish Noor, "Blood, Sweat and Jihad: The Radicalization of the Political Discourse of PAS from 1982 Onwards", Contemporary Southeast Asia 25.2 (2003), p. 205.

ideology of the institution overseeing Islamic education (MORA) remained unaffected and the influence of the arbiter of Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia, MUI, also did not increase despite the apparent rise in pietism among the Indonesian Muslim population from about the mid-1980s.[75] The multifaceted nature of state Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia is an indication of a state that is more divided and penetrable by various Islamic groups with ideologies that run the gamut from the progressive Jaringan Islam Liberal to the mainstream Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah to the deeply conservative Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia and Front Pembela Islam. In short, both the states in Indonesia and Malaysia encountered a similar exogenous pressure – Islamic revivalism – but they came up with starkly different responses, producing very different state Islamic orthodoxies.

Islamic orthodoxy and state institutions

A state Islamic orthodoxy by definition must be promoted by state institutions as a means of controlling religious discourse. In order to explore the nature of the Islamic orthodoxy propagated by a state at any particular moment in time – in this book we are concerned with the Islamization period in Indonesia and Malaysia from the late 1970s onward – we need to consider the political utility for the state in formulating and institutionalizing certain values that make up the state Islamic orthodoxy. One important aspect of orthodoxy is its characteristic as an "institutionalized ideology", meaning attempts at monopolizing religious discourse through formal coercive powers of the state apparatus.[76] In other words, orthodoxy can only function within the framework of state institutions, which renders it official. While Islamic orthodoxies have existed since the beginning of Islam, the use of orthodoxy to prop up regime legitimacy in the Muslim world was irregular and capricious since the orthodoxy itself was highly dependent on the influence of the individual ruler and the feudal kingdom of the day. It was the rise of modern states in the Muslim world in the late 1800s with their attendant bureaucracies that gave orthodoxy a stable institutional home and provided its enforcers with more intrusive and coherent coercive powers. In short, an interpretation of Islam only becomes an orthodoxy if a state adopts it. In the words of Hamid Dabashi, "it is the political success of a given interpretive reading that renders a religious position 'orthodox' ".[77]

Since we have already established that Islamic values have to be ensconced within the state institutional structure to render them an orthodoxy, now we want to look at how and why the states in Indonesia and Malaysia adopt different

75 Hefner, Civil Islam.

76 George Zito, "Toward a Sociology of Heresy", Sociological Analysis 44.2 (Summer 1983), p. 124.

77 Hamid Dabashi, Authority in Islam: From the Rise of Muhammad to the Establishment of the Umayyads (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1989), p. 71.

types of Islamic orthodoxy. As mentioned before, this book contends that institutional objectives and institutional complexity play a crucial role when it comes to determining the nature of state Islamic orthodoxy. The Malaysian and Indonesia cases clearly illustrate the ways these two factors shape the nature of Islamic orthodoxy and its influence in the field of Islamic education. JAKIM represents the face of Islamic orthodoxy in Malaysia and enjoys the status as an official component of the state with the clear purpose of Islamizing the state bureaucracy and the society, along with guarding the sanctity of Islam in the country.[78] JAKIM, along with the state religious authorities, has at its disposal the means of coercion, which then allows it a monopoly on religious ideas and practices; in other words, it enjoys hegemonic control over religious interpretive authority.[79] Therefore, Islamic values promoted by JAKIM are indistinguishable from the ones adopted by other state institutions. All the relevant state institutions share a clear institutional objective and cohesion.[80] The hegemonic influence of JAKIM's orthodox values is evident in the curriculum content of the Islamic Studies subject (*Pendidikan Islam*) at the senior high school level, which will be discussed in detail in the next sub-section.

In Indonesia, MUI, on the other hand, is a membership-based organization and only a semi-official part of the state in Indonesia, with the proverbial other foot planted in the society. As such, MUI lacks a core clarity of institutional purpose beyond certain policy areas such as halal certification and Islamic banking.[81] When it comes to instilling the state with its religious values, MUI often finds itself at odds with other institutions within the state due to its deeply conservative views. MUI is not empowered with the state's means of coercion to implement and enforce its orthodox values, unlike its counterpart, JAKIM, in Malaysia. MUI also faces challenges to its claim for interpretive authority from major Muslim organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, which are far more moderate and arguably more influential than MUI. Hence,

78 "Putrajaya: Jakim benteng negara tangani Syiah, Islam liberal, IS", Malay Mail Online, 10 November 2015 (accessed 10 November 2015); "Who else can defend Islam if not Jakim, says director-general", The Malaysian Insider, 18 November 2015 (accessed on 18 November 2015).

79 "Jakim critic Tawfik Ismail faces sedition probe", The Malaysian Insider, 24 November 2015 (accessed on 24 November 2015); "In trial project, PDRM to deploy officers, sergeants to assist Jais in Shariah enforcement", Malay Mail Online, 28 April 2016 (accessed on 16 May 2016).

80 The ideological agreement between the centre (JAKIM) and the periphery (Majlis Agama Islam Negeri) is best exemplified in a recent concerted condemnation against G25, a moderate Islamic group consists of retired high-ranking Malay civil servants, which calls for the dissolution of JAKIM. "Abolish G25, says Kedah mufti", Malaysiakini, 9 December 2015 (accessed on 9 December 2015).

81 "Gus Mus: MUI Itu Sebenarnya Makhluk Apa?" Tempo, 1 April 2015 (accessed on 15 June 2015); Tim Lindsey, "Monopolising Islam: The Indonesian Ulama Council and State Regulation of the 'Islamic Economy'". Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies 48:2 (July 2012), pp. 264–272; H. Wahiduddin Adams, "Fatwa MUI dalam Perspektif Hukum dan Perundang-Undangan" in Fatwa MUI dalam Perspektif Hukum dan Perundang-Undangan (Jakarta: Puslitbang Lektur dan Khazanah Keagamaan, Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2012), pp. 593–597.

despite MUI's claim to be the voice of orthodoxy in Indonesia, the reality reveals a more contested arena where plurality of Islamic interpretations retain major influence. The lack of a clearly defined institutional objective and ideological fragmentation between various state institutions, which result in the dominance of multifaceted practices, define the values of Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia and its pluralist ideals (more discussion on this in Chapter 2). The curriculum of the Islamic Knowledge (*Pengetahuan Agama Islam*) subject at the senior high school level is a clear reflection of these pluralist and more moderate values, as opposed to the more monolithic and conservative values one finds in similar curriculum in Malaysia. Simply put, in Malaysia, Islamic orthodox values are homogenous and consistent throughout the state and society; in Indonesia they are varied and highly contested with diversity of practices in the society exercising continuing influence.

Orthodox values in the Islamic education curriculum in Indonesia and Malaysia

There is plenty of topical overlap between the *Pengetahuan Agama Islam* curriculum in Indonesia and the *Pendidikan Islam* curriculum in Malaysia, both of which are taught at the senior high school level. The topics mainly revolve around matters of faith (*aqidah*), marriage and family, personal conduct, history of Islamic civilization, history of Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia, and Muslim communal life, which includes governance and citizenship. These common topics, however, are where the similarity ends since the values that inform the content of the common topics are very different. The need of the state in Malaysia to legitimize itself from the Islamic perspective and the state's response to the growing religious conservatism in the society are manifested in the religious values incorporated in the *Pendidikan Islam* curriculum. Likewise, the lack of political utility of Islam as a regime legitimizing force and the prevalent multifaceted Islamic practices in the Indonesian society allow the *Pengetahuan Agama Islam* curriculum to adopt a more moderate and inclusive interpretation when it comes to defining the religious values embedded within the curriculum.

We will look at three common topics to illustrate the differences in Islamic values and interpretations in the two countries' curricula: faith (*aqidah*), marriage, and governance/civic responsibilities. Examples are drawn from the study guidebooks for *Pengetahuan Agama Islam* and *Pendidikan Islam* at the senior high school level, which are widely available in major bookstores in both countries. When it comes to *aqidah*, it is clear that pluralist values are dominant in the Indonesian curriculum. For instance, the curriculum sees freedom of religion and religious pluralism as a human right and an essential component of the Indonesia's state motto *Bhineka Tunggal Eka* (Unity in Diversity). One textbook for senior high schools, by using Quranic interpretations from Surah Al-Kahf verse 29 and Surah Al-Baqarah verse 256, states that: "In dealing with the differences in faith and religious practices, Muslims and non-Muslims must have the freedom of religion and to conduct the teachings of their religions, and cannot

interfere in each other's affairs. Islam forbids compulsion in religion".[82] In regard to religious pluralism and the need for heterodox practices in fostering a tolerant society, the textbook states: "We have to realize that the words of God are very broad and multi-interpretative, so much so that we have to be aware of and respect the existence of many streams within a religion".[83] In contrast, the curriculum for *Pendidikan Islam* in Malaysia contains no such endorsements of pluralism. It is very specific when it comes to defining what constitutes as the real teaching of Islam and what groups are considered deviants. The only acceptable version of Islam is the *Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah* (followers of Quran and the reported practices of the prophet Muhammad) version and Islamic sects such as the Shia, Khawarij, Qadiyani (Ahmadiyah), Bahai and Taslim are categorized as deviant teachings (*ajaran sesat*).[84] Furthermore, according to the curriculum there is no freedom of religion for Muslims and conversion out of Islam is punishable by death.[85] This stands in sharp contrast to the previously mentioned example in the Indonesian textbook that does not list any deviant Islamic groups and places a strong emphasis on non-compulsion in Islam.

The topic of marriage is another example where we can tease out the differences in interpretation and ideological orientation between the curricula for Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia. Two glaring omissions, among others, in the Indonesian textbook can be found in its Malaysian counterpart: the right of a husband to hit his wife, and polygamy. The Malaysian version explicitly permits the husband to hit his wife due to *nusyuz* (disobedience), which includes the wife's refusal to have sex with the husband, leaving the house without the husband's permission, behaving badly against the husband, disobeying the orders of her husband, and allowing an unrelated man into the house without the husband's knowledge.[86] Instead of *nusyuz*, the Indonesian textbook places emphasis on the equality in marriage by stating that both husband and

82 The original excerpt: "Dalam menyikapi perbedaan keimanan dan peribadahan itu, umat Islam dan kaum kafir hendaknya bebas beragama dan menjalankan ajaran agama yang dianutnya, dan tidak boleh saling mengganggu. Islam melarang memaksa orang lain untuk menganut sesuatu agama". Pendidikan Agama Islam untuk SMA Kelas XII (Jakarta: Penerbit Erlangga, 2007), p. 4.

83 The original excerpt: "Kita harus sadar bahwa firman Allah swt., sangat luas dan multitafsir sehingga perlu sama-sama menyadari dan menghormati lahirnya berbagai aliran dalam satu agama". Pendidikan Agama Islam untuk SMK dan MAK Kelas XII (Jakarta: Penerbit Erlangga, 2011), p. 11.

84 Success Pendidikan Islam SPM (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford Fajar, 2012), pp. 201–208.

85 The study guidebook even lists four benefits why death sentence is appropriate for apostasy: 1) as a warning that Islam is not a religion which can be toyed with; 2) to prevent Muslim community from breaking up and becoming chaotic; 3) to stop any acts that belittle and besmirch Islam; and 4) to prevent apostasy from defiling the greatness of Islam [author's translation]. Nexus Tuntas SPM 4–5: Pendidikan Islam (Petaling Jaya: Sasbadi Sdn. Bhd., 2014), p. 47.

86 According to the book, the husband has to follow these criteria when hitting his wife: 1) not using too much force that can cause injuries; 2) not hitting sensitive body parts such as face and stomach; 3) only hit with the objective of teaching the wife a lesson and making her atone for her mistakes; and 4) hitting with a non-lethal implement [author's translation]. Success Pendidikan Islam SPM, p. 229.

wife have equal rights and status in a marriage and should be treated equally in the eyes of law.[87] While the practice of polygamy is legal for Muslim men in Indonesia, the textbook simply does not discuss the issue under the broad topic of marriage. In contrast, the *Pendidikan Islam* subject in Malaysia devotes one lesson plan to the matter of polygamy, essentially sanctioning the practice as long as the man fulfils all the requirements, which are: not having more than four wives, acting justly with all the wives, and being physically and financially capable.[88] These two issues – the right of a husband to hit his wife and polygamy – represent a conservative interpretation of Islam, which is clearly the ideals espoused by the curriculum in Malaysia; their omissions in the Indonesia curriculum, conversely, are an indicator of a more moderate Islamic interpretation.

The topic of governance/civic responsibilities is another telling illustration of whether Islam serves a political utility to the state's sense of legitimacy. Treatment of the topic can indicate whether the state is using an Islamic interpretation to justify the political status quo. In the Indonesian curriculum, there is no evident attempt by the state to use Islamic values to prop up its legitimacy and extract compliance from the Muslim populace. The only lesson plan concerning citizenship and governance mainly touches on how the plural Indonesian society can remain united and harmonious while people respect each other's differences. There is no mention of the relationship between the citizenry and the political leadership.[89] Meanwhile, the Malaysian curriculum lists a host of citizens' responsibilities toward their political leaders, namely: obedience (which must be provided as long as one is not forced by the leaders to commit sins); unconditional support even if one does not like the leaders; and advising the leaders through proper and closed channels so as not to publicly shame them and the country in the eyes of the world.[90] Under the topic of citizenship the Malaysian curriculum also justifies the use of repressive laws to save the country from its enemies and maintain stability.[91] In short, it is clear that the state in Malaysia is actively trying to inculcate values in the Islamic education curriculum that it

87 Pendidikan Agama Islam untuk SMK dan MAK, p. 67.

88 The lesson plan also lists the benefits of polygamy, which are human reproduction, taking care of orphans and divorcés, preventing vices, and attaining blessing in this life and the hereafter. Ibid., pp. 235–237.

89 Pendidikan Agama Islam untuk SMK dan MAK, pp. 119–124.

90 The lesson plan also states that the implications for defying the leaders include destabilizing the country, adversely affecting the economy, and giving opportunity for enemies to destroy the country. Success Pendidikan Islam SPM, pp. 311–312. See also "Disloyalty to leader is disloyalty to God, Muslims told in Friday sermon", Malay Mail Online, 18 March 2016 (accessed on 18 March 2016); "Murid perlu ditanam rasa taat pada pemimpin, negara – Mahdzir", Malaysiakini, 30 April 2016 (accessed on 30 April 2016).

91 The lesson plan argues that enemies of the country can be thwarted by keeping surveillance on suspicious activities, taking legal actions against any threatening activities, and establishing preventive laws that can nip the threat in the bud. Ibid., p. 308.

believes can legitimize its rule and preserve the status quo, as opposed to Indonesia, where no such attempt can be found.[92]

The religious values one finds in Islamic education curricula in Indonesia and Malaysia are reflections of the states' dialectic relationships with Muslim society at large. The values found in the Indonesian curriculum reflect the pluralist nature of Islamic practices in the society and the weak saliency of Islam as a rule-legitimizing force. The state in Indonesia does not have to compete with other socio-political Islamic forces for religious credibility, which typically results in a very conservative interpretation of Islam, as we can see in the Malaysian case. The non-ideologically monolithic nature of the state institutions also explains why MUI, as the self-proclaimed arbiter of Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia, has not been able to exert a more muscular and deep-reaching role in imbuing the state – including the education system – with its conservative values.[93] In essence, there is a low degree of congruency between the values advocated by MUI and the values contained in the curriculum for *Pengetahuan Agama Islam*.[94] Nevertheless, this is also not to say that values found in MORA's *Pengetahuan Agama Islam* curriculum is representative of Indonesian Muslim society as a whole. Pluralist values within Indonesian Muslim society are still highly contested as evidenced by the discrimination and violence against the followers of Ahmadiyah and Shia and church closure controversies in some parts of the country. The fact that these diverse values are in constant state of flux across the society indicates that no one Islamic interpretation holds sway over others. In essence, the pluralist approach of the state Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia allows

92 There were charges that pro-government views were also incorporated in the senior high school national exam (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia, SPM) questions for Pendidikan Moral, a Pendidikan Islam equivalent subject for non-Muslim students. "Partisan politics in SPM Moral exam?", Malay Mail Online, 19 November 2015 (accessed on 19 November 2015).

93 "Indonesia aims to root out bigotry in schools, mosques", The Jakarta Post, 10 February 2017 (accessed on 13 February 2017).

94 The hardline values propagated by MUI stand in stark contrast to the more moderate ones found in the Pengetahuan Agama Islam curriculum. For example, MUI issued a fatwa in 2005 that declared pluralism, liberalism and secularism to be against the tenets of Islam. MUI had also issued fatwas against Shia and Ahmadiyah groups. Himpunan Fatwa MUI Sejak 1975 (Jakarta: Sekretariat Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 2011), pp. 40–41, 46–47, 87–95, 96–99. When it comes to marriage, MUI adopts a patriarchal view that a wife must choose family over career. "Tidak Mentaati Orang Lain Selain Suami", Mimbar Ulama, February 2004, p. 45; "Perkahwinan; Antara Karir dan Keluarga", Mimbar Ulama, May 2004, pp. 42–44. In regard to politics and governance, MUI is highly nationalistic and supports a more centralized Indonesia as it sees decentralization as a precursor to widespread heterodox Islamic practices (and a weakening of its role as the country's arbiter of Islamic values). "Usul Majelis Ulama Terhadap RUU Tentang Pemerintahan Daerah Dan Konsep Satu Atap Mahkamah Agung", Mimbar Ulama, April 1999, pp. 28–29; "Menyoroti RUU Pemerintahan Daerah dan Peradilan Satu Atap: MUI Kembali Datangi DPR", Mimbar Ulama, April 1999, pp. 33–34. Also see Syafiq Hasyim, "Majelis Ulama Indonesia and Pluralism in Indonesia", Philosophy and Social Criticism 41:4–5 (May–June 2015), pp. 490–494.

for Islamic interpretations of all ideological stripes to co-exist and compete with each other.[95]

In contrast, in Malaysia there is a high degree of congruency between the values espoused by JAKIM and the values found in the *Pendidikan Islam* curriculum. JAKIM regularly revises and streamlines the curriculum and textbooks for Islamic education and expects total compliance from teachers and students.[96] JAKIM acts as, borrowing the words of Althusser, the "state ideological apparatus", which tries to reproduce its own Islamic values in the society as a means to legitimize the state's hold on power.[97] A highly religious and deeply conservative Malay-Muslim society partly informs the values held by JAKIM and other state institutions, which the state, in turn, reproduces in the society albeit in a form that is amenable to its political goal, which is to sustain its legitimacy.[98] In other words, a monolithic interpretation of Islamic values shared by both the state and the Malay-Muslim society in Malaysia allows the state to minimize disruptive influence from the Islamic social forces that can challenge its legitimacy, especially the opposition political party PAS.

Institutional identity formation and maintenance

If the analysis of state–society relations is the first prong of this book' theoretical framework, studying institutional dynamics forms the second prong; in particular it uses the conceptual tools provided by the extensive work done in the area of

95 For a more detailed comparison of Islamic orthodoxies found in Indonesia and Malaysia, in particular the comparison between MUI and JAKIM, refer to: Azmil Tayeb, "State Islamic Orthodoxies and Islamic Education in Indonesia and Malaysia", Kajian Malaysia 35.2 (2017), pp. 1–20.

96 Pelan Tindakan Strategik JAKIM 2009–2014: Memacu Transformasi Pengurusan Hal Ehwal Islam (Putrajaya: Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia, 2009), p. 61.

97 JAKIM's view is clear when it comes to obeying political leaders: "Allah hina rakyat tidak hormat pemimpin, kata Jakim", Malay Mail Online, 11 March 2016 (accessed on 11 March 2016).

98 A Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey by the Pew Research Centre of eleven countries with significant Muslim population that gauges the population's views on ISIS, an international Islamic terror group, shows that higher number of Indonesians (79 per cent) are not in favour of ISIS compared to 64 per cent in Malaysia. More tellingly, 11 per cent of Malaysians have a favourable view of ISIS compared to only 4 per cent in Indonesia. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/17/in-nations-with-significant-muslim-populations-much-disdain-for-isis/ (accessed on 19 November 2015). A 2011 survey by Goethe Institute and Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom in collaboration with the Merdeka Centre for Opinion Research in Malaysia showed that almost 81 per cent of Muslim youth (15 to 25 years old) in Malaysia defined themselves as Muslim first, not Malaysian or Malay while more than 70 per cent wanted the Quran to replace the Constitution. www.goethe.de/ins/id/pro/jugendstudie/jugendstudie_en.pdf (accessed on 1 February 2016). These two surveys serve as an indicator of the deep religious conservatism that is prevalent within the Malay-Muslim population in Malaysia.

comparative historical institutionalism.[99] In the context of the argument put forth by this book, the conceptual tools provided by historical institutionalism allow the analysis of state institutions involved in Islamic education throughout the modern history of Indonesia and Malaysia (from the late 1800s to present time), i.e. why these institutions come into existence and act in certain ways at certain periods of time. Historical institutionalism focuses on the role of timing, sequencing and interactions between various socio-political-economic forces (endogenous and exogenous) that lead to the creation of a particular type of institution. An institution, as seen by historical institutionalists, is a product of a "critical juncture", a seminal moment in historical time when the aforementioned factors interact to produce major change. This approach helps to explain why certain institutions come into existence at a certain point in time and not others, and the unique characteristics of the said institutions. By mapping out the process of institutional formation and trajectory in various chapters of history, one can deduce why and how an institution develops a particular identity and behaves in a certain way. Historical institutionalism also looks at the constraints provided by the institutions in moulding not just the behaviour and strategies of political actors but also their goals. In other words, every act of a political actor must be analysed beyond the limited scope of that actor's self-interests since those interests do not appear in a vacuum but must be explained in a larger context, with reference to the role of institutions and their limitations, which again, are significantly influenced by various socio-political-economic forces. According to two leading historical institutionalists, "by shaping not just actors' strategies (as in rational choice), but their goals as well, and by mediating their relations of cooperation and conflict, institutions structure political situations and leave their own imprint on political outcomes".[100] In short, historical institutionalism contributes to the middle-range theory that "explicitly focuses on intermediate variables in order to integrate an understanding of general patterns of political history with an explanation of the contingent nature of political and

99 James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, eds., Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Paul Pierson, Politics in Time: History, Institutions and Social Analysis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Kathleen Thelen, "How Institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analysis" in Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences, eds., James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 305–336; Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol, "Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science" in Political Science: State of the Discipline, eds., Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), pp. 693–721; James Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology", Theory and Society 29.4 (August 2000), pp. 521–523; Sven Steinmo, Kathleen Thelen and Frank Longstreth, eds., Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

100 Kathleen Thelen and Sven Steinmo, "Historical institutionalism in comparative politics" in Sven Steinmo, Kathleen Thelen and Frank Longstreth, eds., Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 9.

economic development".[101] With regard to the book's argument, the intermediate variables here refer to factors such as the culture and ideology of institutions that deal with Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia, and which affect how these institutions shape the behaviour of actors who actively participate in the Islamic education system and in society at large.

Comparative historical institutionalism also tries to tackle the question of why institutions in general can be resistant to change by introducing the concept of path dependency, defined by Arthur Stinchcombe as "historical causation in which dynamics triggered by an event or process at one point in time reproduce and reinforce themselves even in the absence of recurrence of the original event of process".[102] This essentially means that actions of the past determine the limit and scope of decisions that can be made in the present. The durability of institutional logic (the institution's internal culture and driving philosophy), seen in this analytical light, can be explained through the ability of the institution concerned to adapt and reinforce its norms and beliefs over time as various processes from within and without the particular institution intersect and interact to produce what is called "positive feedback", which, in turn, helps to sustain the institution in the long run.[103] Feedbacks are the causal chains of events that in the end reinforce institutional logic and durability, which explain why some institutions are more resistant to change than others.

Another essential notion introduced by comparative historical institutionalism is "institutional complexity". Institutional complexity refers to the balance of power and the nature of interactions between various components of the state. Dan Slater uses this concept to illustrate the durability of Suharto's New Order regime and its ultimate downfall.[104] The more complex an institution and its interactions with other institutions within the state, the more opportunities provided for vested institutional actors who want to preserve the status quo from forces of change and also for agents of change – from within and without the institution – to alter the status quo; in other words, institutional complexity presents a competitive atmosphere between actors who clamour for change and those who want the institution to remain static. The types of opportunities offered by institutional complexity determine the types of agency that either want to preserve the status quo or challenge it. Slater develops his notion of institutional complexity in the context of authoritarianism, showing how varying institutional arrangements and dynamics provide agentic opportunities and thus prospect for institutional change that can either lead to the durability of the authoritarian regime or its

101 Ibid., p. 28.

102 Paul Pierson, "Big, Slow-Moving, and Invisible: Macrosocial Processes in the Study of Comparative Politics" in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds. Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 195.

103 Ibid., p. 195.

104 Dan Slater, "Altering Authoritarianism: Institutional Complexity and Autocratic Agency in Indonesia" in James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, eds., Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 132–167.

eventual collapse.[105] Within the narrow scope of this book, the concept of institutional complexity is used as a complementary analytical tool, along with the aforementioned notions of feedbacks and path dependency, to describe the process of ideological formation in state institutions that deal with Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia and the reasons why the institutional ideology manages to persist over time or simply fade into irrelevancy.

Comparative historical institutionalism and Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia

This study aims to explain why, when it comes to exerting its hegemony via Islamic education, the state in Malaysia has been more successful in minimizing the influences from the society than its counterpart in Indonesia. Comparative historical institutionalism is useful in explaining the characteristics needed by the particular state educational agencies involved in Islamic education – i.e. the national ministries and their local offices – to carry out their functions as the ideological apparatus of the state. The conceptual tools provided by comparative historical institutionalism allow us to study the behavioural dynamics of the educational institutions across time and space, dynamics which lead to formulation of different, and on occasions, conflicting types of policies and (non)uniformity of policy implementation and enforcement at the local level. In other words, these tools help us to understand what kind of institutional logic allows for a certain Islamic educational policy to be formulated at a certain point in time and what factors determine the implementation success or failure of the said policy. For instance, one major focus of this book is how and why the state institutions in Indonesia and Malaysia formulated specific Islamic educational policies in response to the Islamic resurgence from the late 1970s and how the particular characters of these state institutions affected the viability of the formulated policies. As state bodies tasked with ideological inculcation, institutions overseeing Islamic education also become an arena of contestation between competing interests within and without the state, looking to shape the identity and raison d'être of the institutions. The complexity of these institutions, their inter- and intra-relationships, along the vertical (centre-periphery) and horizontal (inter-ministerial) axes of governance, determine the types of policies being formulated and how these policies are implemented and enforced.

To illustrate in the context of this book the concepts discussed previously such as critical juncture, path dependency and institutional complexity, let us turn to one of the institutions that is the focus of this study: the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Islamic revivalism in the late 1970s can be seen as the impetus for the institutional "critical juncture" that forced the Ministry of Education to adapt to the rising religious conservatism in the society and transformed the hitherto irreligious institution by infusing it with more religious values and norms, which it then

105 Ibid., pp. 138–140.

propagated across society through its curriculum, textbooks, teachers' training programs, collaboration with local Islamic non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and so on. Some of the graduates of the orthodox-influenced Islamic education system ended up working within the Ministry, thus continuing the cycle. This unbroken cycle of inculcation, dissemination and reinforcement of state Islamic orthodoxy forms a "positive feedback" mechanism within the Ministry of Education and the Malaysian Islamic Development Agency (*Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia*, JAKIM), which explains these two bodies' intra- and inter-institutional norms and cultural orientation and their engagement with the socio-political trends in the outside world (in this case, Islamic revivalism), and how they manage to remain relevant to this day. In other words, both the state institutions – Ministry of Education and JAKIM – and the deeply conservative Malay-Muslim society feed off each other with the state trying to shape the religious discourse in its favour.

Similarly, in the Indonesian case, there are historical forces and feedback mechanisms that explain the particular characteristics of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) and why they tend to be less intrusive in managing the Islamic education system than their Malaysian counterparts, despite the pervasive influence of Islamic revivalism and the highly centralized nature of the Indonesian unitary state during the New Order period. Heterogeneity in Islamic practices is very prevalent in Indonesia with major Islamic groups such as Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah and Persis commanding strong grassroots support that allows these groups to remain autonomous throughout their history. As such, the ideologically moderate nature of MORA is a reflection of the diversity in the ways Islam has always been interpreted and practised in Indonesia, where no group has so far managed to monopolize the religious interpretive authority and impose its own values on others despite the best attempts by the hard-line MUI to do so. For example, the curriculum for Islamic education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*) is a culmination of MORA's moderate institutional ideology, which can differ wildly from the views espoused by MUI, as explained above. Another reason is that the same critical juncture of Islamic resurgence that hit Malaysia in the late 1970s did not take place in the same way in Indonesia. Suharto's New Order regime was firmly ensconced in its rule, with political expression of Islam safely emasculated, which precluded any significant Islamically inspired challenge to the regime's legitimacy. The regime, in turn, did not feel the need to co-opt religious discourse in order to remain legitimate and so there was no move toward instilling pro-regime orthodox values in the Islamic education curriculum, in contrast to the Ministry of Education in Malaysia. Nonetheless, similar to the Malaysian case, some of the graduates of the Indonesian pluralist-infused Islamic education curriculum, particularly from the ideologically moderate State Islamic Universities (*Universitas Islam Negeri*, UIN) and State Islamic Institutes (*Institut Agama Islam Negeri*, IAIN), ended up joining MORA and going on to perpetuate the pre-existing institutional culture and ideology; in other words, acting as "positive feedback" mechanism by reinforcing the institutional status quo. Reinforcement of institutional norms through feedback mechanisms as found in

both the Malaysian and Indonesian cases makes the state institutions that deal with Islamic education resistant to change over time.

Institutional complexity, which plays an integral part in opening up windows of opportunity for agents of change to influence institutional dynamics, can be analysed through the interactions and history of relationships between all the institutional actors with interests in Islamic education. In the Indonesian case, the long-standing uneasy relationship between MORA, MOEC and their local offices, and the quasi non-governmental status of Indonesian Islamic Council (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, MUI), the standard bearer of Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia, contribute to why policies on Islamic education are more fragmented and why the state's control over Islamic education in the country is relatively weak.[106] Meanwhile, in Malaysia, the near-uniform institutional objectives of all the agencies in charge of Islamic education such as the Ministry of Education, its local offices, JAKIM, and State Islamic Agency (*Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri*, JAIN), allow the formulation of more coherent Islamic educational policies and their effective implementation and enforcement at the local level. This book argues that the institutional complexity is higher in Indonesia than Malaysia, which then produces more opportunities for institutional agents to either preserve the status quo or effect incremental changes over time. The near ideologically monolithic state institutions in Malaysia result in less opportunity for institutional changes to take place, which produces the preservation of the status quo. Institutional complexity in the Indonesian case, on the other hand, allows for more opportunities for change to emerge. In short, different levels of institutional complexity can help to explain why Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia has taken such divergent trajectories.

Theoretical framework in the context of state functionalization of Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia

As mentioned in the opening section of this chapter, one of the questions this book asks is why has the state in Malaysia been more successful in minimizing the influence of Islamic socio-political groups compared to the state in Indonesia, and has thus been able to centralize its control over the Islamic education in the country. There are three factors that shape the state's ability to deal with the pressures from Islamic groups, and thus determine its capacity to exert more dominance, in this case, in the field of Islamic education: the ideological makeup of the state institutions; the patterns of Islamization in the society that necessitate different reactions from the state; and the control of resources by the central government that influences the interaction between the centre and periphery. The book explains these factors within the theoretical framework laid out in the

106 Two major issues that animate the uneasy relationship between these institutions especially in the era of decentralization (post-1999), which will be discussed at length in Chapter 2: the single-roof education system (sistem pendidikan satu atap) and funding for madrasah.

preceding sections, namely by employing Joel Migdal's state-in-society approach and comparative historical institutionalism. Three paired case studies in each country – Aceh, Nusa Tenggara Timur and West Java in Indonesia and Kelantan, Sarawak and Selangor in Malaysia – are used to illustrate in empirical terms the points argued by the book.

The paired comparisons are chosen for specific reasons. Aceh in Indonesia and Kelantan in Malaysia have generally similar socio-cultural backgrounds. Both are Muslim-majority areas that take pride in their long-standing Islamic learning traditions and piety, so much so that they both earn the moniker *Serambi Mekah* (Verandah of Mecca). Nusa Tenggara Timur in Indonesia and Sarawak in Malaysia are Christian-majority areas in Muslim-majority countries. They are chosen to explore dynamics of Islamic education within the Muslim-minority communities in these areas, areas that might be expected to be backwaters for Islamic education. Last, West Java in Indonesia and Selangor in Malaysia are chosen for comparison due to the popularity of integrated Islamic schools in some Muslim-majority suburbs in these two areas. Integrated Islamic schools are largely located in the middle- and upper-middle-class Muslim neighbourhoods that tend to be religiously conservative. These schools represent the aspirations of well-to-do Muslims to provide the best religious and general educations for their children. They are chosen as case studies because they represent the educational cutting edge of the Islamic resurgence.

Joel Migdal proposes that the state and society are mutually constitutive and that the various components of the state might not always work in harmony with each other due to their susceptibility to exogenous social pressures. As already noted, Migdal identifies four areas of contestation within the state, which he calls "points of pressure". In the context of this study, these refer to points in the hierarchical institutional structure that manages Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia: the executive and ministerial level (commanding heights); the policymaking bureaucracy inside the overseeing ministries (central offices); local educational offices (dispersed field offices); and the schools (trenches). The capacity of the state to implement and enforce its Islamic educational policies depends on how these pressure points interact with each other. The thrust of the argument, which strives to refine Migdal's conception of state–society relations, is the ability of the state to minimize the discrepancy and conflict in and between these pressure points so that it is able to project its hegemony more coherently. One way for the state to ensure that the pressure points are working harmoniously is by cultivating a uniform institutional culture and identity across the axes of governance.

It is therefore imperative to study the factors that shape institutional culture and identity at the aforementioned points of pressure. The book argues that the formation of an institutional identity starts with a critical juncture, an exogenously induced rupture marked by a momentous time in history. In the cases of Indonesia and Malaysia, the first critical juncture was in the late 1800s and early 1900s, in which we can trace the identity formation of the institutions that oversee Islamic education to the colonial period when the Dutch and British first introduced mass education.

The interplay between colonial educational policies and their specific policies on Islam and the Muslim population was a major factor in shaping the nature of Islamic education for years to come. In particular, the dynamics between these two major factors – colonial educational and Islamic policies – are integral to explaining why and how state institutions overseeing Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia assumed certain types of characteristics at the time of their establishment.

The book argues that educational institutional identity was more decentralized and fragmented in Indonesia than in Malaysia as a result of the effects of colonial policy. While both the Dutch and the British adopted a laissez faire approach when it came to their colonial educational policies, the British exerted more oversight over the national education system by providing conditional financial assistance such as grants-in-aid and introducing Islamic instruction in Malay vernacular schools as a way to revive lagging enrolment from Malay-Muslim students. The increased bureaucratization of Islam in British Malaya that started in the early 1900s, which placed many private Islamic schools under the control of State Religious Councils (*Majlis Agama Islam Negeri*) and later the Ministry of Education, also explains why state educational institutions in Malaysia assumed a more centralized form than their equivalents in Indonesia. These particular institutional characteristics – the degree of centralization and bureaucratization of Islam – formed a set of constraints that shaped the future trajectory and propensity for change of the institutions. Between the 1950s and 1970s, the ministry in Malaysia did not actively try to centralize its control over Islamic education, lacking political motive and facing constitutional constraints that reserved the management of Islamic schools for state bureaucracies. It was only in the late 1970s when the ministry started to exert more influence over Islamic schools.

When the second critical juncture appeared in the late 1970s in the form of the Islamic resurgence, it brought about different opportunities for institutional change within the ministries in Indonesia and Malaysia. The Malay-dominated civil service and the ascendancy of pro-Malay policies, a result of the 1971 New Economic Policy (NEP), provided prime opportunities for newly empowered Malay-Muslim activists to Islamize the state institutions and to use the deep reach of the state to inculcate the Malay-Muslim society in their own values, giving rise to the state Islamic orthodoxy as discussed in the previous section (and discussed in more detail in Chapter 2). The same critical juncture did not have a similar effect on state institutions in Indonesia. The New Order regime did not deem it necessary to engage in Islamic discourse for political legitimacy, and thus provided no opportunities for change agents to transform the institutional culture within the state. This essentially meant the preservation of the pre-existing decentralized and fragmented status quo.

Finally, ideological hegemony and state Islamic orthodoxy are two important interrelated concepts that inform the ability of the state to functionalize Islamic education for its own political ends. In the Indonesian case, this book argues that the political end for the state in functionalizing Islamic education is to promote unity based on diversity of religious and cultural practices especially in the Reformasi era (1998 to present). The values that make up the state Islamic orthodoxy in

Indonesia are moderate and inclusive in nature, which is a reflection of the influence that various Islamic social groups of many ideological stripes exercise in shaping the overarching ideological orientation of the state institutions in Indonesia. The lack of institutional cohesion in Indonesia, marked by the dearth of common goals among various state institutions, results in a porous Indonesian state that can be influenced with relative ease by Islamic social groups with varying ideologies. This lack of common institutional goal, when compared to the more institutionally cohesive Malaysia, is because the state in Indonesia does not depend on dominating the Islamic discourse for its legitimacy, unlike its Malaysian counterpart, which has the explicit institutional agenda to Islamize the bureaucracy and the society. The ideological coherency of state institutions in Malaysia and their shared institutional goals of propagating a single unchallenged interpretation of Islam, run almost seamlessly from the centre to the periphery of governance. The high degree of ideological congruency between various state institutions and the Malay-Muslim society allows the state in Malaysia to exert its ideological hegemony in the form of state Islamic orthodoxy more effectively with minimal interference from countervailing Islamic social groups.[107] In Indonesia, in contrast, the incoherent overarching institutional goals of the Indonesian state lead to more divided and permeable state institutions prone to influence from social groups, which, in turn, weakens the state's ability to exert its hegemony in the field of Islamic education. The 1999 decentralization laws further exacerbate the Indonesian state's weak control over Islamic education when the matters of education are transferred to the local levels while religious affairs remain at the centre (more discussion on this subject in Chapter 2). In sum, the variegated Islamic practices in Indonesian society shape the values that make up the state Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia but at the same time contribute to the inability of the state to exert more dominance due to the ideological incoherency among the state institutions, in this case, the ones that deal with Islamic education.

Organization of the book

The book is organized into six chapters, three of which consist of paired comparisons of similar Islamic educational settings in Indonesia and Malaysia. Chapter 1 outlines the research questions, argument, and hypothesis. It also

107 In 2008 the Malaysian government via the Prime Minister's Office, of which JAKIM is also part, established Islamic Consultative Council (Majlis Perundingan Islam, MPI), which currently consists of 87 members from various backgrounds such as civil servants, academics, ulama, CEOs, and heads of major Islamic NGOs. MPI's main function is to act as a "think tank" that helps the government to implement development policies based on Islamic principles. Mesyuarat Majlis Perundingan Islam: www.islam.gov.my/en/mesyuarat-majlis-perundingan-islam (accessed on 15 February 2016). For a list of MPI members, see http://e-muamalat.gov.my/sites/default/files/VVIP/a8-_majlis_perundingan_islam.pdf (accessed on 15 February 2016). See also "Deputy minister admits Putrajaya funds Islamic groups, including Isma", Malay Mail Online, 13 February 2016 (accessed on 13 February 2016).

frames the book in a larger theoretical and comparative picture by drawing from literature on sociology of education, modern Islamic education in the Muslim world, state–society relations, institutionalism, and orthodoxy.

Chapter 2 delves deeper into state functionalization of Islamic education and national education in general in Indonesia and Malaysia by tracing the trajectory of the state institutions overseeing mass education and the variation of policies from the colonial period until the present day. The chapter starts with a discussion of educational policies during the late colonial period (late 1800s to 1950s) when the Dutch and the British tried to introduce and implement standardized mass education in the Netherlands East Indies and Malaya, respectively. In the post-colonial era, mass education became inextricably enmeshed with the nationalism project as the states in Indonesia and Malaysia tried to formulate new national identities and inculcate their standardized values through the national education system. The national education system was transformed into a political battleground as various groups contended for their ideological views to be heard, which, in turn, affected the nature of the state institutions dealing with national education, and Islamic education in particular. The chapter ends with an overview of the organizational structure and functions of the state institutions and types of Islamic schools that comprise the Islamic education system in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Chapter 3 uses case studies from Aceh in Indonesia and Kelantan in Malaysia since these two areas are socio-culturally very similar, particularly when it comes to their deeply conservative Islamic cultures. The chapter strives to illustrate in detail why, despite the two areas' shared legacy of Islamic learning, Aceh has been able to preserve the uniqueness of its Islamic educational tradition while Islamic education in Kelantan is slowly being "federalized" by the government in Putrajaya. The modern Islamic education system in Aceh and Kelantan traces its formation to the late colonial period and early years of independence when various socio-political groups jockeyed to become the sole representative of Islamic authority in both areas. These local power dynamics coincided with efforts by the centralizing states in Indonesia (up until 1998) and Malaysia to impose their own ideals through the national education system. Islamic education became a contested arena between advocates for the preservation of local Islamic learning traditions and agents of state educational institutions who saw local traditions as both a threat to the state's legitimacy and an opportunity to be exploited in order to buttress the state's legitimacy. In the end, it is argued that, despite the present progress of Islamic education in both areas, Aceh has been more successful in preserving the uniqueness of its learning tradition than Kelantan, where the federal government over the past four decades has been slowly ensuring that learning conforms to national standards.

Chapter 4 presents case studies from Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) in Indonesia and Sarawak in Malaysia. The reason for the comparison is because both areas have Christian-majority population and lack long-standing traditions of Islamic learning, and therefore it is interesting to explore the dynamics of Islamic education in these two Muslim backwater areas. The book argues the differences in political strength of the respective Muslim-minority groups mean that Islamic

education in Sarawak is much better off than in NTT. At the heart of the chapter's argument is a matrix of power relations and tolerance, in which concessions made by the minority group are measured against the political dominance of the majority group. In NTT, the Muslim-minority group is politically weak, so much so that the Christian-majority group is able to extract many concessions from the Muslim-minority group without threatening its own social and political dominance. In Sarawak, on the other hand, the Muslim-minority group is politically dominant. It does not have to concede much when it comes to political power and control of resources due to the heavy backing from the Malay-Muslim dominated federal government in Putrajaya, while at the same time keeping check on the social and political domination of the non-Muslim majority group. The chapter lists three factors that explain the discrepancy of political strength of Muslim-minority groups in these two areas: historical legacy, post-independence political dynamics, and centre-periphery relations. In NTT, the weak reach of the central state from Jakarta, coupled with the pluralist values inherent in the state Islamic orthodoxy, allows local Islamic schools and education offices to adapt Islamic education to the multi-religious context of the region. In short, despite the lack of local autonomy, Islamic education in Sarawak seems to be better off than in NTT.

Chapter 5 focuses on the rising popularity of integrated Islamic schools among urban middle- and upper-middle-class Muslims in Depok, Indonesia and Bangi, Malaysia, Muslim-dominated suburban enclaves in the outskirts of Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur, respectively. The chapter argues that due to their genesis in the Islamic socio-political movement in the late 1970s and early 1980s, integrated Islamic schools serve as an ideological training ground for future cadres for the Islamic political movement. Presently, integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia are generally affiliated with the Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*, PKS) and other ideologically like-minded modernist Islamic organizations while their counterparts in Malaysia typically sympathize with the opposition despite their Islamically conservative ideological orientation. In the context of the broader argument, this chapter shows how financial autonomy and state Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia and Malaysia allow for the aforementioned dynamics to take place. Not being financially dependent on the state provides integrated Islamic schools in both countries the discursive space to promote their conservative brand of Islam and political indoctrination since financial autonomy equals less supervision and onerous bureaucratic demands from the state. State Islamic orthodoxy in each respective country also plays an important role in the said discursive space. Pluralist values of the Indonesian Islamic state orthodoxy mean that some schools can even promote a deeply conservative version of Islam that might run counter to state's more tolerant and inclusive interpretation of Islam. In Malaysia, the state Islamic orthodoxy provides conservative integrated Islamic schools room for political dissent against the government as long as the opposition takes place within the discursive space delimited by the state's conservative Islamic values.

Chapter 6 concludes the book by summarizing the argument and points made in the previous chapters and offering possible avenues for future research into the topic.

2 Overview of state functionalization of national education in Indonesia and Malaysia from the late 1800s to the present

Functionalization of the national education in general and Islamic education in particular entails two interrelated integral aspects: standardization and nationalization. Standardization refers to the streamlining and homogenizing of national education based on a single standard set by the central government. The standard typically requires schools to adhere to a common curriculum, teach students to pass compulsory national exams, use mandated textbooks, employ teachers who are certified by the ministry, among others. Nationalization of education involves attempts by the state to build more national public schools and incorporate more privately run schools into the national education system. Normatively speaking, by clustering as many schools as possible within the national education system and enforcing a single standard of education on these schools, the state can be more effective in propagating its values among the population at large. These values, which can be religious and/or nationalistic, can serve as one of the means for the state to maintain its legitimacy and prolong its rule. Of course, in reality, not every state has the capacity to standardize and nationalize education and schools in the country due to the tensions between state institutions dealing with national and Islamic education as well as strong influences from various groups within the society, which will be amply demonstrated later in this chapter.

The standardization of Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia traces its genesis to the advent of modern madrasah education in the early 1900s. Traditional Islamic education, as described in Chapter 1, does not employ a common standard among its schools; rather, the head of each school set his/her own standard. Modern madrasah education largely follows the Western model of modern education, which implements a standard curriculum, divides students into various levels of competency, and introduces mandatory exams as an evaluative means. Authoritative body such as school boards, state religious departments and the ministry professionally manage and staff the schools by training and certifying the teachers, appointing school principals, and introducing an entrance exam to select students for admission. The standardization and professionalization of the Islamic schools led to the heads of these schools assuming a bureaucratic role that deviates far from the more spiritual role played by the heads of traditional Islamic schools such as *kiyai* in Indonesia and *tok guru* in Malaysia. It is a distinction that still holds today. During the late colonial era in Indonesia and Malaysia (late 1800s to mid-1950s), the

purpose of standardized education was to staff the lower rungs of the colonial bureaucracy and the booming commercial sectors with educated labour. The expanded career opportunities provided traditional Islamic schools in Indonesia and Malaysia the impetus to reform their curricula and pedagogical methods since now the Islamic school graduates could potentially explore employment options outside the religious realm. Standardization and modernization of education signalled the beginning of the slow demise of traditional Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia. Traditional Islamic schools, in essence, had to reform their modus operandi or fade into irrelevancy and most did the former.[1]

What standardization of education accomplished from the early 1900s was to reduce the long-standing heterogeneity of educational practices in the Netherlands East Indies (formerly Indonesia) and British Malaya (formerly Malaysia). The opening up and diversification of the colonial economy provided new job opportunities in public and private sectors, which required applicants to be trained in specific trade skills or in possession of a certain qualification.[2] Production and export of commodities such as rubber, tin, sugar and tobacco shot up exponentially from the mid-1800s to 1930s.[3] In the post-independence years, the need for an educated workforce motivated the state to establish the national educational system and determine what values should be instilled in the national curriculum. The post-colonial states in Indonesia and Malaysia realized early on that not only could standardization, which was part of the national education system, produce an educated workforce of a consistent quality but also serve, as discussed in Chapter 1, as a powerful means to inculcate its ideals in the students. In the context of Islamic education, the state's ability to implement and enforce its own version of orthodoxy through the national curriculum is especially

1 Even though there are still thousands of traditional pesantren in Indonesia and scores of pondok in Malaysia that are not part of the national education system, most of them had converted to People's Religious School (Sekolah Agama Rakyat, SAR) in the case of pondok in Malaysia, and incorporate madrasah education as part of the traditional Islamic education in the case of pesantren in Indonesia, part of the effort to modernize their curriculum since the early 1900s.

2 By 1938 the British colonial administration employed 1,742 Malays in Federated Malay States in low-level administrative works from the total of 4,938 employees. William Roff, The Origins of Malay Nationalism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 120. Meanwhile in the Netherlands East Indies, the job opportunity was decidedly smaller for the natives to join the Dutch colonial administration. For instance, in 1928 the total of Clerkship (K.A.) diploma holders in the Netherlands East Indies numbered at 6,559 while the average annual number of job vacancies in the lower rung of the colonial bureaucracy were 447. J.S Furnivall, Educational Progress in Southeast Asia (New York, NY: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1943), p. 77.

3 In the Netherlands East Indies, the export value for sugar and tobacco went up from 32,299,000 guilden and 3,654,000 guilden in 1870 to 254,274,000 guilden and 58,647,000 guilden in 1930, respectively. The export for rubber also saw a meteoric rise from 15,800 tons in 1915 to 153,500 tons in 1930. J.S. Furnivall, Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944), pp. 207, 337. In British Malaya, the production of tin went up from 6,500 long tons in 1850 to 77,000 long tons in 1937. Likewise, the export of rubber rose dramatically from 33,000 tons in 1913 to 232,000 tons in 1927. K.G. Tregonning, A History of Modern Malaya (Singapore: University of London Press, 1964), pp. 188–189, 203.

useful when Islamic principles form the basis of the state's legitimacy. In theory, the state can win the minds of the Muslim populace if it is able to monopolize the Islamic values these Muslims imbibe at a young age at school. Thus, it is imperative for us to look in detail into the attempts by states in Indonesia and Malaysia to nationalize and standardize the education system in various epochs from the late 1800s to the present, in particular the objectives and values associated with these attempts.

The standardization and nationalization of education in the early post-independence years of Indonesia and Malaysia also took on the task of promoting national integration (forging a sense of nationhood had of course not been a concern of colonial educational policies). Education became one of the ways for the young post-colonial governments to not only produce a well-trained workforce to help develop the country but also to cultivate a new national identity. The state had to draw up new educational policies in order to achieve the two aforementioned objectives. This chapter will demonstrate that the efficacy and reach of the post-colonial states in Indonesia and Malaysia can be seen by their ability and success in formulating and implementing educational policies, which comprise both standardization and nationalization, that are compatible with their (ever-changing) ideas and visions of what the national identity should be.

The chapter starts with an overview of the organizational structure and functions of the state institutions and types of Islamic schools that comprise the Islamic education system in Indonesia and Malaysia. It then continues with a discussion of educational policies during the late colonial period (late 1800s to 1950s) when the Dutch and the British tried to introduce and implement mass education in the Netherlands East Indies and Malaya, respectively. In the post-colonial era, mass education became inextricably enmeshed with the nationalism project as the states in Indonesia and Malaysia tried to forge new national identities and inculcate their standardized values in the population through their national education systems. The national education system became a political battleground as various groups contended for their ideological views to be heard, in turn, affecting the nature of the state institutions dealing with national education, and Islamic education in particular. In the end, as the chapter argues, the state in Malaysia has been more effective in minimizing the influences from the social forces, thus allowing it to assert more control over national education in the country, especially Islamic education, compared to the state in Indonesia.

Indonesia: nationalization with local characteristics

Present-day institutional structure of national education in Indonesia

The present institutional structure that manages national education in Indonesia remains relatively unchanged from its inception during the early post-independence years. Educational dualism that separates general and Islamic education into two overlapping bureaucratic spheres characterizes the national education system. Since the passing of the 1999 decentralization laws, the

matters of national education, which used to be solely under the purview of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), have been largely devolved to the provincial and district governments while Islamic education firmly remains under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). The decentralized bureaucracy of the *Reformasi* era management of national and Islamic education further accentuates the pre-existing institutional rift between MOEC and MORA, which will be discussed at length in this chapter.

The management, oversight and funding of national education in Indonesia, Islamic education in particular, are enmeshed in the complex lattice-work of the MOEC, the MORA, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), the provincial and district governments. MOHA's role is not central to the overall picture of national education; nonetheless, the ministry does have the ability to affect the viability and effectiveness of local educational initiatives when MOHA's annual "guidance" on sectoral priorities for *kabupaten* (district) budget sometimes comes into conflict with the *kabupaten*'s own local concerns and priorities.[4] For the most part, MOEC and MORA are the major actors from the central government in regard to the national education in the country. MOEC is charged with the overall implementation of the national curriculum while MORA is responsible for the religious education dimension of the national curriculum, which MORA theoretically must adapt to the objectives and ideals established by MOEC. The supervision of schools and implementation of educational policies at the local level are carried out by the local offices of MOEC (called *Dinas Pendidikan*) and MORA (called *Kanwil Agama*). In present-day decentralization, *Dinas Pendidikan* are part of the autonomous local governments while *Kanwil Agama* remains subsumed under the authority of MORA.[5] As such, *Dinas Pendidikan* are funded through provincial and district budgets while *Kanwil Agama* receives their financial support directly from the central government. Both MOEC and MORA also provide direct per capita financial assistance to the schools in the form of School Operational Assistance (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah*, BOS).[6] In short, the relationship between MORA and its local offices is a direct vertical hierarchy while the relationship between MOEC and its local offices is diverted through the provincial and *kabupaten/kota* governments.

There are three types of Islamic schools in Indonesia: madrasah, *pesantren*, and *sekolah Islam* (literally Islamic schools). By design, all schools that are part of

4 Study of the Legal Framework for the Basic Education Sector, Decentralised Basic Education 1: Management and Governance, USAID DBE 1 Special Report, 2nd Edition, September 2009, p. 14.

5 According to Article 7(2) of the Government Regulation 38/2007 regarding the Division of Governance Administration between the Central Government, Provincial Government and District/City Government (Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 38 Tahun 2007 tentang Pembagian Pengurusan Pemerintahan antara Pemerintah, Pemerintahan Daerah Provinsi, dan Pemerintahan Daerah Kabupaten/Kota).

6 Funding for Dinas Pendidikan comes from national budget transfers to the regions in the form of specially calculated allocations. Study of the Legal Framework, pp. 15, 38.

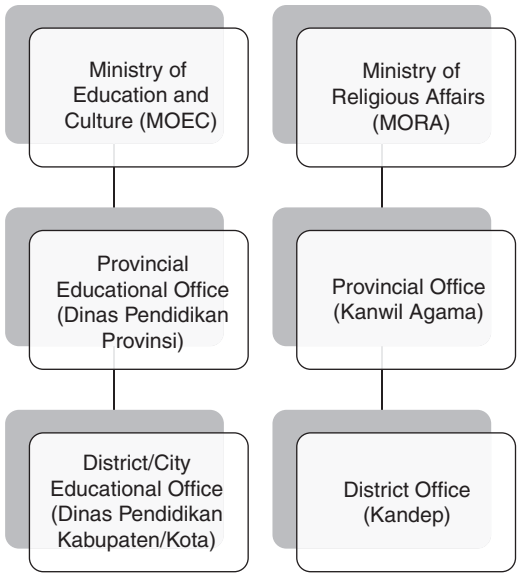

Figure 2.1 Management of national education in Indonesia.

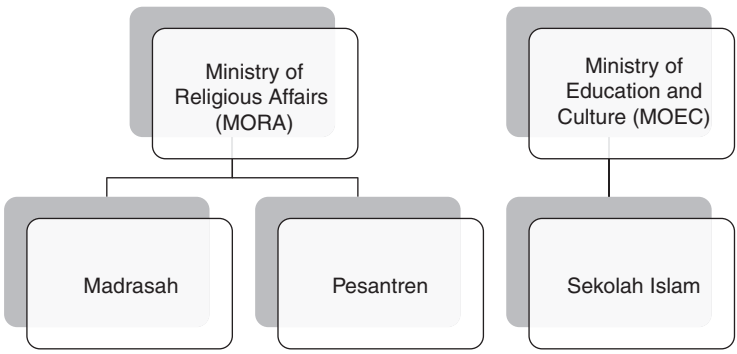

Figure 2.2 Management and supervision of Islamic schools in Indonesia.

the national education system have to follow the national curriculum established by MOEC. Traditional Islamic schools such *pesantren salafiyah* and *madrasah diniyah* do not follow the national curriculum and, therefore, are solely registered under MORA. The management and supervision of the Islamic schools are divided between MOEC and MORA. Madrasah and *pesantren* are registered with MORA under their respective directorates while *sekolah Islam* are supervised by MOEC through the General Directorates for Primary and Secondary Education. In the case of *Sekolah Islam Terpadu* (SIT), the focus of Chapter 5,

their integrated curriculum, which combines Islamic precepts and general education, must also be vetted and approved by MORA even though the schools are registered under MOEC. Overall, most Islamic schools come directly under the jurisdiction of MORA since madrasah and *pesantren* make up an overwhelming majority of Islamic schools in the country.

Islamic education in the late colonial period (1880–1945)

In the pre-independence period, the Dutch in the Netherlands East Indies adopted a basically laissez faire approach to educating the native population. By 1940, there were 88,223 Indonesians enrolled in Dutch public primary schools (grades 1–6), 8,235 students in Mulo schools (grades 7–9) and 1,786 students in high schools.[7] The low numbers of Indonesian students were due to the limited resources of the colonial state and its decision to follow the "Islamic policy" proposed by the well-known Dutch Islamologist, C. Snouck Hurgronje. One aspect of Snouck's proposition was to leave alone local cultural practices, which also included Islamic education, while keeping political Islam in check.[8] One of the main goals was to deploy traditional elites as a countervailing force against the increasing influence of reformist Islam.[9] The shallowness of Dutch language education also reflected this "non-interference" policy, which delegated the responsibility of educating the population to the local Muslim community and Christian missions.[10] However, fearing political mobilization by Islamic schoolteachers, the Dutch colonial administration did try to assert control over Islamic

7 In 1940, only 240 native Indonesians graduated from high school due to high school education being primarily reserved for the European population. George Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia (Ithaca: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1952), p. 31.

8 W.F. Wertheim, Indonesian Society in Transition: A Study of Social Change (The Hague & Bandung: W. van Hoeve Ltd., 1956), p. 295. Nevertheless, the Dutch implemented a different Islamic policy in the Christian-majority eastern Indonesia, where it repressed the socio-cultural aspects of Islam and encouraged the growth of Christianity through the missionaries. Chapter 4 contains more discussion of this historical legacy.

9 Harry Benda, The Crescent and the Rising Sun (The Hague & Bandung: W. van Hoeve Ltd., 1958), p. 25; Daniel Lev, Islamic Courts in Indonesia (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), p. 10; M.B. Hooker, Adat Law in Modern Indonesia (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 97.

10 In 1942, there were 1,871 pesantrens with 139,415 students in Java and Madura. Dhofier, The Pesantren Tradition, p. 20. Muhammadiyah-run private madrasah, on the other hand, numbered at 1,774 schools across Indonesia by 1938. Deliar Noer, Gerakan Modern Islam di Indonesia, 1900–1942 (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1980), p. 95. In West Sumatra alone, there were 300 Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah or PERTI-run private madrasah with 45,000 students in 1928. Karel Steenbrink, Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam Dalam Kurun Moderen (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986), pp. 64–65. By 1890 there were about 150 Christian mission schools in the island of Java alone. Furnivall, Netherlands India, p. 381. In the sparsely populated Christian-dominated Nusa Tenggara Timur, there were 247 Catholic schools with 33,522 students and 572 teachers by mid-1941. There were also 69 Protestant schools with about 6,000 students at this time. Jan Sihar Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink, eds., A History of Christianity in Indonesia (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), p. 240.

education by enacting the 1905 Guru (Teachers) Ordinance whereby every Islamic schoolteacher had to apply for official permission from the district office before they could start teaching. Vigorous opposition from Islamic schoolteachers ultimately led to its replacement by the 1925 Guru Ordinance.[11] The 1925 Guru Ordinance, which still required Islamic schoolteachers to inform the district office, only lasted for a few years before it was suspended due to strident opposition from teachers.[12] Various ordinances also mandated that curriculum in the Dutch public schools for the natives remained secular and free from religious instruction, which led to the schools' deep unpopularity among the Muslim community.[13] The result was a Dutch education system that did not reach deep into society, and thus had limited capacity as a form of social control. Another side effect of this approach was the preservation of various types of Islamic and non-Islamic schools that were relatively independent from state control. After Indonesia achieved her independence in 1945, the first post-colonial government inherited this limited institutional capacity to manage the education system, coupled with the relatively independent nature of private schools. The legacies of this situation can still be seen in the manner that the Indonesian state manages and controls Islamic education and schools today.

Islamic education and the ideologically divided Guided Democracy era (1950–1966)

The effort to formulate and implement a systematic national education that reflects the ideals and aspirations of the newly independent Indonesian nation did not take place until 1950, when the first post-independence government was formed. At the time, the literacy rate among the population was at a

11 Essentially there were no discernible differences between the 1905 and 1925 Guru Ordinances. The 1905 Guru Ordinance was only applicable to Java and Madura islands and the 1925 Guru Ordinance merely expanded the existing statute to the Outer Islands, namely Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi. While the 1905 Guru Ordinance required Islamic schoolteachers to apply for a license from "native chiefs" before they could start teaching, the 1925 Guru Ordinance mandated that Islamic schoolteachers to possess a "letter of registration" from the district office in order to teach. The 1925 Guru Ordinance also stipulated that teachers kept complete data of their students and curricula. Taufik Abdullah, Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra, 1927–1933 (Singapore: Equinox Publishing, 1971), pp. 130–132.

12 Some of the high-ranking Dutch administrators including Charles van der Plas, an adviser in the Office of Native Affairs and later served as the Governor of East Java during the revolutionary period (1945–1949), deemed the 1925 Guru Ordinance to be ineffective in curbing political activism among Islamic schoolteachers especially when there was already a slew of existing laws that specifically dealt with political opposition among the natives. Ibid., pp. 130–141.

13 The ordinances stipulated that religious instruction could only be given outside of school hours. Haidar Putra Daulay, Dinamika Pendidikan Islam di Asia Tenggara (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2009), p. 16. In comparison, the British initially implemented similar policy in Malaya but ultimately included religious (Islamic) instruction in the curriculum by the late nineteenth century as a way to attract more Malay students to Malay vernacular schools.

dismal 5 per cent.[14] Hence, when the 1950 Law on Education (*Undang-Undang Nomor 4/1950*) was enacted, its two major foci were cultivating national identity and democratizing access to education for everyone, in accordance with Article 31(1) of the 1945 Constitution that ensures every citizen's right to an education. Article 4 of the 1950 Law on Education stated that educational policies and pedagogical system had to be compatible with the foundational beliefs of the nation as exemplified by the 1945 Constitution, the national ideology *Pancasila*, and the national culture. Article 10 of the same law made it compulsory for children from eight years of age to attend school for a minimum of six years as a solution to the acute problem of illiteracy.[15] Despite its expressed intent of using education to forge a national identity and foster social cohesion, Articles 13 and 14 of the 1950 Law on Education also provided for the right of private schools (*sekolah partikulir*) such as Islamic and mission schools to operate with relative autonomy. Article 20 of the law also gave students the right to decide whether to attend religious instruction at school and that the subject would have no bearing on the student's class promotion, much to the dismay of Muslim leaders who wanted the subject to be compulsory.[16] It was not until after 1960 that religious instruction was made compulsory in some parts of Indonesia, largely due to the heightened conflict between the military and the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, PKI) during the final years of Sukarno's Guided Democracy era.

The final years of the Guided Democracy era saw Islamic education being used as a pawn in the ideological and political struggle between the military and the PKI. In a 1959 speech at Padjajaran University in Bandung, President Sukarno expounded on the role of national education in propagating the nation's values, namely repudiation of liberal democracy, promotion of national unity and cultural nationalism, and protection from western decadence.[17] The essence of the speech formed the ideals and aims of the Guided Democracy era,

14 Wajib Belajar Pendidikan Dasar, 1945–2007 (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2007), p. 2.

15 As mentioned previously, in 1950 literacy rate among the general Indonesian population was at a 5 per cent. By 1961 the literacy rate shot up to 46.7 per cent for children under 10 years old and even higher for male teenagers (ages 10 to 19) at more than 76 per cent. Moh. Suardi, Ideologi Politik Pendidikan Kontemporer (Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2015), p. 94.

16 The law also stipulated that religious education in government public schools started from Class 4 in primary schools for two hours per week and madrasah had to provide a minimum of six hours per week of religious instruction in order to receive a certification from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Lambert Kelabora, "Religious Instruction Policy in Indonesia". Asian Survey 16:3 (March 1976), pp. 237–242; Sejarah Pendidikan Islam dan Organisasi Ditjen Pendidikan Islam: http://pendis.kemenag.go.id/index.php?a=artikel&id2=sejarahpendis#.VnbTZfFw-Rs (accessed on 20 December 2015).

17 Lee Kam Hing, Education and Politics in Indonesia, 1945–1965 (Kuala Lumpur: University Malaya Press, 1995), p. 165.

enshrined in an official political manifesto called Manipol/USDEK.[18] Despite the speech's emphasis on the development of a common Indonesian national identity, the Guided Democracy era was a period that was rife with political and ideological turbulence as various social forces jockeyed for power. The main competition was between the military and the PKI. In the early 1960s, in return for support from Muslim leaders, the military agreed to support compulsory religious instruction especially in predominantly Muslim areas.[19] The contentious struggle to make religious instruction a compulsory subject flared when the PKI-dominated Ministry of Education came up with a new educational philosophy called *Pancawardhana*, which noticeably excluded reference to the One-ness of God (*Tuhan yang Maha Esa*), the first principle of *Pancasila*. Muslim leaders were predictably upset about this change, and with the help of the military and leaders from other faiths, managed to pressure the government to incorporate religious subject into the 1964 curriculum.[20]

Another issue that cropped up during the final years of the Guided Democracy era was the "single-roof education system" (*sistem pendidikan satu atap*). *Sistem pendidikan satu atap* essentially means that only a single ministry should be in charge of all educational affairs in the country including Islamic education, which falls under the jurisdiction of MORA. The contest for *sistem pendidikan satu atap* began when the MOEC intended to absorb all madrasah into its orbit, which was included in the Eight Year Development Plan (1961–1969) proposed to the parliament. After a relentless opposition, major Islamic groups managed to defeat the proposal and madrasah remained under the aegis of MORA.[21] The defeat of the *sistem pendidikan satu atap* proposal simply put the issue on the back burner, from which it would come up time and again in the ensuing decades, as illustrated in the next section.

In short, the state of Islamic education during the Guided Democracy era was in a flux and the prevailing perception at the time was that Islamic schools such as *pesantren* and madrasah were academically inferior to government public schools. There were 13,849 madrasah in 1954 and 30,368 *pesantren* with 1,392,159 students in 1955, and most of these Islamic schools had incorporated,

18 Manipol/USDEK is an acronym for Manifesto Politik/Undang-undang 1945, Sosialisme Indonesia, Demokrasi Terpimpin, Ekonomi Terpimpin dan Kepribadian Indonesia (Political Manifesto/1945 Constitution, Indonesian Socialism, Guided Democracy, Guided Economy and Indonesian Character). It comprised the Guided Democracy's broad guidelines for state policies (Garis-garis Besar Haluan Negara, GBHN), deeply imbued with the spirit of Indonesian brand of socialism. Roeslan Abdulgani, Pendjelasan Manipol dan Usdek (Jakarta: Teragung, 1961).

19 Lee, Education and Politics, p. 262.

20 Muslim parents and guardians had a choice whether to allow their children to attend the Islamic education (Pendidikan Agama Islam) class, which meant the subject was not compulsory. If the Muslim parents opted not to, then the students can attend character education (Pendidikan Budi Pekerti) class instead. Edi Susanto, "Pendidikan Agama Dalam Sistem Pendidikan di Indonesia (Survei Historis Era Pemerintahan Soekarno)", Tadrîs 4:1 (2009), pp. 47, 53.

21 Mujiburrahman, "Feeling Threatened: Muslim–Christian Relations in Indonesia's New Order". Ph.D diss., University of Utrecht, 2006, p. 224.

to a varying degree, some general education subjects in their effort to modernize their individual curriculum.[22] Nevertheless, there was no uniform standard and academic qualification for Islamic education system, which meant that graduates of *pesantren* and madrasah would find it impossible to pursue their tertiary studies in non-Islamic higher institutions of learning. A worsening economy during this time, evidenced by severe recession and hyperinflation, added to the woes faced by Islamic school graduates.[23]

Incorporating religious subject in the curriculum and making its learning mandatory in government public schools also became highly contentious, a clear reflection of the society-wide ideological divide between the secular and religious socio-political groups at the time. Ever since the excision of the Jakarta Charter (*Piagam Jakarta*) during the promulgation of the constitution (UUD 1945), many Muslim groups felt the need to preserve the relevance of Islam in post-independence Indonesia. Advocating for an official recognition and equal status for Islamic education within the national education system was one of the ways to assert the importance of the Islamic way of life in society.[24] The ushering in of the New Order era in 1966 with its staunchly anti-communist and developmentalist ideology initially seemed more amenable to the vitality and growth of Islamic education but later proved to be not as friendly, as we shall see in the next section.

Tug-of-war on the direction of Islamic education during the New Order era (1966–1998)

By 1966, at the beginning of Suharto's New Order era, the frequency of religious subject was increased from twice to four times a week and its status was elevated to one of the six basic subjects designed to develop the spirit of

22 The economic hardship at the time forced many pesantren to focus instead on vocational study such as agriculture as the main component of the general (non-religious) education. Azyumardi Azra, Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan Modernisasi Menuju Milenium Baru (Jakarta: Logos, 2002), pp. 102–103; H. Abdul Kodir, Sejarah Pendidikan Islam: Dari Masa Rasulullah hingga Reformasi di Indonesia (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2015), p. 217.

23 Unemployment rate in the early 1960s hovered at a decent 5.5 per cent but it was the high costs of living that sapped the people's purchasing power. The national hyperinflation rate shot up from around 100 per cent in late 1961 to 500 per cent by 1965. In Jakarta for instance, the cost of living index rose sharply from the average of 281 in the third quarter of 1961 to 711 by the fourth quarter of 1962. Basu Sharma, Aspects of Industrial Relations in ASEAN (Singapore: ISEAS, 1985), p. 36; Shafiq Dhanani, Iyanatul Islam and Anis Chowdhury, The Indonesian Labour Market: Changes and Challenges (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 6; and J.A.C. Mackie, Problems of the Indonesian Inflation (Singapore: Equinox Publishing, 2009), p. 57.

24 The highly contested "seven words" of Piagam Jakarta stipulate that all Muslims should observe the Islamic law (dengan kewajiban menjalankan syari'at Islam bagi pemeluk2-nya). R.E. Ellison, "Another Look at the Jakarta Charter Controversy of 1945". Indonesia 88 (October 2009): pp. 112–118.

Pancasila.[25] Nonetheless, the euphoria felt by the Muslim leaders that Islamic education had finally been given its due recognition by the state proved to be short-lived. During the 1973 parliamentary session discussing the Broad Guidelines for State Policies (*Garis Besar Haluan Negara*, GBHN), the regime's party, Golkar, proposed to abolish religious education classes in public schools but dropped the proposal due to vociferous opposition from the Islamic party, United Development Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, PPP).[26] In 1975, three ministries closely involved with national education came up with a joint declaration, *Surat Keputusan Bersama (SKB) Tiga Menteri 1975*, which laid out, among other things, the reduction of religious instruction hours in public schools and a new standardized ratio of 70 per cent regular instruction and 30 per cent religious instruction in madrasah.[27] Its critics saw the decision as diluting the content of religious instruction and an attempt to convert madrasah into non-religious public schools; in effect, secularizing the madrasah.[28] To this day, the ratio remains the standard used by the government to incorporate many private madrasah and *pesantren* into the national education system and to allow Islamic school graduates to continue their tertiary studies in non-religious higher learning institutions.

The early architects of the New Order regime were secularists and staunch Pancasilaists, which explained the regime's attempts to minimize the role of Islam in policymaking, including educational policies, at least before the late 1980s. Prominent New Order figures such as Ali Murtopo and Sudjono Humardani along with their pro-regime think tank Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) were known for their aversion against inclusion of Islam in politics and governance. In a 1980 speech to open a new mosque, Ali Murtopo made it clear that "for as long as humans still think Islam as a political element, the world will not be at peace".[29] CSIS also clearly articulated characteristics of the New Order regime, one of which was that religion should be privatized and not part of state institution; therefore, the state should not be in the business of

25 Religion assumed a newfound importance during the New Order era since it was seen as the antithesis to the supposedly atheistic communism, which by now had been completely vanquished. The parliament issued the decree TAP MPRS XXVII/1966 that officially designated religious instruction to be compulsory from primary schools to the universities. Haidar Putra Daulay, Pendidikan Islam dalam Sistem Pendidikan Nasional di Indonesia (Jakarta: Kencana, 2002), pp. 42–43; Mujiburrahman, Feeling Threatened, p. 229; Kelabora, "Religious Instruction Policy", pp. 246–247.

26 Mujiburrahman, Feeling Threatened, pp. 229–230.

27 R. Murray Thomas, "The Islamic Revival and Indonesian Education". Asian Survey 28:9 (September 1988), p. 903; Daulay, Pendidikan Islam, pp. 56–58.

28 Azra, Pendidikan Islam, p. 152.

29 Original excerpt: "Selama manusia-manusia itu masih berpikir Islam sebagai elemen politik, selama itu dunia tidak akan aman". Agama Bukan Untuk Dipolitikkan, Pidato Sambutan Menpen Ali Moertopo pada Peresmian Mesjid Nurul Iman Tanggal 11 Juli 1980 di Merdeka Barat 7, Jakarta, Departemen Penerangan RI, 1980, p. 7.

managing religion.[30] The secular background of these New Order figures also influenced MOEC's policymaking orientation, which often set it on a collision course with MORA. For example, Daoed Joesoef, Minister of Education and Culture from 1978 to 1983, was one of the founding members of CSIS.[31] Daoed Joesoef was well known for his attempt to abolish the month-long school holiday during Ramadan and severely curb student activism on campus through the Normalisation of Campus Life/Student Coordinating Body (*Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus/Badan Koordinasi Kemahasiswaan*, NKK/BKK) policy. In short, the dominance of secular values, which characterized the first half of the New Order era, resulted in an uneasy relationship between MORA and MOEC.

The New Order regime also proposed other educational measures that were seen as anti-Islamic by the Muslim leaders. For instance, in the 1973 Broad Guidelines for State Policies (GBHN), Golkar proposed to replace the Islamic education class with the more religiously inclusive Pancasila Moral Education (*Pendidikan Moral Pancasila*, PMP). The parliament approved the formulation of PMP and its implementation in schools across the country.[32] PMP drew strident protests from many Muslim leaders since it relativized the supremacy of Islam as the one true religion by saying that all religions lead to the same truth via different means.[33] The regime remained unmoved, so much so that it designated PMP as a compulsory subject in Article 39 of the 1989 Law on National Education (*Undang-Undang Nomor 2 Tahun 1989 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*).[34] In short, the advocates for Islamic education who thought that they had found a sympathetic regime at the onset of the New Order era that could help to elevate and fortify the status of Islamic education within the national education system were in for a huge disappointment. The first half of the New Order era saw a regime that was adamant in its belief in religious syncretism and pluralism and not in the promotion of Islamic superiority over other religious beliefs. It was not until the late 1980s when the regime started to flirt with

30 Original excerpt: "Agama dalam Republik Indonesia adalah lembaga swasta dan bukan lembaga negara maka dari itu tidak diatur, diurus atau diselenggarakan oleh negara". Harry Tjan Silalahi, Konsensus Politik Nasional Orde Baru: Ortodoksi dan Aktualisasinya (Jakarta: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 1990), p. 9.

31 Harry Tjan Silalahi, Nalar dan naluri: 70 tahun Daoed Joesoef (Jakarta: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 1996).

32 In 1978 the parliament passed a law, Ketetapan MPR No. II/MPR/1978, that listed 36 traits an Indonesian citizen should embody in a Pancasila democracy (New Order era), collectively known as Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila (P4), which formed the basis of PMP curriculum. Samsuri, "Transformasi Gagasan Masyarakat Kewargaan (Civil Society) Melalui Reformasi Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan di Indonesia". Ph.D diss., Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, 2010, pp. 137–150.

33 Adian Husaini, Penyesatan Opini: Sebuah Rekayasa Mengubah Citra (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2002), p. 34; Fikrul Hanif Sufyan, Sang Penjaga Tauhid: Studi Protes Terhadap Tirani Kekuasaan 1982–1985 (Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2014), pp. 43–44.

34 In the end, religious education was also made compulsory as a compromise. Undang-Undang tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional dan Peraturan Pelaksanaannya (Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, 1991), p. 16.

Islamic discourse to counter the challenge to its legitimacy and become more amenable to the demands of the advocates of Islamic education, which will be discussed later in this section.

The secular-religious dynamics seen in the previously mentioned examples were also found in the long-standing feud between the MORA and the MOEC over the management of Islamic education in the country. The turf battle between MORA and MOEC for the control of Islamic education takes shape in the form of the "single roof education system" (*sistem pendidikan satu atap*), mentioned briefly in the previous section. Under this concept, the ideals and aims of national education can presumably be achieved if a single bureaucracy, in this case MOEC, is responsible for its management. In 1972, President Suharto revived the effort to subsume madrasah under the authority of MOEC by issuing Presidential Decree no. 34/1972 that stated madrasah had to be administered by MOEC. Again, the effort failed due to protests from Islamic groups.[35] In the late 1970s, the idea of *sistem pendidikan satu atap* was brought up again, this time tucked inside the draft law to revamp the national education system. As expected, Islamic groups were up in arms against this inclusion, and after a protracted struggle managed to omit the single-roof education clause from the 1988 draft law on national education, which later became the 1989 Law on National Education System (*Undang-Undang Nomor 2 Tahun 1989 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*).[36]

The drastic shift between the 1988 draft law on national education and the resultant 1989 Law on National Education System was a clear indicator of the growing influence of Islamic groups in the New Order regime as Suharto tried to enlist their support as a countervailing force against his political opponents. When the regime first introduced the 1988 draft law on national education, major Islamic groups such as Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, MUI and the Joint Efforts for the Renewal of Islamic Education (*Gabungan Usaha Pembaharuan Pendidikan Islam*, GUPPI) bitterly opposed the draft law as it was perceived to be hostile to Islamic interests. The previously mentioned *sistem pendidikan satu atap* was not the only controversial aspect of the 1988 draft law. The 1988 draft law also attempted to make religious instruction optional in non-religious public schools, restrict the freedom to establish private educational institutions (of which the majority of madrasah and *pesantren* were part), and penalize private schools that failed to provide adequate facilities to their students (a sizeable number of madrasah and *pesantren* were severely under-resourced).[37] The most controversial part of the 1988 draft law, however, was the clarification (*penjelasan*) for Article 28(2) that stated, "Teachers of religious education have to share the same faith as

35 Moch. Nur Ichwan, Official Reform of Islam: State Islam and the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Contemporary Indonesia, 1966–2004. Ph.D diss., University of Tilberg, 2006, p. 142.

36 Ibid., pp. 143–144.

37 Abd. Rachman Assegaf, "Tarik Menarik RUU Sisdiknas 1988–2003 (Isu Pendidikan Agama)", Kependidikan Islam 1:1 (February–July 2003), pp. 73–76.

the religion and the students they teach".[38] The resultant 1989 Law on National Education System ended up not including these proposals while retaining Article 28(2), which can be credited to the strong lobbying efforts by Islamic groups, including the state-affiliated "corporatist" bodies such as MUI and the Golkar-affiliated GUPPI, and the eagerness of Suharto to court the support of these Islamic groups in order to shore up his political standing against an emerging challenge from a nationalist faction of the military.[39] The 1989 law, in fact, achieved the opposite of what its drafters and supporters originally intended.[40] It reaffirmed MORA's sole authority in managing Islamic education and so was the obligation to teach religious education in non-religious public schools. Also for the first time, the Islamic education system was recognized as a sub-system of the national educational system, which placed Islamic schools on an equal standing with other types of national schools.[41] In short, from the late 1980s onward, Islamic education in Indonesia began to grow more strongly and gain more national prominence as it tries to shed the perception of being the provider of subpar and outdated education.

In sum, the elevation of Islamic education's status during the New Order era despite the regime's initial aversion toward the educational needs of Muslims can be chalked up to two main factors: the country's need for a skilled and educated workforce; and the cozy relationship between the regime and major Islamic groups in the second half of the New Order era (from the late 1980s to 1998). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Indonesia's unemployment rate stood at a low 2 to 3 per cent while the economic growth rate maintained an impressive average of 8 per cent, which necessitated an increase in the labour supply.[42] Therefore, the regime's efforts to streamline the curriculum of Islamic education, namely through the issuance of *SKB Tiga Menteri 1975*, and raise its status to equal that of other schools in the national education system fit comfortably within the regime's developmentalist ideology. Nonetheless, advocates of Islamic education during the first half of the New Order era had to face challenges from the

38 Original excerpt: "Tenaga pengajar pendidikan agama harus beragama sesuai dengan agama yang diajar dan agama peserta didik yang bersangkutan". The PDI fraction of the parliament, representatives of Christian education and secularists were bitterly opposed to the inclusion of this particular sub-article since it imposed an undue burden on Christian schools to provide non-Christian religious education for their non-Christian students. An opponent of the sub-article from Majlis Luhur Taman Siswa remarked: "Kalau masuk warung sate, jangan pesan soto, karena bukan warung soto" [If one goes to a sate stall, don't order soto since it's not a soto stall]. Lukman Harun, Muhammadiyah dan Undang-Undang Pendidikan (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1990), pp. 72–88.

39 Ichwan, Official Reform of Islam, pp. 144–146.

40 Among the supporters of the 1988 draft law were known secularist and abangan (practitioners of Javanese mysticism or kedjawen) such as former ministers of education and culture Daoed Joesoef, Nugroho Notosusanto, and Fuad Hassan. Mujiburrahman, Feeling Threatened, pp. 223–225.

41 Ichwan, Official Reform of Islam, p. 146.

42 Dhanani, Islam and Chowdhury, Anis, The Indonesian Labour Market, p. 53; H.W. Dick, "The Rise of a Middle Class and the Changing Concept of Equity in Indonesia: An Interpretation", Indonesia 39 (April 1985), p. 88.

secularists and *abangan* within the regime, particularly those within MOEC, who wished to wrest control and management of Islamic education away from MORA and incorporate Islamic education into an all-encompassing *sistem pendidikan satu atap*. The dalliance between major Islamic groups and Suharto in the second half of the New Order era helped the advocates of Islamic education to fortify their political position and successfully fend off challenges from the secularists and the *abangan*. Ever since the enactment of the 1989 Law on National Education System, which officially confirmed the importance of Islamic schools within the national education system, advocates of Islamic education did not face any serious challenges until the fall of the New Order regime in 1998 and the passing of the decentralization laws in 1999.

Decentralization and 2003 law on national education

One defining characteristic of the New Order regime was its strong tendency to centralize control over all aspects of governance. Even so, despite the centralizing nature of the New Order regime, there had been plans to decentralize the management of national education since the mid-1980s. These plans failed because of the lack of agreement on proper standards and on how much autonomy should be exercised by the local educational offices and schools. The first real attempt to decentralize education occurred in 1994 when MOEC introduced and implemented a policy of Local Content Curriculum (*Kurikulum Muatan Lokal*).[43] This policy allowed schools within the national education system and their teachers to adapt the national curriculum to the particular cultural tradition of the local area, by using local examples to illustrate general points in compulsory subjects. There were several reasons for MOEC to pursue this policy: delegating more autonomy to the localities as part of an experiment to improve educational performance; reducing the percentage of students exiting the system by providing vocational training; creating tighter links between curricula and local conditions; increasing community involvement in schools; and improving instructional process.[44] The Local Content Curriculum policy did not achieve its objectives, however. In particular, it did not empower local educational authorities since local educational authorities and schools perceived the policy as too broad and were afraid of making a wrong interpretation when implementing the policy. The local educational actors did not know how to deal with the newfound autonomy since they were used to simply carry out directives unquestioningly from the MOEC, which, in turn, were also lax in encouraging the local educational actors to act autonomously.[45] Nevertheless, the Local Content Curriculum policy sig-

43 Christopher Bjork, Indonesian Education: Teachers, Schools, and Central Bureaucracy (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), p. 26.

44 Ibid., pp. 30–37.

45 Christopher Bjork, "Decentralisation in Education, Institutional Culture and Teacher Autonomy in Indonesia", International Review of Education 50:3 (July 2004), pp. 251–254.

nalled the willingness of the New Order regime to deviate from its normally centralizing means of governance for the sake of improving academic performance among the schools in the national education system. The policy remains part of the national education as the country transitioned into the post-authoritarian era in 1998.

The political openness of the *Reformasi* era (1998 to present) provided the advocates of Islamic education an opportunity to push for a bigger role of Islamic education within the national education system. In the early 2000s, religious education again became a focus during the debates to draft a new law on national education, as had occurred before the passing of the 1989 Law on National Education System. Buoyed by the political freedom afforded by the new era of openness, many major Islamic groups such as MUI, Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah and al-Irshad lobbied for a more substantive role of religion in national education in the face of stiff opposition from secular and non-Muslim groups.[46] The struggle took shape in the form of the 2002 draft law (*Rencana Undang-Undang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*). Article 12(1) of the draft law, which mandated schools to provide religious education according to the students' religious beliefs, particularly became a highly controversial point especially among secularists who wanted to limit the influence of state-sanctioned religion in the national education and Christian missionary schools that would need to provide non-Christian teachers to teach non-Christian religious subjects to the very few non-Christian students who attended these schools.[47] Ultimately the parliament passed the 2003 Law on National Education System (*Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*), which retained much of the 2002 draft law, including the hotly contested Article 12(1). Also, according to the 2003 law, religious education remained mandatory from primary to tertiary levels and even though the required number of instruction hours per week did not change (two hours), the law gave the schools wide latitude to organize co-curricular religious activities to augment the classroom teaching. These activities included *pesantren kilat* (short-term *pesantren*), communal prayers in the schoolyards, animal sacrifices during *Idul Adha*, observance of Islamic religious holidays, and establishment of Islamic studies forums.[48] The mandatory requirement to provide religious instruction to students by teachers who share the same faith (Article 12(1) of the 2003 law) rattled many Christian missionary schools since it increased their financial burden to educate the sometimes very few Muslim students in their schools. This issue remains contentious until the present day when Islamic groups such as MUI claim that Christian schools are neglecting Islamic instruction for their Muslim students as a form of discrimination and a subtle effort

46 "UU Sisdiknas & Perjuangan MUI", Mimbar Ulama, July 2003, pp. 8–10.

47 Benny Susetyo, Politik Pendidikan Penguasa (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2005), pp. 41–86; Ichwan, Official Reform of Islam, pp. 271–273.

48 Ichwan, Official Reform of Islam, pp. 274–280.

at Christianization.[49] In all, the enactment of the 2003 Law on National Education System marked the high point in the political viability of the advocates of Islamic education in Indonesia, which has gone from strength to strength since the second half of the New Order era. By making it mandatory even in Christian missionary schools, Islamic education has become an inextricable part of the national curriculum. Islamic schools now have assumed an equal status alongside other schools in the national education system.

The 1999 decentralization laws also provided local educational authorities with broad autonomy to manage educational affairs in their local areas. This shift was reflected in the introduction of the new national curricula in 2004 and 2006. In the 2004 national curriculum, MOEC came up with a general guideline and competency standard for all subjects except Islamic Knowledge (*Pengetahuan Agama Islam*, PAI), which remains under the jurisdiction of MORA. Local educational actors were required to arrange the syllabus, technical guidelines and lesson plans according to their specific needs. The curriculum was based on the principle of "unity in policy, diversity in implementation" (*kesatuan dalam kebijakan, keberagaman dalam pelaksanaan*).[50] The introduction of the 2006 curriculum subsequently perfected (*menyempurnakan*) the 2004 curriculum, which laid out a much clearer and detailed national education standard in accordance with the 2005 Government Regulation on National Education Standard (*Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 19 Tahun 2005 tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan*). It also spelled out the division of responsibilities between MOEC and local educational actors, now lumped under the generic term "*satuan pendidikan*" or education units.[51] More recently, the 2013 national curriculum has replaced the 2006 national curriculum. It stresses character and moral development of students by privileging religious and citizenship education at the primary school level at the expense of science and mathematics. The push for moral and civic emphases in the 2013 curriculum stemmed from the panic following a string of violent acts among school-age children.[52] The implementation of the 2013 curriculum was finally halted in December 2014 after teachers and other educational stakeholders leveled criticism at its haphazard introduction, increased teaching burden, poor training and socialization of the teachers, and delays with textbook printing and distribution.[53] There were also concerns that Indonesians would be less competitive globally since moral and civic lessons would replace English

49 Interview with Amany Lubis, former Deputy Secretary General, Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), 3 January 2014.

50 Herry Widyastono, Pengembangan Kurikulum di Era Otonomi Daerah: Dari Kurikulum 2004, 2006, ke Kurikulum 2013 (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2014), pp. 61–65.

51 Ibid., p. 88.

52 "Basmi tawuran, jam pelajaran agama akan ditambah", Merdeka.com, 30 December 2013.

53 "Kurikulum 2013 Dibatalkan, Balik ke Kurikulum 2006", Tempo, 5 December 2014. Madrasah, on the other hand, decided to continue implementing the 2013 curriculum as its moral orientation is seen to be compatible with Islamic education in general. "Kemenag: Kurikulum 2013 Cocok Buat Madrasah", Republika, 17 December 2014.

and information technology lessons in the 2013 curriculum for primary school students.[54] Nevertheless, the heavy focus on morality lessons in the 2013 curriculum is a testament to the influence of Islamic education advocates who see inculcation of religious values in students as a panacea to combat social ills currently afflicting young people. Chapter 5 contains a more detailed discussion of the 2013 curriculum.

The devolution of power provided local governments with leeway to use their own resources to fund local education. While local financial autonomy is a boon for non-religious public schools in resource-rich areas, since they no longer have to compete with other schools for a piece of the meagre national budget for education, Islamic schools in general have not fared as well. Religious affairs remain within the ambit of the central government, which means Islamic education is still managed by MORA.[55] The jurisdictional separation between national and Islamic educations vis-à-vis the decentralization policy means that the local governments can refuse to provide funding for Islamic schools since they see it as the responsibility of the central government (MORA). To make matters worse, since 95 per cent of Islamic schools are privately owned, funding priority would be given to state-owned madrasah.[56] While Islamic schools in areas with strong Islamic traditions such as East and West Java, South Kalimantan, Aceh and West Sumatra do well in the decentralization era, the same cannot be said for Islamic schools in areas where Muslims are not the majority, particularly in the eastern parts of Indonesia (see Chapter 4 for detailed discussion on this issue). In 2002, MORA prepared a draft regulation, *Rancangan Peraturan*

54 "Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Penjaskes, dan TIK di SD Dihapus", Kompas, 10 December 2013 (accessed on 30 December 2015).

55 One reason offered by Kamaruddin Amin, the Director General of Islamic Education at MORA, is that centralized control of Islamic education allows for a single national standard of inclusive, moderate and tolerant version of Islam to form the basis of the Islamic education (Pendidikan Agama Islam) curriculum. According to him, there is no guarantee these moderate Islamic values can be protected once Islamic education becomes decentralized. www.kemenag.go.id/index.php?a=berita&id=233013 (accessed on 25 December 2015).

56 MORA's fiscal year 2012 allocation for Islamic education was Rp30.27 triliun (US$2.2 billion), constituting almost 80 per cent of its total budget. Out of this amount, Rp4.1 triliun (US$301 million) was earmarked for School Operational Assistance (Bantuan Operasional Sekolah, BOS), per capita funding channelled directly to public and private Islamic schools. Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic primary schools) receive Rp800,000 per student per year, Madrasah Tsanawiyah (Islamic junior high schools) receive Rp1,000,000 per student per year, and Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic senior high schools) receive Rp1,200,000 per student per year. In 2012, there were 3,200,459 Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students, 2,745,022 Madrasah Tsanawiyah students, and 1,059,814 Madrasah Aliyah students. Nota Keuangan dan Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Negara, Tahun Anggaran 2012, Republik Indonesia, pp. 150, 220; Petunjuk Teknis Pelaksanaan Bantuan Operasional Sekolah Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Madrasah Tsanawiyah (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, Kementerian Agama RI, 2015), p. 2; Petunjuk Teknis Pelaksanaan Bantuan Operasional Sekolah Madrasah Aliyah Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, Kementerian Agama RI, 2015), p. 2; Madrasah @ Indonesia (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, Kementerian Agama RI, 2015), p. 14.

Pemerintah (RPP) tentang Pelimpahan Urusan Madrasah, supported by the president, that sought to address the issue of funding imbalance between religious and government public schools by making madrasah equivalent to non-religious public schools in terms of quality of education, teaching force and infrastructure while also relegating most of madrasah's management and decision-making process to the local levels.[57] MORA hoped by elevating the quality and standard of madrasah through the draft regulation it would be attractive enough for the local governments to pick up most of the tab in funding madrasah in their areas since the prevailing perception was that madrasah provided an inferior standard of education compared to government public schools. Unfortunately, nothing has changed when it comes to local government funding of madrasah despite the strong support for the local funding aspect of the draft regulation to be included in the 2003 Law on National Education System.[58] In the end, the draft regulation simply disappeared and the responsibility of funding madrasah still remains to this day exclusively with MORA.[59] Meanwhile, funding for Islamic schools from local governments in areas with weak traditions of Islamic learning often comes in the form of Social Assistance (*Bantuan Sosial*, Bansos), which is irregular and not guaranteed.[60] A 2011 ruling by the Constitutional Court somewhat changed this funding dynamics when it decided that local governments' refusal to fund madrasah in their areas was unconstitutional since it violated the right of all citizens to receive nine years of basic government-funded education enshrined in Article 31(2) of the 1945 Constitution.[61] Despite the mandate from the court ruling that favours madrasah funding by the local governments, the dispute between various national institutions (MORA and MOEC) and local governments when it comes to funding Islamic schools continues (see more discussion on this topic in Chapter 4).

57 "Perlu Peraturan Pemerintah tentang Desentralisasi Madrasah", Kompas, 26 November 2002.

58 "Desentralisasi Madrasah Perlu Terangkum dalam Revisi UU Sisdiknas", Kompas, 30 November 2002.

59 MORA suggested that alternatively a small slice of the central government's contribution to the local governments in the form of General Allocation Fund (Dana Alokasi Umum, DAU) and Special Allocation Fund (Dana Alokasi Khusus, DAK) be used to fund madrasah, as a way to circumvent the legal barrier of using decentralized funding for vertical organizations (non-decentralized government agencies). www.kemenag.go.id/index.php?a=berita&id=233013 (accessed on 25 December 2015).

60 Personal communication with Wayan Darmawan, Head of the Regional Agency for Planning and Development (Badan Perencanaan dan Pembangunan Daerah, Bappeda) in Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), 4 November 2014. More discussion on this issue can be found in Chapter 4.

61 Article 55(4) of the 2003 Law on National Education System states that "community-based educational institutions can receive technical assistance, funding subsidy, and other resources in a just and equal manner from the central government and/or local governments" (lembaga pendidikan berbasis masyarakat dapat memperoleh bantuan teknis, subsidi dana, dan sumber daya lain secara adil dan merata dari Pemerintah dan/atau Pemerintah Daerah). The contentious word in the article was "can" (dapat), which was interpreted as giving the local governments a legal escape from not funding private educational institutions. "Bantuan Pendidikan Berbasis Masyarakat Bersifat Wajib", Hukum Online, 29 September 2011.

One obvious downside of being relatively autonomous and private is that a lot of madrasah and *pesantren* are not financially secure. Private madrasah and *pesantren* are highly dependent on students' tuition fees as their main source of income. In addition, most *pesantren* engage in economic activities such as farming, fishery and livestock rearing to supplement their income. As mentioned before, most madrasah and *pesantren* are also eligible to receive financial assistance from MORA in the form of BOS but the complexity of satisfying the funding requirements results in a delay, which leads to many schools not receiving any money for many months.[62] Hence, as discussed before, some advocates of Islamic education tried to lobby for the decentralization of the management and oversight of madrasah as a way to force local governments to provide funding for madrasah.[63] In general, the financial situation for madrasah and *pesantren* is not as stable as other schools in the national education system due to their autonomous and private status coupled with jurisdictional conflict between MORA and MOEC.

Another way for financially fledgling private madrasah to overcome their fiscal troubles is to convert into state-owned madrasah. This move provides private madrasah with a steady flow of guaranteed funding from MORA, which ensures their financial stability. In 2014 the Minister of Religious Affairs issued a directive, *Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 14 Tahun 2014 tentang Pendirian Madrasah yang Diselenggarakan oleh Pemerintah dan Penegerian Madrasah yang Diselenggarakan oleh Masyarakat*, that lays out strict criteria that private madrasah must satisfy in order to become state-owned (*dinegerikan*). One of them is Article 7(1), which requires a private madrasah to surrender all its assets to MORA before it can become a state-owned institution.[64] This requirement presents a conundrum for private madrasah that cherish their autonomy, since the management and ownership of the schools will be fully transferred to MORA. Despite the prospect of losing independence, as of mid-2014, around 500 madrasah had applied to become state-owned since the issuance of the new regulation.[65] This figure, of course, is a mere drop in a bucket since there are 72,669 private madrasah in Indonesia from pre-school to senior high school levels.[66] The funding quandary concerning Islamic education also brings back the aforementioned hot-button issue of *sistem pendidikan satu atap* that first came

62 "Menanti Cairnya Dana BOS Madrasah", Republika, 2 September 2015 (accessed on 30 December 2015).

63 "Komisi VIII DPR Ingin Madrasah Dikelola Desentralisasi", Republika, 4 December 2012 (accessed on 30 December 2015).

64 "Madrasah Bisa Jadi Sekolah Negeri", Republika, 5 July 2014 (accessed on 8 May 2015).

65 "Kemenag Terbitkan PMA Penegerian Madrasah", Pelita, 2 July 2014 (accessed on 8 May 2015).

66 Total number of madrasah of all levels of education (pre-school to senior high school) in Indonesia as of 2014 is 76,551, of which 95 per cent are comprised of private madrasah. Madrasah @ Indonesia (Jakarta: Direktorat Pendidikan Madrasah, Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2015), p. 14.

into being in the late 1950s, in which its advocates argues that Islamic education will be better funded and managed if MOEC takes full control over it.[67] MORA, functioning as expected, does not find this idea at all attractive as the ministry would lose its monopoly in determining the nature and direction of Islamic education in the country and risking marginalization in the field of education.[68] As a result, Islamic education remains mired in jurisdictional overlap between MORA, MOEC and the local governments in the post-authoritarian era.

Malaysia: centralization of the education system

Overview of state institutions that administer Islamic education

Most Islamic schools in Malaysia are part of the national education system. Only a few dozen traditional *pondok* choose to remain independent of the official control by offering exclusively religious education. There are three authorities that manage and supervise the various types of Islamic schools in Malaysia: the Ministry of Education (*Kementerian Pendidikan*), the State Religious Councils (*Majlis Agama Islam Negeri*, MAIN), and Department of Islamic Development

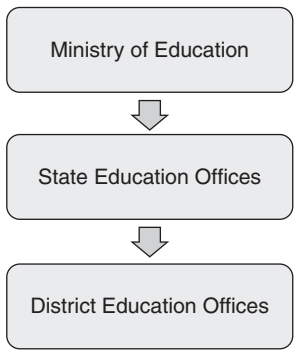

Figure 2.3 Organizational structure of national educational bureaucracy in Malaysia.

67 Advocates of sistem pendidikan satu atap also argue that by making MOEC, and to some extent MORA, completely in control of all madrasah and vocational schools, the 20 per cent annual national budgetary allocation for education can be spent more efficiently, instead of being shared with other ministries such as Agriculture and Maritime that purportedly use the money to support their own vocational schools. "Pendidikan Satu Atap, Mungkinkah?" Suara Merdeka, 26 February 2007.

68 Interview with Halfian Lubis, Head of Sub-Directorate, Directorate of Islamic Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs, 14 January 2014. MUI is also adamantly against the transfer of Islamic education to MOEC for fear of secularization. Interview with Amany Lubis, former Deputy Secretary General, Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 3 January 2014.

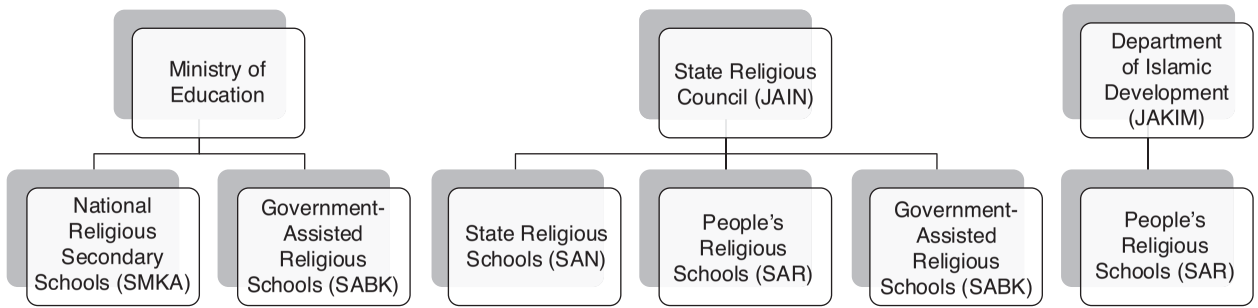

Figure 2.4 Management of Islamic schools in Malaysia.

(*Jabatan Kemajuan Islam*, JAKIM). There is an occasional overlap of jurisdiction and responsibilities between these three authorities, even causing intra-institutional frictions at times, but the overall relationship is smooth with a heavy tilt toward the Ministry of Education and JAKIM.

Article 3 of the constitution, which provides each state the full authority to manage Islamic affairs within its borders, produces a two-tiered administration for Islamic education in Malaysia: national and state. At the national level, the Islamic Education Division (*Bahagian Pendidikan Islam*, BPI) of the Ministry of Education is in charge of all national religious secondary schools (*Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama*, SMKA), the curriculum of the Islamic studies subject in all schools within the national educational system, and the certification of Islamic studies teachers. BPI also co-manages the Government-Assisted Religious Schools (*Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan*, SABK) with the state Islamic council. The ministry and the state Islamic council divide between them the management of People's Religious Schools (*Sekolah Agama Rakyat*, SAR) and State Religious Schools (*Sekolah Agama Negeri*, SAN). The ministry supervises the implementation of the national curriculum in these schools while the state Islamic council sets the curriculum for all Islamic subjects. Schools such as *pondok*, which are not part of the national educational system, fall under the aegis of the state Islamic council. SAR also come under the Advisory Agency for the Streamlining of Islamic Education and Islamic Studies (*Lembaga Penasihat Penyelarasan Pelajaran dan Pendidikan Agama Islam*, LEPAI), a subdivision under the Department of Islamic Development (*Jabatan Kemajuan Islam*, JAKIM), which strives to harmonize the varying standards and qualities of Islamic education and schools between all the states in Malaysia.[69]

At the local level, the federal bureaucracy that oversees and manages national education, including Islamic education, mimics the organizational structure found at the national level. This means that for every department, sector and unit in the Ministry of Education, there are corresponding departments, sectors and units in each state and district. Theoretically, this allows for seamless flow of information and better coordination between levels of government. In reality, the organizational efficiency is highly dependent on geographic location. Geographically remote district offices such as the ones in Sabah and Sarawak are typically hard to reach due to bad infrastructure and forbidding landscape, which can sometimes complicate the attempt of the ministry to implement uniformity across all levels of governance. However, in general, the interaction and cooperation between levels of governance in the national educational system is smooth and the ministry does try to engage with officers from the state and

69 SMKA are Islamic secondary schools that are established by and under full control of the Ministry of Education. SAN are Islamic schools established by the State Islamic Councils, while SAR are Islamic schools established by local communities (many converted from the traditional pondok). Finally, SABK are renamed SAR that have been taken over by the Ministry of Education, namely due to funding problems.

district levels as much as possible by occasionally flying them to Putrajaya or Kuala Lumpur for briefings, seminars, and workshops.[70]

Educational policies during the late colonial years in British Malaya (late 1800s to 1957)

As briefly mentioned in the Indonesian section of the chapter, the British's educational policies in Malaya were initially similar to the Dutch in the Netherlands East Indies, in that both adopted a laissez faire approach. But unlike the Dutch, which largely ignored the importance of Islamic education in the lives of its Muslim subjects, the British did accommodate Islamic education in the curriculum for national Malay vernacular schools in the late 1800s as a way to increase student enrolment. While Islamic schools such as *pondok* and madrasah have always been an integral part of the educational practices in Malaysia, Islamic education did not figure prominently in the national education until the late 1970s when the wave of Islamic resurgence started to hit the country and the federal government began to pay more attention to Islamic schools in the country. Since the late colonial period (the late 1800s to 1957), one of the main emphases of the national education system has been the implementation of a common language as a thread that can unify the Malaysian multi-ethnic society and forge a new national identity, which still continues until today. Another reason for such heavy emphasis on educational language policy especially during the early independence years is the strong correlation between the rise of ethno-religious politics and the growing importance of Islamic schools in the national education system in the late 1970s, underlined by the ascendancy of the Malay language in the national education system. As such, the discussion of the nationalization and standardization of education in Malaysia in this chapter will disproportionately focus on the language debate in the national education system, namely whether to use Malay, English or other vernacular languages as the medium language in schools.

Before World War II, the British colonial administration mainly adopted a laissez faire approach when it came to educating its colonial subjects in Malaya. Its educational policies encouraged private enterprises and communities to set up their own schools and curricula. As such, most schools during the pre-independence period were vernacular in nature, which the Malays, Chinese and Indian communities built to serve their respective communities. There were two reasons for this decentralized approach. The first was the paternalistic tendency of the British to preserve native customs and protect them from the so-called corrupting foreign influences. The second reason was the colonial state's limited resources for more comprehensive educational programs. The British and various missionary organizations also set up English-medium schools in the

70 These meetings in Putrajaya typically take place about four times a year. Interview with Wan Ramdzan Wan Mamat, former Director of Islamic Education Division, Ministry of Education, 15 July 2013.

urban areas to serve the cosmopolitan population and provide an educated workforce for the colonial administration.[71] Thus, this educational legacy of school system segregated by vernacular education has largely remained until the present day though all the English-medium national schools were converted to Malay-medium schools in the 1970s (will be discussed in detail later in the chapter).

When it came to providing Islamic religious instruction in Malay vernacular schools, the British initially implemented a policy similar to the Dutch in the Netherlands East Indies, which was not to allow any religious instruction at all during the school hours. But unlike the Dutch, the British later realized that the only way to entice Malay parents into sending their kids to the Malay vernacular schools was to include Islamic religious instruction in the curriculum, which was introduced in the late nineteenth century. The policy proved to be successful as average school attendance in Malay vernacular schools rose exponentially from 13,350 in 1896 to 37,866 pupils in 1924.[72] The first three decades of the 1900s also saw the establishment and growth of modern Islamic education in the form of madrasah. Many Muslim reformers who came back from the Middle East such as Syed Sheikh Al-Hadi and Syeikh Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin established their own madrasah as a way to modernize the Islamic education system in British Malaya, which had been hitherto dominated by the traditional *pondok* system. The first few decades of the twentieth century also saw the increasing bureaucratization of Islam by the sultanates in the form of State Islamic Council (MAIN). The Kelantanese sultanate was the first to establish its own State Islamic Council, *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan* (MAIK), in 1915. One of MAIK's early undertakings was to build more madrasah in order to bring Islamic education in the state up to date with the socio-economic demands of the time by including subjects such as English, mathematics, and science (more details in Chapter 3). Other states soon followed suit in establishing their own State Islamic Councils as a means to formalize and deepen the reach of the sultan's religious authority. Modernizing Islamic education through building more madrasah and overhauling the curriculum became one of the State Islamic Council's main priorities.[73]

In the immediate years following World War II, the British realized that the momentum for self-determination was unstoppable among the Malayan popula-

71 Francis Wong Hoy Kee and Ee Tiang Hong, Education in Malaysia (Hong Kong: Heinemann Educational Books, 1975), p. 9.

72 J. Stewart Nagle, Educational Needs of the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States. Ph.D diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1928, pp. 56–57; Rex Stevenson, Cultivators and Administrators: British Educational Policy towards the Malays 1875–1907 (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 78–79.

73 Unlike in Indonesia, hardly anything comprehensive has been written on the history of Islamic education in Malaysia during the colonial era. Most works that I found were detailed ethnographic study of a particular madrasah or pondok or on Islamic education in a particular state or area of the state. Therefore, it is not known exactly how many madrasah and pondok existed during this time throughout the British Malaya. On the other hand, there are a lot more information on Malay vernacular schools since the British did keep meticulous record on them.

tion. They thus promoted policies they thought would help with nation building and ethnic integration. The common thrust of these policies was the emphasis on language as the social glue, specifically the use of bilingual education – Malay and English – to foster inter-ethnic harmony and a sense of nationalism. The Cheeseman Plan in 1946 proposed to expand the instruction of English language as a way to bridge the gap between all vernacular schools – Malay, Chinese and Tamil – but it was ultimately aborted due to resistance from the major ethnic communities that saw mother-tongue education as an integral part of preserving their cultural traditions.[74] The British administration then established the Central Advisory Committee on Education (CACE), which came up with the Holgate Report in 1950 that proposed replacing all vernacular schools with a single bilingual education that consisted of English-medium schools with mandatory Malay language classes and Malay-medium schools with mandatory English language classes; Mandarin and Tamil would be elective subjects in these schools. Both the Malay and non-Malay communities strongly opposed the plan, which resulted in its abandonment.[75] CACE then appointed the Barnes Committee, which produced a report in 1951 that recommended mandatory bilingual (English and Malay) in the national primary schools; national secondary schools were exempted as a compromise to placate the opposing Malay and non-Malay communities. Despite vehement resistance from both the Malays and non-Malays, the British colonial government formally adopted the recommendations from the Barnes Report, which became the underpinnings of the 1952 Education Ordinance.[76] From this point, standardization and nationalization of the national educational system began in earnest.

Educational policies in the early years of independence

In 1955, the first post-colonial government in Malaysia (known as Malaya at the time) wasted no time in establishing a committee to conduct an in-depth study of the state of education in the country. The committee produced the Razak Report in 1956 that later turned into the 1957 Education Ordinance. The main recommendation of the Razak Report was the mandatory use of Malay language as the medium of instruction in the national educational system. The 1957 Education Ordinance, however, dropped this recommendation in the face of strident protests from Chinese educationists. In its place, the new law proposed a common-content syllabus while allowing vernacular schools to maintain their mother-tongue language as the medium of instruction. The new law also set up local educational authorities and effectively decentralized the oversight of local

74 Tham Seong Chee, "Issue in Malaysian Education: Past, Present, and Future", Journal of Southeast Asian Studies 10:2 (September 1979), pp. 324–325.

75 Tan Yao Sua and R. Santhiram, Educational Issues in Multiethnic Malaysia (Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2014), pp. 10–14.

76 Ibid., pp. 14–18.

educational affairs to local councils, which were democratically elected until 1965 when local government elections were suspended during the confrontation with Indonesia.[77] The 1957 Education Ordinance and its progenitor, the 1956 Razak Report, displayed early on the contrast between the centralizing tendency of a Malay-dominated state and its inability to fully implement all its centralizing recommendations in the education sphere, namely the mandatory use of Malay language in national primary schools. The slight departure of the 1957 Education Ordinance from the 1956 Razak Report was to placate the demands of Chinese educationists wanting to maintain the character of their mother-tongue education. One researcher notes: "[i]nstitutional pluralism [diversity of types of schools] has permitted the Alliance [the coalition government at the time] its luxury of ambiguity as it tries to work out the shape of its long-range goal".[78] The young post-colonial state also did not possess the administrative capacity to expand its bureaucratic reach down to the local level; hence the delegation of educational authority to the local councils. All this was about to change rather drastically from the 1960s.

The 1960 Rahman Report and the resultant 1961 Education Act exerted the efforts for nationalization and standardization more forcefully by implementing the Malay- and English-medium secondary schools and imposing mandatory national exams in both languages that were vital to students' class promotion (vernacular education was still allowed unchanged at the primary school level). The Chinese educationists, as in the earlier ordinance, were bitterly opposed to this new educational law, but this time the government did not budge. It took a hard-line approach to the extent of trying to revoke the citizenship of Lim Lian Geok, one of the most vocal critics of the new law.[79] The implementation of the act meant that vernacular secondary schools, namely Chinese and Tamil schools, were forced to change their medium of instruction to Malay or English if they wanted to remain in the national educational system and continue to receive financial assistance from the government. Non-Malay vernacular schools were mainly supported by their respective ethnic communities in their local areas and therefore varied in their financial viability. The prospect of losing state funding proved to be too much for many of the cash-strapped schools; in the end, fifty-five out of seventy-one Chinese secondary schools opted to remain in the national educational system and become National-Type Chinese Secondary Schools. There was hardly any resistance from the mainly rural Tamil schools since they were already in a woeful financial condition and in no position to oppose the act. The government at this time possessed three assets, which allowed it the means to adopt a more muscular approach in implementing the

77 Local council elections are still abolished until today. For section on local education authorities, see: Report of the Education Committee 1956 (Kuala Lumpur: B.T. Fudge, 1956), p. 6.

78 Cynthia Enloe, Multi-Ethnic Politics: The Case of Malaysia (Berkeley: Research Monograph No. 2, University of California, 1970), p. 45.

79 Tan and Santhiram, Educational Issues in Multiethnic Malaysia, p. 25.

new educational policies: economic resources (a colonial legacy that centralizes income distribution and makes states dependent on federal government for funding), control of the examination system, and the luxury of ambiguity.[80] Financial solvency, in particular, turned out to be the deciding factor whether a school chose to cede control over to the government or remained independent, which will be illustrated in greater detail in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.[81]

Centralization forms the main thrust of the national education system in post-independence Malaysia, but it has not always been that way. Initially, the 1957 Education Ordinance stipulated that education on the local level was to be managed and funded by municipal governments. From this time there was a form of decentralization in educational management due to the lack of bureaucratic capacity by the federal government and its supposed sensitivity to particular local educational needs. The government did an about-face in the early 1960s when it decided to centralize control of local educational affairs and abolish the wide latitude hitherto enjoyed by the local authorities. Accordingly, the 1960 Rahman Report and the 1961 Education Act wrested the control away from the municipal government. The federal government gave as its reasons the inability of local education authorities to raise sufficient funds for their schools, the need to streamline all levels and types of education, and political meddling by the local educational authorities that did not share common ideals and objectives as the federal government.[82] The 1961 Education Act authorized the establishment of federally controlled state educational offices in every state in the country to act as the agent of the Ministry of the Education at the local level. The state educational offices had effectively replaced the pre-existing local educational authorities, and would only be answerable to the ministry, not the state government or local municipal administration. The Ministry of Education allowed the teachers to make recommendations to modify the curriculum based on the particularities of local conditions, but such changes had to be approved by

80 Ambiguity here refers to the indeterminate shape of what Malaysian idea of nationhood should be, which characterized how national educational policies were formulated at this time. The government used the ambiguous national identity to find compromises with every stakeholder in the educational arena since there were no concrete official ideals to "unite" all ethnic groups in Malaysia, besides the universal implementation of Malay and English languages as media of educational instruction, with English to be eventually phased out to make way for the sole dominance of Malay language. It was not until the early 1970s when the Malaysian national identity came to be dominated by Malay/Islamic ideals. Indonesia, on the other hand, is blessed with a rather clear national identity with Bahasa Indonesia and the ideals of Pancasila firmly at its core, around which educational policies can be formulated and implemented. Enloe, Multi-Ethnic Politics, pp. 58–67. See also R.S. Milne, "National Ideology and Nation-Building in Malaysia", Asian Survey 10:7 (July 1970), pp. 563–573.

81 At the time of the law's implementation, there were 122 English-medium, 29 Chinese-medium and 2 Tamil-medium independent schools operating outside the national educational system. See Chapter VIII, Paragraph 165 of Report of the Education Review Committee 1960 (Kuala Lumpur: B.T. Fudge, 1960), p. 30.

82 Ibid., Chapter XI, Paragraphs 197–219, pp. 35–37.

the ministry.[83] The stage was thus set for a deeper penetration of the federal government into the education system as it took away the local autonomy in managing educational affairs and consolidated its control via the Ministry of Education and its state educational offices.

In short, the indeterminate shape of the newly independent Malaysian national identity and the increasing efforts of the federal government to centralize control of the education system came to characterize the direction of national educational policies in the 1950s and 1960s. Non-Malay vernacular schools had to contend with the efforts of the federal government to implement an exclusively bilingual education system (English and Malay) at the expense of Mandarin and Tamil languages, against which the non-Malay vernacular schools managed to resist to a certain extent due to the negotiating flexibility afforded by the ambiguity of the national identity at this time.[84] The 1960s also saw the federal government taking away the local autonomy in managing educational affairs by setting up its own local educational offices in every state in the country. The centralizing tendency of the federal government in educational matters remains unchanged in the ensuing decades while the ambiguity of national identity finally gave way to the dominance of Malay/Islamic ideals from the early 1970s onward.

Islamic education in early years of independence (1950s–1960s)

Before 1915 Islamic schools in British Malaya were privately owned and managed by individual religious teachers (typically known as *to' guru*) or the local communities. There was no overseeing authority either on the state or national level that supervised and funded these schools, just like the case in Indonesia. But unlike in Indonesia, where most *pesantren* and madrasah have always remained private and relatively autonomous from the control of a central authority, the Islamic education in Malaysia became enmeshed in the bureaucratic centralizing trend that originated with the establishment of the first State Religious Council (*Majlis Agama Islam Negeri*, MAIN) in Kelantan in 1915. From the 1950s until late 1970s, the federal government, while acknowledging the need to improve the poor conditions of Islamic schools around the country, gave very little assistance until Islamic discourse came to dominate the public space in the late 1970s. It was then that the federal government started to take an active role in the management and supervision of Islamic schools in Malaysia.

Since the early 1900s, Islamic schools had been under the jurisdiction of MAIN, accorded by the sultan's authority over the Malay and Islamic matters in his state. MAIN and community governing boards managed the *pondok*,

83 Report of the Committee on Curriculum Planning and Development (Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1967), p. 4.

84 For detailed account of the national language policy debates in the 1950s and 1960s, see Margaret Roff, "The Politics of Language in Malaya", Asian Survey 7:5 (May 1967), pp. 316–328.

madrasah and People's Religious Schools (*Sekolah Agama Rakyat*, SAR), which were in the same leaky financial boat as the vernacular schools as illustrated by a 1956 report submitted by the Committee to Consider Financial Aids to Non-Government Islamic Religious Schools.[85] The resultant 1957 Education Ordinance, however, did not incorporate the report's recommendation to improve the financial situation of Islamic schools in the country. While Section 49 of the 1957 Education Ordinance mandated that any public schools in the national education system that had more than fifteen Muslim students had to provide at least two hours of Islamic knowledge instruction, the implementation and funding of this directive became entangled in the messy division of responsibilities between the state and federal governments since neither authority wanted to bear the full costs of providing Islamic education in national public schools. The 1960 Rahman Talib Report sought to clarify this jurisdictional muddle by recommending that the state religious authority should supply religious teachers in government-assisted schools while the state and central authorities would share the cost for providing such instruction.[86] Nonetheless, both the 1956 and 1960 Reports and their attendant Acts did not directly address the state of affairs of private Islamic schools, which, for the most part, were in a sorry condition.

As mentioned above, many traditional Islamic schools have modernized their curriculum since the early 1900s in order to keep up with the changes and demands of the modern world. Unfortunately, not many of these Islamic schools had the financial wherewithal to undertake this endeavour sufficiently, which would have required hiring new teachers, providing new learning facilities and replacing outdated textbooks, as exemplified by the aforementioned 1956 report. On August 1956, a national congress of SAR came out with specific demands for support from the federal government. The congress asked for $50 per student per year, textbook subsidies, assistance for teachers' training, supply of university-educated teachers, and scholarships for SAR students to study in the Islamic universities abroad. In return, the schools agreed to place their management under the control of the Ministry of Education.[87] Even some state religious authorities asked for the government to assume control of SAR, which were under their jurisdiction, due to the lack of funding for maintaining basic school

85 According to the report, by 1956, there were 368 non-government Islamic religious schools along with 35,093 students and 1,174 teachers spread across eleven states in the peninsular Malaysia. Most of these schools had poor infrastructure, unqualified teachers, and haphazardly designed curricula that mainly focused on religious subjects. Hashim, Educational Dualism, pp. 36–39.

86 Exception is made for Islamic studies teachers in residential secondary schools for Malays, where the Ministry would provide the teachers. Ibid., Chapter XVI, paragraphs 283–297, pp. 47–48.

87 Laporan Mesyuarat, Kongres Sekolah-Sekolah Agama Rakyat SaMalaya di Dewan Sekolah Al-Ulum, Batu 20, Bagan Datoh, Perak, 23 dan 24 Ogos 1956, National Archive of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur.

infrastructures and hiring competent teachers.[88] It was not the priority of the government at this time to increase its support for Islamic education beyond what was proposed in the 1956 Razak Report and the 1960 Rahman Talib Report, since Islam as a political tool was not yet central to its legitimacy and regime maintenance.[89] Moreover, private Islamic schools especially SAR were largely the stronghold of the Islamic opposition political party, PAS, which added another reason for the non-support from the federal government (more discussion on this issue in Chapter 3).[90] The "secular" stance of the federal government was about to change as the wave of Islamic revivalism hit the Malaysian shores in the late 1970s.

In all, the first three decades following independence saw the federal government not properly addressing the plight of Islamic education despite the 1956 report that acknowledged the problems and pleas for financial help from various Islamic schools and state religious authorities. Furthermore, the fact that Islamic schools were largely under the jurisdiction of MAIN and some schools were known to be the hotbed for Islamic opposition against the federal government added to the reluctance of the federal government to support the Islamic schools. The federal government's reticent attitude toward Islamic education was about to change in the late 1970s as Islamic discourse became more prominent in the public space and posed a serious threat to the federal government's legitimacy to rule.

The dominance of Malay/Islamic views in the national education system (1970s to present)

Due to the aforementioned ambiguous approach in shaping the new national identity, the government's educational policies before 1970 did not explicitly represent the interests of a single ethnic group. This ambiguity allowed the government the flexibility in appeasing the demands of non-Malay education advocates, namely the Chinese educationists. The ambiguity was also the result of the contradictory purposes of educational policies. On the one hand, the government

88 The state religious authority in Pahang asked for a federal government takeover of SAR under its management. It lamented that some SAR teachers did not receive salaries for three months and that most SAR teachers were not qualified, which, in turn, resulted in poor instruction and high rate of exam failure among the SAR students. Kertas Meshuarat Jawatan Kuasa Ugama dan Kebajikan Masharakat, Bil. 26/65, National Archive of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur.

89 Wan Abdul Rahman Wan Abdul Latiff and Kamaruzzaman Yusoff, "Kontroversi Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR): Globalisasi, Sekularisasi dan Pendemokrasian Pendidikan" (paper presented at the 4th International Malaysian Studies Conference, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, 3–5 August 2004), p. 11.

90 One example of the close relationship between PAS and SAR at this time was evident in a letter dated 16 March 1965 from Ustaz Zulkarnain Hj. Ahmad, the Secretary General of the Association of Teachers of People's Madrasah (Persatuan Guru-Guru Madrasah Raa'yat) in the state of Perak, to Ustaz Hj. Hassan Adli, the then Deputy President of PAS. The letter entailed the former's refusal of the latter's offer to appoint him as the head of a new Islamic college in northern Perak. National Archive of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur.

expected the educational policies to act as an agent of integration that could somehow unite the multicultural Malaysian society on common ideals; on the other hand, these very same policies were also supposed to improve the socio-economic conditions of the majority Malay population, who were mainly poor and rural at the time.[91] This dynamic was soon to change from the early 1970s as the government adopted more Malay/Islam-centric educational policies. This policy change came as result of two reasons: the 13 May 1969 racial riots and the Islamic revivalism that started in the late 1970s.

There are many versions of the 13 May 1969 race riots, but in a nutshell the event involved clashes between Malays and Chinese, which resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries, along with serious property damage.[92] At the root of the 13 May 1969 race riots was the economic disparity between the poor rural Malays and the more economically dominant Chinese, which quickly became the rallying cry for United Malay National Organisation or UMNO, the Malay political party that dominated the ruling coalition at the time. The aftermath of the race riots saw the creation of the New Economic Policy (*Dasar Ekonomi Baru*) or NEP, which was an affirmative action program aiming to benefit the *Bumiputera* (sons of the soil), the majority of whom were Malays. NEP was part of the UMNO-led government's aggressive push for the elevation of the Malay status in all aspects of life even at the expense of other non-*Bumiputra* groups. The government founded the National University of Malaysia (*Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*, UKM) in 1970 as the first institution of higher learning that uses Malay language as its sole medium of instruction. The government also took more concerted and determined efforts to establish the supremacy of the Malay language in national education. The post-1970 national educational policies reflected the reification of Malay identity, as evidenced by the sharp rise of Malay-empowerment rhetoric in the political discourse following the 1969 racial riots. Mandatory implementation of the Malay language was one of these policies that acted as a means to exert a Malay-dominated national identity. The Minister of Education, Abdul Rahman Ya'akob announced in 1970 that as of 1978 all standardized national examinations would be held in the Malay language.[93] The ministry even imported teachers from Indonesia to fill in the vacancies needed to teach Malay in all subjects except English.[94] There was a regional aspiration as well that the Malay language could play a larger economic and technical role between Malaysia and Indonesia. Hussein Onn, who succeeded Abdul Rahman Ya'akob as Minister of Education, stated that:

91 John Bock, Education and Nation-Building in Malaysia: A Study of Institutional Effect in Thirty-Four Secondary Schools. Ph.D diss., Stanford University, 1971, p. 155.

92 For the official version of the event, refer to The May 13 Tragedy: A Report (Kuala Lumpur: National Operations Council, 1969). For an alternative account, refer to Kua Kia Soong, May 13: Declassified Documents on The Malaysian Riots of 1969 (Kuala Lumpur: Suaram, 2007).

93 Bock, Education and Nation-Building in Malaysia, p. 184.

94 Ibid., p. 184.

> Working in close cooperation with Indonesia in regard to common spelling, scientific and technical terms etc., the National Language will be spoken and used in a region consisting of over 100 million people. We have no doubt whatsoever the National Language is virile and viable.[95]

The ascendancy of Malay identity politics from the 1970s onward gave rise to the concept of *Ketuanan Melayu* (Malay supremacy), which, among other things, required non-Malays to conform to the Malay/Islam-centric notion of Malaysian nationhood.[96] The government formulated the National Cultural Policy (*Dasar Kebudayaan Kebangsaan*) in 1971, and put Malay culture and Islam firmly at the heart of the government's idea of "Malaysian culture".[97] By the 1970s, the Malayanization policy that from the onset of independence had set out to wean the civil service of British expatriates and increase the recruitment of Malayans of all ethnicities gave way to "Malay"ization policy that favoured the recruitment of Malays over other ethnic groups.[98] The percentage of Malays in managerial and professional positions within the civil service rose dramatically from 14.1 per cent in 1957 to 67.8 per cent by late 1999.[99] This trend was also abetted by the increased enrolment of Malay students in public universities as a result of NEP. In 1970, Malay students constituted 40.2 per cent of all tertiary-level students enrolled in public institutions. By 1995, the number had jumped to 61.6 per cent. The figure for non-Malays plummeted from 56.2 per cent in 1970 to 38.4 per cent in 1995.[100] The government's Malay-centric educational policies also resulted in a mass exodus of Chinese students into National-Type Chinese primary schools when the government began to convert all English-medium primary schools to Malay-medium primary schools in the early 1970s. By 2011, Chinese students comprised only 3 per cent of all students enrolled in the Malay-medium national primary schools and 22 per cent in the national Malay-medium

95 Speech given at a seminar for Members of Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies hosted by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Institute of Language and Literature) on 18 February 1971. Education in Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia, 1971), p. 12.

96 The term Ketuanan Melayu was coined by Abdullah Ahmad, a former UMNO Member of Parliament, in a speech at Institute of International Affairs, Singapore on 30 August 1986. "Sorry attempt to rehabilitate Ketuanan Melayu", Malaysiakini, 9 February 2011.

97 Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia: http://pmr.penerangan.gov.my/index.php/maklumat-kenegaraan/238-dasar-kebudayaan-kebangsaan.html.

98 In 1957, Europeans made up 82.6 per cent of the direct-entry Senior Malayan Civil Service posts with no Malayans holding these senior posts. By 1967, the trend was completely reversed with 30.3 per cent Malayans and no Europeans holding these senior posts. The Malayan Administrative Service (46.7 per cent) and the State Civil Services (22.9 per cent) made up the rest of bureaucratic staffs. Shafruddin, The Federal Factor, pp. 164–174.

99 Khoo Boo Teik, "Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance in the Public Sector: Malaysian Experiences", United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Democracy, Governance and Human Rights Programme Paper Number 20 (December 2005), pp. 18–19.

100 Ibid., p. 21.

secondary schools.[101] When it comes to ethnic composition of the teaching staff in national primary and secondary schools, in 2011 *Bumiputera* (most of whom are Malays) made up 81 per cent while only 14 per cent and 5 per cent were Chinese and Indians, respectively.[102]

In short, the decades following the 1969 racial riots saw an overwhelming representation of Malays in the national schools (as opposed to Chinese and Tamil schools, which are classified as National-Type schools) and the government agencies that oversee these schools, which, in turn, produced Malay/Islam-centric educational policies and environment in the schools. Catalysed by the 13 May 1969 race riots, the 1970s became the decade in which Malay political elites within UMNO began to assert their dominance vis-à-vis other ethnic groups via the *Ketuanan Melayu* rhetoric and practices such as favourable recruitment of Malays in the civil service, implementation of Bahasa Malaysia as the sole medium language in schools, and the preferential admission for Malay students in public universities. This pervasive "Malay"ized climate in the government and national schools proved to be conducive to the widespread growth of Islamic piety that took place during the Islamic resurgence period from the late 1970s onward.

The Islamization of a Malay-centric national educational system (late 1970s to present)

The increasing Malay dominance in the civil service and the national school system, which began in the early 1970s, prepared a fertile socio-political environment for the Islamic revivalism that hit Malaysia in the late 1970s. The main reason was the official notion of the Malay identity. Article 160 of the Malaysian constitution defines Malay people as "a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, and conforms to Malay custom". The conflation of ethnicity (Malay) with religion (Islam), while having always been present in the constitution since it first came into force in 1957, did not gain serious political saliency until the late 1970s when Islam became more prominent in public discourse. The 1979 Iranian revolution further galvanized Islamic activists seeking political change, which also included the former Deputy Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim. The challenge from the Islamic activists became real enough that the government decided to take it seriously by mainly co-opting the Islamic activist leaders, including Anwar Ibrahim (more discussion on this

101 Similarly, Indian students also constituted a dismal 1 per cent of overall enrolled Malay-medium primary school students and 7 per cent of the Malay-medium secondary school students. Ironically, there are now more Malay students in National-Type Chinese primary schools (9 per cent) than Chinese students in Malay-medium national primary schools (3 per cent). Preliminary Report: Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025 (Putrajaya: Ministry of Education, 2012), p. 95.

102 Ibid., p. 96.

topic in Chapter 5).[103] The government issued a special committee report in 1979, chaired by the then Deputy Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, which proposed that national exam for Islamic education be made compulsory for all Muslim students, candidates for Islamic education teachers to be chosen based on the federal government's guideline, and there should be at least one religious officer in every state who would oversee the implementation of religious education in schools.[104] In the 1982 UMNO general assembly, soon after becoming the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad articulated the urgency of UMNO in responding to the Islamic revivalism in the Malay society:

> Today we face the biggest struggle – the struggle to change the attitude of the Malays in line with the requirement of Islam in this modern age … UMNO's task now is to enhance Islamic practices and ensure that the Malay community truly adheres to Islamic teachings.… Naturally this cause is far bigger than the previous struggles of UMNO. Of course it is not easy to succeed. But UMNO must pursue it, whatever the obstacles, for this is our real cause.[105]

By the early 1980s, the federal government had also started to actively provide funding for SAR, which it had largely ignored before.[106] With the permeation of Islamic values in all parts of the government, facilitated by the previously discussed "Malay"ization of the civil service, the 1985 Policy on the Inculcation of Islamic Values in Administration (*Dasar Penerapan Nilai-Nilai Islam Dalam Pentadbiran*)[107] and the increasing religious piety within the Malay society in

103 The Malaysian government's responses to the threat posed by Islamic revivalism at this time consisted of four methods: making largely symbolic religious concessions to the Islamic activists such as building more mosques; coopting leaders of major dakwah organizations and promoting its own official dakwah activities; increasing control over Islamic affairs and education; and repressing Islamic groups that could not be coopted and which the government considered "deviants". Simon Barraclough, "Managing the Challenges of Islamic Revival in Malaysia: A Regime Perspective", Asian Survey 23:8 (August 1983), p. 967. See also Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism and the Political Process in Malaysia", Asian Survey 21:10 (October 1981), pp. 1050–1055.

104 Laporan Jawatankuasa Kabinet Mengkaji Dasar Pelaksanaan Pelajaran (7hb November, 1979) (Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1979), pp. 71, 177–178.

105 Quoted in Diane Mauzy and R.S. Milne, "The Mahathir Administration in Malaysia: Discipline Through Islam", Pacific Affairs 56:4 (Winter 1983–1984), p. 644.

106 In 1983, 680 SAR with 105,292 students received RM3,868,035 from the federal government. In 1984 the allocation increased to RM3,924,165 for 697 SAR with 105,950 students. Taklimat, Bahagian Pendidikan Islam kepada Y.B. Datuk Abdullah bin Hj. Ahmad Badawi, Menteri Pelajaran Malaysia, 23 Ogos, 1984, National Archive of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur.

107 The 1985 Dasar Penerapan Nilai-Nilai Islam Dalam Pentadbiran was an official government policy that aimed to make Malay civil servants better Muslims with the belief that a devout Muslim is also a productive and honest worker. Garis Panduan Bagi Mengadakan Ceramah Penerapan Nilai-Nilai Islam Dalam Perkhidmatan Awam: Pekeliling Am Bil. 2 Tahun 2001 (Putrajaya: Jabatan Perdana Menteri, 2001), p. iii.

general, Islamic values came to dominate the Malay-centric policies of the government. The centrality of Malay/Islamic worldview in educational policies manifested itself in the form of the National Education Philosophy (*Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan*) in 1988 and the 1989 Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools (*Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah*, KBSM). While the influence of Malay/Islamic-centric views in educational policies have been apparent since the 1970s, the formulation of the National Education Policy and KBSM marked the first time these views were made official by the UMNO-dominated government that strived to burnish its Islamic credential. Religious values (read: Islam) as defined and promoted by the federal government now formed the crux of the national curriculum. No longer were religious values divorced from general subjects as the Ministry of Education saw the seamless integration between the two as the most effective way to shape the character of young Muslim students.[108] The Ministry of Education stated in 1992 under the heading "Penekanan Nilai-Nilai Murni" (Emphasis on Virtuous Values) that: "Inculcation of virtuous values is carried out in total through all KBSM subjects. This approach is known as values transcending curriculum".[109] KBSM stood in stark contrast to previous national curricula due to the explicit role of religious values in its content and preferred pedagogy in an effort to keep the curriculum in line with religiously imbued *Falsafah Pendidikan Negara*. While the Ministry of Education defined *nilai-nilai murni* (virtuous values) as universal in character and as not contradicting religion, culture and norms of the Malaysian society, the implementation of these values in the curriculum indicated a hegemonic presence of Malay/Islamic values in schools that alienates other belief systems.[110] The former director of Centre for Curriculum Development at the Ministry of Education, Wan Mohd. Zahid Mohd. Nordin, stated that: "Even though the moral values proposed in the education on the primary and secondary levels embody universal values, these values have to be acknowledged as Islamic values that are not 'new' or relative".[111] The Ministry of Education's current curriculum guideline (*Huraian Sukatan Pelajaran*) for the subject of history at the

108 Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan: www.moe.gov.my/v/falsafah-pendidikan-kebangsaan (accessed on 6 January 2016).

109 The original Malay excerpt: "Penyerapan nilai-nilai murni dilakukan dengan menyeluruh melalui semua mata pelajaran KBSM. Pendekatan ini dikenali sebagai nilai-nilai merentas kurikulum". Buku Penerangan Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah (Kuala Lumpur: Pusat Perkembangan Kurikulum, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1992), p. 6.

110 The original Malay excerpt: "Nilai-nilai murni bersifat sarwajagat dan tidak bercanggah dengan agama, budaya dan norma masyarakat Malaysia". Ibid., p. 10.

111 The original Malay excerpt: "Walaupun nilai-nilai moral yang disarankan dalam pendidikan di peringkat rendah dan menengah merupakan nilai-nilai universal tetapi ianya tetap diakui sebagai nilai-nilai Islam yang bukan bersifat 'baharu' atau relatif". Paper entitled Perancangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam dalam Falsafah Pendidikan Negara (Planning of Islamic Education Curriculum in the National Educational Philosophy) was presented at the 1990 Bengkel Pendidikan Islam Malaysia [Workshop on Islamic Education in Malaysia], Kolej Agama Sultan Zainal Abidin, Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, p. 5.

senior high school level (Form 4) reveals that 50 per cent of the content are Islamically oriented, despite the non-religious nature of the subject.[112] There are also reported incidences of Malay/Islamic domination in national schools, which include a Muslim school principal forcing non-Muslim students to participate in Islamic prayer during school assembly, a Muslim teacher asking a non-Muslim student to not drink water in class during Ramadan and drink his own urine in the toilet instead, and a Malay school principal who gave racist speech while addressing a multiracial student body.[113] The Education Act of 1996, which repealed the Education Act of 1961, further entrenched the superior position of Malay/Islamic-centric views in the national education system. The main difference between the Education Acts of 1996 and 1961 was that the former reduced the minimum number of Muslim students for whom mandatory provision of Islamic studies by the schools was required from fifteen to five.[114] This was a blatant attempt to force National-Type Chinese schools to provide Islamic studies instruction to the small number of Muslim students who attended those schools and represented an added burden on schools that were already severely under-funded.[115] The non-Malay vernacular schools now have to hire Muslim teachers to teach the subject, most likely from their own pocket.[116] On the other hand, in 1997, the Ministry of Education increased the budget allocation for the teaching of Islamic Studies and Moral Studies subjects in government schools by 41.6 per cent, namely to ramp up *dakwah* (Islamic propagation) activities

112 The Islamically oriented content includes discussions on the spread of Islamic civilization in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, and the golden era of the Melaka sultanate in the fifteenth century. The rest of the syllabus sweepingly covers the history of western civilization and the pre-Islamic civilizations of Southeast Asia, which curiously omitted any reference to Hindu-Buddhist Malay kingdoms in the peninsular. Huraian Sukatan Pelajaran Sejarah Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah, Tingkatan 4 (Putrajaya: Pusat Perkembangan Kurikulum, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2015), pp. 28–50.

113 These reports are just the tip of the iceberg since there are many other discrimination cases in schools that went unreported. "Lagi gejala 'rasis' di sekolah", Malaysiakini, 27 September 2010; "Jabatan pendidikan Kedah diarah siasat dakwaan pelajar disuruh minum air kencing", The Malaysian Insider, 22 June 2015; "School abused power by luring minor into Islam, Sabah MP claims", Malay Mail Online, 8 February 2015; "Masing: Attempts to convert students to Islam must stop", Borneo Post, 28 March 2015; "Report: Malaysia's mission schools facing Islamisation with alleged conversions", Malay Mail Online, 12 February 2016.

114 Chapter 10, Paragraph 50 of the Education Act of 1996 (550 Act). The Act also states that no funding will be given to the teaching of other religions besides Islam though schools are allowed to have it on their own (Paragraph 51) and financial assistance can be given to private Islamic schools that are not under the control of the Ministry of Education (Paragraph 52).

115 National-Type school (Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan) is an official designation for Chinese and Indian vernacular schools that are part of the national education system.

116 Under the Ninth Malaysian Plan (2006–2010), Chinese and Tamil National-Type schools were each allocated 3.6 per cent and 1.34 per cent funding respectively despite constituting 21.12 per cent and 3.124 per cent of the total student population respectively. Tan and Santhiram, Educational Issues in Multiethnic Malaysia, p. 67.

among the students.[117] In short, it is clear from the examples given that there have been active efforts by the government since the early 1970s to shape the national identity in the Malay/Islamic mould due to the 13 May 1969 race riots and the Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s; educational policies are simply one of the means to achieve that end.

Enforcing standardization (1970s to present day)

As mentioned before, standardization goes hand in hand with nationalization of the education system. In order for the federal government to effectively shape the society to conform to its objectives via the national education system, it needs to formulate standardized curriculum and educational policies that it can implement without major alterations as the curriculum and policies trickle down to the local level. While this book argues that the state in Malaysia is generally strong and cohesive in its educational objectives, as evidenced by the state's relentless centralizing efforts and attempts to control the political discourse through the national education since the 1970s, the state is still vulnerable to pressures from various social groups that can result in alterations to its standardized curriculum and educational policies. The cohesiveness of the Malaysian state can be readily observed in the local educational offices where the federalized institutional mindset (mentioned in Chapter 1) prevails despite the pride in strong regional identity. It is at the ministerial level where the state cohesion can be heavily influenced by the political dynamics in the public sphere. The example shown in this section – the policy implementation of Teaching and Learning Science and Mathematics in English (*Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam Bahasa Inggeris*, PPSMI) – illustrates the occasional weakness of the Malaysian state to external pressures from the society, which can put a damper on the state's efforts to formulate and implement a uniformly agreed standard for national curriculum.

Despite the increasing centralization tendency of the federal government since the early 1970s, there is a gap between what the Ministry of Education envisions and the practical reality on the ground when it comes to implementation and enforcement of national educational policies. The highly centralized, top-down nature of national policymaking in Malaysia formulates one-size-fits-all policies and hands them down from the cloistered citadel of Putrajaya to be implemented by state educational offices at the local level. While there is a fair amount of local adaption of national education policies at the local level as we shall see in the case studies chapters, the institutional ideology in the form of a federalized mindset is still very strong and ubiquitous among the local agents of the ministry, who generally believe in the nobility and sincerity of their national mission to improve local education in their areas. A federalized institutional

117 Pembangunan Pendidikan 2001–2010: Perancangan Bersepadu Penjana Kecemerlangan Pendidikan (Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2001), p. 6–6.

mindset means that the views of the state education officers are generally in accordance with the objectives of the ministry despite these officers being typically locals, especially in states with historically strong regional pride and tradition such as Kelantan and Sarawak, both of which make up the case studies in this book. In other words, these local officers believe that the national mission bequeathed upon them by the ministry usually supersedes any unique attributes of the local culture and tradition in their areas. More detailed explanation of the federalized institutional mindset among the state education officers are illustrated in Chapters 3 and 4.

The institutional identity of the Ministry of Education, on the other hand, changes more readily at the national level depending on the political exigencies of the time. This is largely due to the fact that key policymakers are generally politicians and political appointees, whose careers are reliant on their ability to satisfy the demands of their core constituencies or, in the case of political appointees, their political patrons. Institutional ideological shift can occur as a response to electoral results or pressure from the civil society groups. One example of institutional ideological shift in the Ministry of Education since the 1970s is the policy implementation of Teaching and Learning Science and Mathematics in English (PPSMI). The policy shift in the PPSMI issue illustrates how institutional ideology can respond to pressure from society despite the Ministry of Education's overwhelming centralizing tendency.

The formulation and implementation of PPSMI represent a major shift in the Ministry of Education's language policy regarding the national curriculum. As mentioned before, the government's educational policies have become increasingly Malay/Islamic-centric since the early 1970s. One of the main pillars of this Malay/Islamic institutional ideology is the implementation of Malay language as the sole medium of instruction in all national schools, which the government managed to achieve by the early 2000s. Nevertheless, the all-Malay language policy went through an abrupt shift in 2002 when the then Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, introduced the PPSMI policy for national primary and secondary schools. This policy's purported primary concern was to increase the global competitiveness of Malaysian students in scientific and technical fields, with English proficiency the key to achieve that objective. There was also a general concern among employers that the level of English proficiency among Malaysian students had deteriorated significantly ever since the implementation of Malay-only national curriculum and exams. PPSMI enjoyed several years of nationwide implementation before the former Minister of Education and Deputy Prime Minister, Muhyiddin Yassin abolished it in 2009 and replaced it with a compromised version called Upholding The Malay Language and Strengthening The English Language (*Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia dan Memperkukuhkan Bahasa Inggeris*, MBMMBI).[118] The ministry argued that it was necessary to

118 Ministry of Education, Frequently Asked Questions: www.moe.gov.my/en/soalan-lazim-view?id=150&cat=28&keyword=&page=1& (accessed on 20 March 2015).

abolish PPSMI due to the low English proficiency of teachers and students and the lack of evidence that learning science and mathematics in English would improve Malaysia's global competitiveness.[119] The PPSMI issue elicits strong reactions that divide the Malaysian society along ethnic and class lines: non-Malays and urban educated Malays support the policy, while Malay nationalists and rural Malays oppose it.[120] In the aftermath of the 2008 election, when the UMNO-led government saw its parliamentary advantage reduced to a simple majority for the first time since independence, it decided to abolish PPSMI as a move to entice the rural Malay voters back to the government's camp.[121] PPSMI remains a contentious issue until now with the former Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, calling for its reinstatement while Muhyiddin Yassin vowing to protect the Malay language and forge ahead with the new policy.[122]

In the context of institutional ideological shift, the PPSMI policy and its subsequent reversal signifies the reactions of the key policymakers, namely the politicians and their political appointees in the Ministry of Education, to the apparent changes in the society since the 1970s. The 1971 New Economic Policy had created a large educated and upwardly mobile middle-class population, especially among the Malays, who demanded the partial reintroduction of English in the national curriculum to improve global competitiveness.[123] This emerging Malay middle-class group, along with the non-Malays who were already disgruntled at the increasing dominance of Malay language in the national education since the early 1970s, created a tremendous pressure that resulted in the ideological shift within the Ministry of Education. The institutional ideology of the Ministry of Education again swung back to supporting the supremacy of Malay language in the national curriculum in the aftermath of the 2008 general elections, namely for UMNO to shore up support from the rural Malays to compensate for the loss of votes from the urban Malays, who overwhelmingly voted

119 "Why PPSMI is abolished?", The Star, 5 October 2011.

120 The fault line can be clearly seen in the headlines of mainstream newspapers in Malaysia: English-language newspapers such as The Star and The New Straits Times, which readership mainly comprises non-Malays and urban Malay professionals, were in support of PPSMI while Malay-language newspapers such as Utusan Malaysia and Berita Harian were calling for PPSMI's abolition. Asiah Abu Samah, The Development of English Language Policy in Malaysia: The New Policy on Science and Mathematics in the Medium of English. Ph.D diss., University of Sussex, 2008, pp. 92–93.

121 The then Deputy Minister of Education, Wee Ka Siong, denied that the policy repeal was in any way related to the results of the 2008 election: "No return to English, says Wee", The Malaysian Insider, 18 January 2011.

122 "Dr M: Bring back PPSMI or get left behind", The Star, 2 October 2014; "Kerajaan janji perkasa bahasa Melayu", Utusan Malaysia, 12 November 2014.

123 The significant decrease in the percentage of population living in poverty from 49.3 per cent in 1970 to 6.1 per cent in 1997 corresponded to the rising percentage of middle-class population during the same period. Similarly, gross monthly income grew from RM264 in 1970 to RM2,606 in 1997. Jomo Kwame Sundaram and Wee Chong Hui, Malaysia @ 50: Economic, Development, Distribution, Disparities (Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2014), pp. 68–70.

for the opposition.[124] In short, while the institutional ideology in the state educational offices remains consistently pro-federal government regardless of the strong influence from the local culture and politics, the institutional ideology within the Ministry of Education can readily change, though rarely, as the government reacts to socio-political dynamics that can threaten its hold on power. The ability of the state in Malaysia to detect the changes in society and react accordingly contributes to its resiliency and hegemonic reach when it comes to national education, as exemplified by the PPSMI policy battle.

Conclusion

Both post-colonial governments of Indonesia and Malaysia have undertaken serious efforts since the 1950s to standardize and nationalize education, including Islamic education, as a way to inculcate the idea of nationhood among the population and to create an educated workforce that is able to satisfy the country's development needs. Standardization and nationalization of the education system also signify the extent to which the two governments are able to centralize its authority. In present-day Indonesia, two defining aspects characterize its national education, which also includes Islamic education: the rift between the MOEC and the MORA especially on the questions of "single roof education system" and madrasah funding; and local autonomy. At the heart of it is the cultural and ideological clash between MOEC and MORA that hinders efforts by the state to increase centralization of Islamic education, even during the highly centralized New Order era (1966–1998). The 1999 decentralization laws further accentuated and made formal the institutional chasm between the two ministries by devolving matters of national education to the local level while still retaining Islamic education within the ambit of the non-decentralized MORA. Meanwhile in Malaysia, national education in the post-independence era, including the management of Islamic education, is characterized by the increasing centralization of the Malay-Muslim dominated federal government especially from the early 1970s onward. The heightened presence of Malay/Islamic rhetoric since the early 1970s helped to establish more ideologically coherent state institutions that did not operate at cross-purpose (at both national and local levels), which contributed to the efficacy of the state in Malaysia in centralizing the national and Islamic education.

124 The results of the 2008 General Elections denied the incumbent coalition Barisan Nasional its customary two-third majority of the parliamentary seats, which it had continuously received since 1969, in large part contributed by the loss of many Malay urban and semi-urban seats to the opposition coalition. An Analysis of Malaysia's 12th General Election (Kuala Lumpur: Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute, 2012), p. 2.

3 The two verandahs of Mecca

Islamic education in Aceh and Kelantan

The province of Aceh in Indonesia and the state of Kelantan in Malaysia share a particularly strong Islamic identity and a long tradition of Islamic education. Both places are known as *Serambi Mekah* (Verandah of Mecca) due to their Islamic character and the important role both places play in the Southeast Asian region as major centres of Islamic learning. Traditional Islamic schools in Aceh are known as *dayah*, which are akin to *pesantren* in Java and *surau* in West Sumatra. In Kelantan, traditional Islamic schools are known as *pondok*. Both *dayah* and *pondok* are very similar in the sense that they are boarding schools established by local ulama, and are predominantly rural, self-sufficient, and heavily focused on the study of old Islamic manuscripts (*kitab*). The major difference between *dayah* and *pondok* is that currently the *dayah* system is thriving within the province of Aceh, especially since the beginning of the 2000s after the passing of the decentralization laws and the law to recognize the special status of Aceh, while the *pondok* system in Kelantan is fast fading into obscurity, dwarfed by the dominance of the modern Islamic school system in the state, which is mainly under the control of the federal government. This chapter argues that despite the two areas' shared legacy of Islamic learning, Aceh has been able to preserve the uniqueness of its Islamic educational tradition while Islamic education in Kelantan is slowly being "federalized" by the government in Putrajaya.

I posit that the localization and federalization of Islamic education in Aceh and Kelantan, respectively, is due to three factors that link directly to the core arguments of this book: the ideological makeup of state institutions that oversee Islamic education; patterns of Islamization in the society; and control of resources by the central government.

Both Aceh and Kelantan share similar historical legacies. Both were governed by a series of similar socio-political forces – sultans, local chieftains, ulama and colonial administrations – which began to modernize Islamic education in these two areas from the early 1900s. However, the socio-political dynamics that led to the modernization of Islamic education in these two areas also set them on different institutional paths. While institutions that oversee Islamic education in Aceh became more localized over the years especially after 2005 when the province gained the special autonomy status, their counterparts in Kelantan became

increasingly federalized from the late 1970s as the Ministry of Education absorbed more local Islamic schools into its jurisdiction.

Ministry officials at the educational office in Kelantan, who are locals, believe that the best way to improve the conditions of Islamic education at the local level is through the federal government. This points to what I term as "federalized institutional mindset": the local staff of the ministry possess strong regional pride in their unique local culture and traditions, but believe they need substantial assistance from the federal government in order to maintain and develop the state's Islamic education.[1] In contrast, in Aceh, post-2005 special autonomy status only serves to strengthen the already pervasive localized institutional mindset by empowering local state educational offices, including the officers of the provincial office of Ministry of Religious Affairs (*Kantor Wilayah Agama Aceh*), and to shape Islamic education in Aceh according to the objectives of *syariat* Islam in the province.

The wave of Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s affected states in Indonesia and Malaysia in markedly different ways. The New Order regime in Indonesia did not face an existential threat to its legitimacy similar to that posed by highly mobilized Islamic socio-political forces toward its counterpart in Malaysia. As such, the New Order regime did not feel the need to shape the Islamic discourse in its favour via the Islamic education system, which resulted in the preservation of Aceh's unique Islamic learning tradition. Unlike the Darul Islam rebellion in the 1950s, the Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, GAM) did not instrumentalize Islam as a rallying cry in its opposition against the Indonesian government; hence, there was little need to shape local Islamic discourse to favour its struggle.[2] In Malaysia, however, the engagement between the UMNO-led regime and the politically galvanized Islamic opposition, led by Pan-Malaysia Islamic Party (*Parti Islam Se-Malaysia*, PAS), which has governed Kelantan since 1959, resulted in the federal government's relentless attempts to gain control of Islamic schools in Kelantan.[3]

The localized institutional identity found in Aceh since independence was preserved during the highly centralized New Order era (1966–1998). The New Order regime in fact encouraged socio-cultural expressions of Islamic religiosity, which was further strengthened by the newfound autonomy since 2005. The increasing role played by Islam in every facet of the Acehnese society since the province assumed special autonomy status has helped the development of local Islamic education, especially the *dayah* education system. Meanwhile, Islamic education in Kelantan has always been a site of contestation between the

1 "Ku Li: Kelantan needs financial help from Putrajaya", Malaysiakini, 18 October 2016.

2 Edward Aspinall, Islam and Nation: Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2009), pp. 193–219.

3 UMNO managed to take advantage of the leadership crisis in the Kelantan's state legislature when the state of emergency was declared and PAS was expelled from Barisan Nasional. UMNO subsequently took over the reins of the state government in a fresh election in 1978. Harold Crouch, Government and Society in Malaysia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 106.

UMNO-controlled federal government and the PAS-controlled state government, with the federal government trying to subdue Islamic opposition by controlling Islamic education in the state. Taking control of Islamic schools, especially the People's Islamic schools (*Sekolah Agama Rakyat*, SAR) in Kelantan, has been one of the ways in which UMNO tried to win the hearts and minds of a constituency that has historically opposed the federal government on religious grounds.

At present, decentralization of governance affects Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia in different ways. In Indonesia, Islamic education falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Minister of Religious Affairs as stated in Article 3(2) of the Government Regulation 55/2007 (*Peraturan Pemerintah No. 55/2007*). Such control makes it very difficult for Islamic schools to receive funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture, the functions of which have been decentralized to the local level since 1999. On the other hand, Article 3 of the Malaysian constitution specifies the right of every state to administer its own Islamic affairs, which includes Islamic education. In practice, the federal government often overrides the states' constitutionally provided autonomy in administering Islamic education by virtue of financial superiority.

The main tool used by the federal government to increase its control over Islamic education in Kelantan has been distribution of resources. Islamic schools that are opposed to the federal government's control have to choose between shutting down due to financial problems or receiving assistance from the federal government and moderating their resistance. In Aceh, on the other hand, the special autonomy status has accorded the provincial government much more control over its own resources, and local Islamic education has benefitted handsomely from this arrangement. Special agency such as Dayah Education Development Agency (*Badan Pembinaan Pendidikan Dayah*, BPPD) was established so that *dayah* education could be developed with Aceh's own resources outside of the jurisdictions of both the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

In this chapter I will attempt to trace the formative trajectory of institutional identity of agencies dealing with Islamic education in Aceh and Kelantan, and why different institutional identities have managed to take root in these two places. By connecting the pre-independence socio-political dynamics with post-independence centre-periphery relations, I will explain why Islamic education in Aceh manages to maintain its local character while the federal government has been slowly taking control of Islamic education in Kelantan especially since the late 1970s.

The first half of this chapter starts with a historical background of Islamic education in Aceh, followed by a socio-political analysis that explains how Islamic education in the province has developed a localized identity since the early 1900s. The section on Aceh ends by showing how the localized Islamic educational identity engaged with the central government in Jakarta, and how this local identity was later bolstered by Aceh's post-2005 special autonomy status. The second half of the chapter looks at the historical background of

Islamic education in Kelantan, followed by an analysis of socio-political root causes that have shaped the characteristics of Islamic education in the state since the early 1900s. The section on Kelantan closes with a discussion of the increasing hegemony of the federal government on present-day Islamic education in Kelantan by looking at how various local Islamic educational actors such as officers in the state educational office, Kelantan Islamic Foundation (*Yayasan Islam Kelantan*, YIK) and school principals perceive the pervasive role of federal government in the state's Islamic educational affairs.

Aceh: localization of Islamic education system

History of Islamic education in Aceh

The history of Islamic education in Aceh is divided into four epochs: the Islamic sultanate era (pre-1873), the Dutch–Aceh war (1873–1903), the Dutch and Japanese occupation (1903–1945), and the post-independence era (1945–present day).[4] The traditional Islamic schools in Aceh are known as *dayah*. The word *dayah* is thought to derive from the Arabic word *zawiyah*, which literally means corner.[5] A *dayah* is established by an ulama, known in Aceh as Teungku, and typically consists of a space for learning and a living quarter to accommodate students from all across the territory and sometimes, beyond. It is said that the first *dayah* in Aceh was founded by a nobleman cum ulama named Teungku Cik Cot Kala (Muhammad Amin) of the old Kingdom of Perlak in the tenth century.[6] The curriculum varies from one *dayah* to another, depending on the perceived expertise of its *Teungku*. During the golden age of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607–1636) subjects such as philosophy, politics, history, health and agriculture were reputedly taught by forty-four *syeikh* (another term for *Teungku*), in addition to the normal fare of Islamic subjects such as Arabic language, *tafsir* (Quranic exegesis), *tauhid* (the doctrine of one-ness of God), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and others.[7] The level of education in the traditional *dayah* was roughly equivalent to the present-day senior high school. It was preceded by *meunasah* (primary level) and *rangkang* (junior high school level). There were also *Dayah Teungku Chik* that served as the training centres for future *Teungku*

4 M. Hasbi Amiruddin, The Response of Ulama Dayah to the Modernization of the Islamic Law in Aceh. M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1994, p. 5.

5 The corner in educational context originally refers to the corner of Mesjid Madinah (Medina Mosque), where Prophet Muhammad delivered his teachings during the early years of Islam. Later on, zawiyah came to be known as the religious centre of tassawuf (Islamic mysticism) adherents and other spiritual seekers. M. Hasbi Amiruddin, "Dayah: Lembaga Pendidikan Tertua Masyarakat Aceh" in T.H. Thalhas and Choirul Fuad Yusuf, eds., Pendidikan & Syariat Islam di Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (Jakarta: Gelora Pase, 1997), p. 15.

6 Dayah Cot Kala is also thought to be the first Islamic learning centre in Southeast Asia. A. Hasjmy. Bunga Rampai Revolusi Dari Tanah Aceh (Jakarta: Penerbit Bulan Bintang, 1978), pp. 55–56.

7 Amiruddin, Dayah, p. 23.

Chik (major ulama).[8] Aceh was a well-known centre for Islamic learning in the region during this time (pre-1873) and produced scholars such as Hamzah Fansuri, Syamsuddin Sumatrani, Nuruddin ar-Raniry and Abdurrauf Singkili (Tengku Syiahkuala). Thriving *dayah* education was part and parcel of this vibrant intellectual environment.

The Dutch–Aceh war lasted for thirty years, from 1873 to 1903, and swiftly destroyed most of the achievements and progress made by the *dayah* in the preceding few hundred years. Many ulama died fighting in what they believed to be a holy war (*Prang Sabil*) against the Dutch infidels; and with their demise the *dayah* they led also ended up in ruin. *Dayah*, like their Javanese counterpart *pesantren*, are dependent on the ulama's influence and leadership. Once the ulama died, the school was likely to disintegrate; if there was no designated successor, the school would be divided up among several heirs.[9] The war gave rise to a chaotic socio-political situation, with power struggles intensifying among the traditional elites and security conditions worsening for everyone, especially the common folk. Travelling far from one's village (*gampong*) to study in a *dayah* was no longer safe; people armed themselves to the teeth just to go to the market.[10] Mahmud Yunus, a prominent reformist ulama and a historian of Islamic education in Indonesia, refers to the resistance against the invading Dutch forces as *masa kemunduran* (an age of reversal).[11] Politically, the Dutch struck deals with various *uleebalang* called *korte verklaringen* (short contracts) as a way to secure more territory and divide the traditional elites from the ulama.[12] The sultanate was finally abolished in 1903. The effect of the war effectively left only two influential socio-political groups standing amidst the dust and rubbles: the traditional elite represented by the *uleebalang* and the religious elite represented by the ulama.

When the war ended around 1904 and conditions in Aceh began to stabilize, the few remaining ulama started to re-establish *dayah* to replace the ones lost during the conflict. Nevertheless, they met numerous obstacles thrown up by the Dutch colonial administration, particularly the requirement to have a legal permit to build a school, limits on what could be taught in classrooms, close supervision of Islamic teachers, and a provision for an explanation letter for every out-of-the-area

8 Hasjmy, Bunga Rampai Revolusi, pp. 66–68.

9 Karel Steenbrink, Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam Dalam Kurun Moderen (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986), p. 116.

10 Allegedly, according to the people who lived through this tumultuous time, just going to the market alone one had to bring bedil (gun) and tombak (spear), and carry two or three kelewang (a type of sword) and rencong (Acehnese dagger) on one's waist. Mahmud Yunus, Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia (Jakarta: PT Mahmud Yunus Wadzurriyah, 2008), p. 192.

11 Ibid, pp. 191–193.

12 Ismail Yakub, "Gambaran Pendidikan di Aceh Sesudah Perang Aceh-Belanda Sampai Sekarang" in Ismail Suny, ed. Bunga Rampai Tentang Aceh (Jakarta: Penerbit Bhratara Karya Aksara, 1980), p. 328.

student who would then have to report to the authorities every three months.[13] During the early 1900s, the colonial government built Dutch schools in Aceh as a means to train civil servants to staff the bureaucracy and assist in governance, which mainly catered to the sons of *uleebalang* and the wealthy due to their prohibitive fees and discriminatory policies against non-elite natives. The colonial administration also built people's schools (*sekolah rakyat*) in various districts to provide rudimentary education for the village folks. These public schools were unpopular with the Acehnese who viewed them with deep suspicion; various ulama exhorted that it was *haram* (religiously prohibited) for parents to send their children to these schools.[14] Despite the resistance from the populace, by 1936 there were 321 public schools across Aceh with 33,553 students (9,871 of them were female).[15]

Meanwhile, the problem with *dayah* education at this time was that *dayah* only offered religious subjects. Many traditional ulama considered learning general subjects such as science, mathematics, geography and other non-Islamic knowledge to be *haram*, as was attending public schools built by the Dutch. Reformist ulama, who became active in Aceh in the early 1900s, on the other hand, believed that the only way for Muslims to progress and to resist the colonial power was to seriously revamp the Islamic education system by modernizing its pedagogy and infrastructure, and most importantly, by incorporating general subjects into its curriculum. This new mood was part of a broader trend already happening in other areas of the Netherlands East Indies that involved the spread of reformist Islamic ideas brought by Muhammadiyah activists from Java and West Sumatra. In fact, some of the reformist ulama in Aceh in the 1930s and 1940s were graduates of the Muhammadiyah-influenced *Thawalib* schools in West Sumatra.[16] These ulama came back to Aceh and along with other like-minded religious leaders and *uleebalang* started the madrasah system that incorporated both Islamic and general subjects. Nonetheless, Dutch colonial authorities only allowed Arabic (reading and writing), *tauhid* (one-ness of God) and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) to be taught in

13 Hasjmy, Bunga Rampai Revolusi, pp. 88–92; Ismuha, "Ulama Aceh dalam perspektif sejarah" in Taufik Abdullah, ed. Agama dan Perubahan Sosial (Jakarta: CV Rajawali, 1983), p. 55.

14 During this time, the fee for madrasah was about 0.25 guilden per month, while the fee for the Dutch schools was at least 2.50 guilden. There was no set fee for attending a dayah since it was based on donation and the students' ability to pay, either monetarily or in-kind. M. Isa Sulaiman. Sejarah Aceh: Sebuah Gugatan Terhadap Tradisi (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1997), p. 41. Also see Yakub, "Gambaran Pendidikan di Aceh", pp. 328–333.

15 The major reason for the high number of students in public schools despite the resistance from the populace was that the colonial government in Aceh ordered the uleebalang to force parents to send their children to the public schools under the threat of fines or forced labor (corvée). Sejarah Pendidikan Daerah Istimewa Aceh (Jakarta: Proyek Inventarisasi dan Dokumentasi Kebudayaan, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1984), pp. 40–45.

16 Yakub, "Gambaran Pendidikan di Aceh", p. 335; Yunus, Sejarah Pendidikan Islam, p. 197.

madrasah, which meant that religious content in a madrasah curriculum was inferior to that found in *dayah*.[17]

A member of the Acehnese royal family, Tuanku Raja Keumala, opened the first madrasah in Aceh, Al Khairiyah, in 1916 in Kutaraja. The growth of madrasah, in conjunction with the rising influence of the reformist ulama, really accelerated in the late 1920s and into the World War II years. Several reformist Islamic foundations came into existence, such as *Madrasah Perguruan Islam* in Seulimun, *Jamiah Al-Islam Wal Irsyad Al-Arabia* in Lhokseumawe, and *Al-Muslim* in Mantang Glumpang Dua, which subsequently established madrasahs in their local areas. By 1936 there were almost 100 madrasahs throughout Aceh.[18] While there was tension between the traditionalist and reformist ulama, similar to other parts of the Netherlands East Indies, the conflict did not yet take a violent form.[19] Both forms of Islamic education, *dayah* and madrasah, managed to co-exist rather peacefully despite their theological differences. These differences were finally resolved in a meeting (*musyawarah*) convened in Banda Aceh in October 1936 that comprised both groups of ulama and reform-minded *uleebalang*. The *musyawarah* discussed and debated three major theological issues: (1) Can Muslims learn knowledge such as science and other bases of modern progress? (2) Can Islamic schools incorporate these subjects in their curricula? (3) Can female students learn from male teachers in a safe and controlled environment? By the end of the meeting all parties unanimously agreed that Muslims could learn non-religious subjects, Islamic schools should be allowed to teach these subjects, and that there was no proscription in Islam that prevented girls from learning from male teachers.[20] The result of the *musyawarah* led to the rapid growth of madrasah education in the 1930s and 1940s.

The effort to modernize Islamic education in Aceh took another monumental step on 5 May 1939 when a group of reformist ulama including Daud Beureueh, Nur Al-Ibrahimi, and Ismail Yakub formed *Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh* (PUSA), or All-Aceh Association of Ulama. PUSA's founding objectives were three-fold: to spread, uphold and defend Islam; to resolve differences between the ulama concerning Islamic laws; and to improve and streamline Islamic

17 In order to burnish the religious content in their curriculum, madrasah in Aceh went so far as to rename general subjects in Arabic. For example, Geography was renamed Al-Joghrafiyah, General History as At-Tarikh Al'am, Dutch language as Al Lughah Al Hulandiyah, English language as Al Lughah Al Injeliziyah, and Mathematics as Ilmu Hisab. Ismuha, Ulama Aceh, p. 23; Baihaqi, "Ulama dan Madrasah Aceh" in Taufik Abdullah, ed. Agama dan Perubahan Sosial (Jakarta: CV Rajawali, 1983), p. 167.

18 Sejarah Pendidikan Daerah Istimewa Aceh, pp. 58–65.

19 Public debates were held by several uleebalang in their districts between the traditionalist and reformist ulama with the intention to ameliorate the ill feeling harboured by the two groups and the hope that both would somehow come to an understanding. The typical result of these public debates was that the two groups of ulama simply agreed to disagree without resolving their theological differences. Sulaiman, Sejarah Aceh, pp. 66–69.

20 Hasjmy, Bunga Rampai Revolusi, pp. 93–95; Yakub, "Gambaran Pendidikan di Aceh", pp. 349–351.

education in Aceh.[21] The new uniform curriculum proposed by PUSA – in this case, for junior and senior high school – consisted of fourteen Islamic subjects and ten general subjects, with the weekly hours broken down into roughly 70 per cent for the former and 30 per cent for the latter.[22] The *Normal Islam Instituut*, a modern tertiary institution, was established in December 1939 in Bireuen to absorb madrasah graduates and supply teachers for the newly revamped and modern Islamic education system. The Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945 saw heightened fervency in PUSA's activity and its growing influence as most of its leaders collaborated with the Japanese military government and began to prepare against the return of the Dutch. The Japanese military government formed the Islamic Council for Assisting Prosperity in Greater East Asia (*Majlis Agama Islam Untuk Bantuan Kemakmuran Asia Timur Raya*, Maibkatra) in Kutaraja in 1943, which was subsequently dominated by the ulama from PUSA. Maibkatra served as a central hub to funnel resources, namely financial assistance, to Islamic schools and mosques.[23] By the end of 1946, there were almost 200 madrasahs across Aceh serving the needs of tens of thousands of students.[24]

The years immediately following Indonesia's independence on 17 August 1945 were a time when PUSA further entrenched its dominance over the Acehnese society: first, by almost wiping out its political rival, the *uleebalang*, in a violent social revolution;[25] and second, by building on the nascent Islamic bureaucracy previously established by the Japanese military government. The Islamic court (*Mahkamah Agama*), also known as *Syukyo Hooin*, which functioned as the agency that managed all Islamic affairs during the Japanese occupation period, was renamed after independence as Office of Religion (*Pejabat Agama*) with Islamic Education (*Pendidikan Agama*) as one of its divisions.[26] In 1946, one of the first acts of the *Pejabat Agama* was to take over 180 private madrasah along with about 36,000 of their students and fold them into the public school system. These madrasah were subsequently renamed *Sekolah Rendah*

21 Yunus, Sejarah Pendidikan Aceh, pp. 195–196.

22 An interesting aspect of this new curriculum was its national orientation that included subjects of Bahasa Indonesia (two hours per week for all five levels) and Indonesian History (one hour per week for levels 4 and 5). Amiruddin and Wildan, "Pelaksanaan Pendidikan di Kabupaten Bireuen: Tinjauan Historis terhadap Al Muslim Peusangan" in T.H. Thalhas and Choirul Fuad Yusuf, eds., Pendidikan & Syariat Islam di Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (Jakarta: Gelora Pase, 1997), p. 33.

23 Sulaiman, Sejarah Aceh, pp. 93–113.

24 Hasjmy, Bunga Rampai Revolusi, p. 106. The Japanese military administration kept the Dutch public school structure intact while at the same forced all private schools, namely dayah, to become public. Sejarah Revolusi Kemerdekaan Daerah Istimewa Aceh (Jakarta: Proyek Inventarisasi dan Dokumentasi Kebudayaan Daerah, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1983), pp. 24–30.

25 Anthony Reid. The Blood of the People: The Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 185–217; Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, The Republican Revolt: A Study of the Acehnese Rebellion (Singapore: ISEAS, 1985), pp. 23–26.

26 Ismuha, Ulama Aceh, p. 91.

Islam (SRI) for *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (primary schools), *Sekolah Menengah Islam* (SMI) for *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (junior high schools), and *Sekolah Menengah Islam Atas* (SMIA) for *Madrasah Aliyah* (senior high schools).[27] Meanwhile, by 1952, there were 445 non-religious public schools (primary and secondary levels) with 90,644 students, far outnumbering madrasah and *dayah* in the province.[28] It was not known if *Pejabat Agama* tried to inject more Islamic content in the curriculum for non-religious public schools since Law no. 4/1950 on National Education System made religious education non-compulsory. Nonetheless, the early years of independence saw the provincial government in Aceh beginning to put its localized stamp on Islamic education in the province.

Between the years 1950 to 1956, the province of Aceh was merged into the province of North Sumatra, a move that resulted in the *Darul Islam* rebellion against the central government in 1953. The *Darul Islam* rebellion was a reaction against the increased centralization of the Sukarno's regime that sapped away Aceh's autonomy including in the field of education, which will be discussed in the next section. The failure of the central government to pass the Jakarta Charter (*Piagam Jakarta*), which obligated all Muslims in the country to abide by *syariah* laws, and the central government's efforts to hamper Aceh's aspiration to implement Islamic laws in the province, also played a significant role in sparking the *Darul Islam* rebellion.[29] The military governor of Aceh during this time, Daud Beureueh, lamented "Acehnese are disappointed to see the behavior of the leaders in central government who obstruct the implementation of Islamic teachings in the life of the society and the nation".[30] At the end of the conflict, in May 1959, Aceh was given the status of Special Province through a decree by the central government that allowed it broad autonomy in the areas of religious affairs, education, and local customs.[31]

During Suharto's New Order period (1966 to 1998), local reformers who wanted to use the autonomy provided by the Special Province status to strengthen Islamic education in Aceh had to contend with the centralizing tendency of the regime in Jakarta, which had a development-focused agenda. Law No. 5/1974 on the Principles of Regional Government Administration formally consolidated the central government's control over the provinces, which included centralized appointment of governors and *bupati*. Attempts by Islamic education advocates in Aceh to subvert a central ruling banning the wearing of

27 Sejarah Pendidikan Daerah Istimewa Aceh, p. 180; Hasjmy, Bunga Rampai Revolusi, pp. 106–108.

28 Sejarah Daerah Propinsi Daerah Istimewa Aceh (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1991), p. 230.

29 Hardi, Daerah Istimewa Aceh: Latar Belakang Politik dan Masa Depannya (Jakarta: Cita Panca Serangkai, 1993), pp. 111–114.

30 Original excerpt: "Rakyat Aceh kecewa melihat sikap pemimpin Pemerintah Pusat yang menghalang-halangi terlaksananya ajaran-ajaran Islam dalam kehidupan masyarakat dan Negara". Quoted in ibid., p. 112.

31 Ismuha, Ulama Aceh, pp. 95–96.

jilbab (head-covering) in schools were rebuffed by MOEC.[32] Meanwhile, *dayah* education did not remain static though the *dayahs'* willingness to incorporate general subjects into their traditional curriculum came much later than the madrasah. Traditionalist ulama who hitherto had organized themselves under *Pergerakan Tarbiyah Islamijah* (PERTI), or Movement for Islamic Education, a rival organization to the reformist PUSA, had decided to modernize the *dayah* curriculum in the 1970s. In 1974, major leaders of PERTI in Aceh Besar formed the Educational Institute for Integrated Dayah Inshafuddin (*Lembaga Pendidikan Dayah Terpadu Inshafuddin*) to facilitate the modernization of *dayah* education in Aceh, which two years later was managed by the newly created Foundation for Inshafuddin Development (*Yayasan Pembina Inshafuddin*).[33] By 1994, the number of *dayah* in Aceh almost doubled from 243 in 1975 to 470 with 77,500 students and 2,000 teachers.[34] In short, Islamic education in Aceh – madrasah and *dayah* systems – was rapidly becoming modernized under the New Order to keep up with the developmentalist objectives of the regime.

The post-authoritarian period (1998 to the present) saw a deepening of local control of Islamic education in Aceh. First, came the enactment of the decentralization laws in 1999, which devolved educational matters to the levels of province and district. The national legislature also passed the 1999 Law on Special Administration of the Special Province of Aceh (*Undang-Undang Nomor 4/1999 tentang Penyelanggaraan Keistimewaan Propinsi Daerah Istimewa Aceh*) that affirmed Aceh's autonomy in administering its own educational affairs (Article 3). The 2006 Law on Governance of Aceh (*Undang-undang No 11/2006 tentang Pemerintahan Aceh*) and Qanun Aceh No 5/2008 on the Administration of Education (*Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan*) further clarified and broadened Aceh's autonomy by specifying that the functions of provincial and district governments in administering matters of education to be in line with local customs and Islamic values. The provincial government of Aceh also streamlined the curriculum for *dayah* in 2010 by passing the Governor's Regulation Number 47/2010 (*Peraturan Gubernur Aceh Nomor 47/2010*), which centralized the management and supervision of *dayah* under the authority of Dayah Education Development Agency (BPPD).

The Islamic education system in present-day Aceh is built upon a web of interrelated and overlapping jurisdiction and authority of various national, provincial and district agencies. The provincial office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (*Kanwil Agama*) and the Local Offices for Education (*Dinas Pendidikan*)

32 Tim Kell, The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1980–1992 (Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur: Equinox Publishing, 2010), p. 56. See also Hardi, Daerah Istimewa Aceh, pp. 181–183.

33 Dayah that incorporate general subjects in their curriculum are called Dayah Inshafuddin, while traditional dayah are called Dayah Salafiyah. For a brief organizational history of Dayah Inshafuddin, refer to: http://dayahinshafuddin.wordpress.com/organisasi/sejarah/ (accessed on 3 July 2014).

34 Aceh: Penampilan Pembangunan, 1993/1994 (Banda Aceh: Kantor Gubernur Provinsi Daerah Istimewa Aceh, 1994), p. 90.

represent national educational interests. *Kanwil Agama* is in charge of the administration of madrasah curriculum and the teaching of Islamic Studies (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*) in national public schools (*sekolah negeri*), while *Dinas Pendidikan* deals with the management of general education in all schools that belong to the national education system. The Article 16 of Qanun No 5/2008 also endowed *Dinas Pendidikan* offices at the district (*kabupaten*) and city (*kota*) levels with autonomous privileges such as setting their own strategic plans and implementing the provincial and national educational standards as long as they do not contradict the provincial and national objectives. On the provincial level, there is the Dayah Education Development Agency (BPPD) that manages the affairs of all the *dayah*s in the province, which includes implementing detailed standards and guidelines for traditional *dayah* curriculum and providing financial assistance for *dayah* infrastructure and teachers' training. Before BPPD was established in 2008, the management of *dayah* was placed under the aegis of *Dinas Pendidikan*. Aceh's Council of Education (*Majelis Pendidikan Daerah*, MPD) was established as part of the provincial government's Syariah Agency (*Dinas Syariat Islam*), the overarching purpose of which is to imbue every aspect of Acehnese life with the spirit of Islam. There is also the role of the Ulama Council (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama*, MPU), through its education commission, to ensure a homogenized interpretation of major theological issues in Islamic education in Aceh. In sum, the overall picture of Islamic education in present-day Aceh shows it to be thriving and firmly ensconced within the highly autonomous jurisdiction of the local governance.

The socio-political roots of present-day Islamic education in Aceh

Dutch colonial rule in Aceh had much to do with how today's Islamic education system in Aceh came to be. In fact, the late colonial period (late 1800s to 1945) was a pivotal time that set up the ulama group for their eventual dominance of state institutions and the reification of local Islamic identity in the post-independence years. Colony-wide, when it came to handling the threat of

Table 3.1 Number of schools (public and private) in Aceh as of 2015[35]

	Number of schools	*Number of students*
Madrasah Ibtidaiyah	1,086	100,099
Madrasah Tsanawiyah	391	82,977
Madrasah Aliyah	261	42,846
Dayah	944	142,600
General public schools	5,113	1,150,000
Total	7,795	1,518,522

35 Kantor Wilayah Provinsi Aceh, Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia: http://aceh.kemenag.go.id/index.php?a=artikel&id=25483&t=241 (accessed on 13 February 2016); Neraca Pendidikan Daerah 2015, Provinsi Aceh: http://npd.data.kemdikbud.go.id/index.php/chome/proses/ (accessed on 12 April 2016).

political Islam, the Dutch policy in the Netherlands East Indies was to play off the Islamic groups and the traditional elites against each other, and Aceh was no exception. This strategy was the brainchild of a prominent Dutch Islamologist, C. Snouck Hurgronje. Its main thrust was to cultivate closer relationship with the traditional elites while isolating influential religious leaders from the society.[36] The traditional elites were seen as more amenable to the Dutch way of thinking and thus recruited into the colonial bureaucracy to exercise indirect rule over the population. Snouck saw the deadly potential of Islam being instrumentalized to organize political resistance against colonial rule and therefore advised the colonial government to aim at the weakening of ties between religious leaders and the people while at the same time empowering the traditional elites.[37] In the case of Aceh, this meant supporting the *uleebalang*, who were the local traditional elites, and pitting them against the emasculated ulama.

Despite the sharp fragmentation within the Acehnese society during the war against the Dutch, major social groups such as the sultanate, *uleebalang*, ulama and the villagers shared a view that Islam was an integral part of their social identity, though how they perceived the role of Islam in their lives varied from one another.[38] The Dutch invading army forced out the sultanate when it took over Kutaraja in 1874, which effectively left two socio-political groups, the *uleebalang* and the ulama, to compete for influence over the population. While there was a clear divide-and-rule policy from the Dutch, there was no similarly concrete effort to manage Islamic affairs in Aceh other than to outsource them to the *uleebalang*, who were now part of colonial indirect rule. The assumption, put forth by Snouck, was that Islam and *adat* (customs) were inseparable inasmuch as the ignorant villagers could not tell the difference between them, and the *uleebalang* as the traditional elites with authority over *adat* were therefore well positioned to be the sole authority for religion and customs.[39]

Snouck's analysis was of course off the mark as many villagers did not see most *uleebalang* as legitimate traditional authorities, much less as religious authorities; they would not have been able to reign supreme without their heavily-armed retainers.[40] Ulama, on the other hand, encouraged the villagers, mainly men, to envision themselves as part of a social group that was much larger and less confining than their limited *gampong* milieu. Ulama did not necessarily wield strong influence in the particular locality where they resided but what they lacked in traditional authority was more than made up by what

36 Eric Morris, Islam and Politics in Aceh: A Study of Center-Periphery Relations in Indonesia. Ph.D Diss., Cornell University, 1983, pp. 61–75.

37 Harry Benda, The Crescent and the Rising Sun (The Hague & Bandung: W. van Hoeve Ltd., 1958), p. 25; Daniel Lev, Islamic Courts in Indonesia (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), p. 10; M.B. Hooker, Adat Law in Modern Indonesia (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 97.

38 Siegel, James, The Rope of God (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 69.

39 Ibid., p. 70.

40 Reid, The Blood of the People, p. 13.

they could offer in abundance: the attractive possibility to escape the confining traditional norms and the chance to become part of the much larger and more egalitarian Muslim *ummah*. In the words of James Siegel:

> The meudagang [to study in a dayah] took the students out of one cultural world, the village, where men were linked as kinsmen, and left them in another, the school, where men acted as Muslims and not kinsmen. The experience of two radically different cultural worlds, which were not linked by the normal expectations of the life cycle, led the ulama to stress that man's nature could be the basis of unity between men even when sociological distinctions separated them. In the absence of cultural bonds between men, the ulama formulated ideas out of their own experience which could tie men together. Islamic ideas provided an idiom by which unity despite social distinction could be expressed.[41]

It was this idea of universalism in Islam that allowed the ulama to break the already weak feudal bond between the villagers and the *uleebalang* and further entrench their own authority in the hitherto atomized Acehnese society.

The transcendental Islamic identity first engendered by the *meudagang* ritual was further reinforced by the thirty-year war against the Dutch. *Dayah* ulama, led by Tengku Cik di Tiro, put an indelible Islamic stamp on the struggle, by casting it as a holy war (*Prang Sabil*). The Dutch, and by extension, most of the *uleebalang*, were seen as infidels by the resisting forces.[42] While there were some *uleebalang* who cooperated with the ulama in the resistance movement, most decided early on to surrender or collaborate with the Dutch as a means to increase their influence and wealth. It was during this tumultuous period that Aceh's red-hot Islamic identity was forged and strengthened. Islam was not only used as a rallying war cry but also was seen as the basis upon which a new Acehnese society must be built and developed. The process of "othering" took place as those who were deemed to be not fitting into this definition of "Acehnese Muslim" were ostracized.

> The ulama were concerned not only with resisting the invaders but also with Islamizing society. These two endeavours were indissolubly linked. In both of them, the main rivals were the *uleebalang*, whom the ulama castigated not only for collaborating with the Dutch but also for their impiety.[43]

The effort to preserve and improve Islamic education in Aceh was therefore inextricably linked to the Islamization of society in general. Further intensifying

41 Siegel, The Rope of God, pp. 57–58.

42 Reid, The Blood of the People, pp. 7–11; Tengku Ibrahim Alfian, "Aceh and the Holy War (Prang Sabil)" in Anthony Reid, ed., Verandah of Violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem (Singapore: Singapore University Press and University of Washington Press, 2006), p. 111.

43 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 27.

this religious bifurcation of Acehnese identity was that most *uleebalang* chose to support the modern secular schools built by the Dutch while the ulama retreated into their *dayah* and madrasah. Some *uleebalang* did join up with the reformist ulama to improve Islamic education but the dividing line in the educational sphere was clearly demarcated between the three contending groups.[44] The sharp difference in educational outlook that saw the *uleebalang* favouring the secular education promoted by the Dutch ultimately signified the complete domination of Islamic education by the ulama, giving them unfettered rein to shape it to their liking. Islamic education, and writ large, Islamic identity, during the post Dutch–Aceh war years were firmly under the control of the ulama and effectively decoupled from their ties to the traditional elites, namely the *uleebalang* and the vanquished sultanate. As noted before, the Dutch did try to intervene in the madrasah curriculum by limiting its religious content, but the attempt did not have any negative impact on the public's perception of madrasah's Islamic identity.

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Dutch schools, as previously mentioned, were exclusively limited to the sons of *uleebalang* for the purpose of training staff for the colonial bureaucracy, while the more numerous and rudimentary *Sekolah Rakyat* were built for the Acehnese in general, with attendance being made compulsory through the threat of fines and forced labour.[45] Nevertheless, Islamic schools – *dayah* and madrasah – remained highly popular with the people especially in light of the reinforced Islamic identity. The role of education as one of the core components of the new Acehnese Islamic identity was best exemplified in the three main objectives of PUSA's first meeting in May 1939: (1) uniting to uphold and defend Islam; (2) unifying religious differences and explaining religious laws to the public; and (3) developing a plan to improve Islamic education in all Islamic schools in Aceh.[46] The target of this reform was solely directed at private madrasah with the intention of streamlining their curriculum, improving their infrastructure, creating a higher institution of learning to absorb madrasah graduates and a teachers' training college (*Normal Islam Instituut*) to train madrasah teachers in modern pedagogy, and also providing graduates with career opportunities on a par with their Dutch school counterparts.

What were the factors that explain the success of the reformist ulama in pursuing their agenda, namely modernizing Islamic education in Aceh, and overcoming opposition from traditionalist ulama and the *uleebalang*? The major reformist ulama who founded PUSA such as Teungku Daud Beureueh, Teungku Abdul Rahman Meunasah Meucap and Teungku Ismail Yakub were homegrown and highly attuned to local sensibilities when spreading their ideas; in

44 Two influential uleebalangs, Teuku Chiek Peusangan in North Aceh and Teuku Panglima Polem in Aceh Besar, did actively support Islamic education reform. Hamdiah Latif, Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (PUSA): Its Contributions to Educational Reforms in Aceh. MA thesis, McGill University, 1992, p. 28.

45 Sejarah Pendidikan Daerah Istimewa Aceh, pp. 40–45.

46 Yakub, "Gambaran Pendidikan di Aceh", p. 354.

addition, they were well-connected with each other geographically and through their past studies, which allowed them an organizing advantage.[47] Traditionalist ulama, who owned and ran many of the *dayah*, resisted the educational reforms put forth by PUSA. During the post Dutch–Aceh war years, traditionalist ulamas started to rebuild many of the *dayah* that were destroyed by the conflict but were not able to bring the *dayah* system back to its old glory.[48] The growing influence of the reformist ulama and the expansion of madrasah system with its modern pedagogy had been chipping away at the traditionalist ulama' religious authority and the dwindling popularity of *dayah* under their control. In any case, the Islamic reform movement had to bear a clear Aceh imprint in order to succeed as evidenced by the failure of the reformist Muhammadiyah to gain a foothold in Aceh.[49]

Arguably, there are two reasons why the traditionalist ulama were ineffective in resisting the growing influence of the reformist ulama in the 1930s and 1940s. First, though the traditionalist ulama did manage to organize themselves in a counter-movement, namely the Association for Islamic Education (PERTI), which was established in the early 1940s, it was geographically limited to their strongholds in the south and west coast of Aceh; moreover, its major players mostly originated in West Sumatra and were therefore perceived as interlopers.[50] Second, there was no deep customary link between the traditionalist ulama and the *uleebalang*, who might have offered support in facing the reformist challenge. The reinforced Islamic identity that stemmed from the *Prang Sabil* period and the colonial divide-and-rule policy effectively ensured the place of the *uleebalang* on the opposite side of the religious divide. The *uleebalang* were never seen as the defender of Islam even before the arrival of the Dutch, and colonial rule had only made them lesser Muslims in the eyes of the ulama, both traditionalists and reformists. Also, as mentioned before, most *uleebalang* had thrown their support behind secular education offered by the Dutch while the few religiously inclined ones decided to join forces with the reformist ulama instead to reform Islamic education.[51] By the 1940s, an alliance, even one of convenience, between the traditionalist ulama and the *uleebalang* was not possible.

The challenge from the *uleebalang* took the form of a political struggle during the years preceding World War II. Though they were officially empowered by

47 Ismuha, Ulama Aceh, pp. 55–65.

48 Sejarah Pendidikan Daerah Istimewa Aceh, pp. 20–23.

49 The reformist movement was locally developed, as opposed to being imposed from the outside, which was instrumental in its success. Morris, Islam and Politics in Aceh, pp. 77–78. See also Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, Pemberontakan Kaum Republik: Kasus Darul Islam Aceh (Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1990), p. 20.

50 Michael Feener, Shari'a and Social Engineering: The Implementation of Islamic Law in Contemporary Aceh, Indonesia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 34, 75; Steenbrink, Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah, p. 63; Alfian, The Ulama in Acehnese Society: A Preliminary Observation (Banda Aceh: Pusat Latihan Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial, 1975), p. 9.

51 Teuku Chik M. Johan Alamsyah, the uleebalang in Sigli, was chosen as the "protector" of the newly-formed PUSA. There were other uleebalangs involved as well such as Teuku Panglima Polem and Teuku Chik Peusangan. Sulaiman, Sejarah Aceh, p. 46.

the Dutch, most of the *uleebalang* ruled over people who did not see them as the sole native authority. It was the ulama who enjoyed the support and trust of the population, particularly due to their high status as learned Islamic scholars and community leaders. During this time, reformist ulama travelled the region, going from one *gampong* to another, to disseminate their ideas through public preaching (*tabligh*); these forums were also used to refute theological beliefs long held by traditionalist ulama.[52] The speaking tours were not only about popularizing new religious ideas; more importantly, they were the means to further sow the seeds of the Acehnese Islamic consciousness in society at large, which stood in stark contrast to the status quo practised by the Dutch and the *uleebalang*.

The political threat posed by the reformist ulama, however, did not go unnoticed by the *uleebalang* who resorted to legal means to suppress the influence of the reformist ulama, particularly by issuing official bans against them speaking and teaching in their territory throughout the 1930s and 1940s.[53] Some *uleebalang* also accused their counterparts who supported the reformist ulama of using PUSA to re-establish the sultanate, so much so as mocking PUSA as *Persatuan Untuk Sulthanat Aceh* (Association for Acehnese Sultanate).[54] Ultimately, the unequal rivalry between the *uleebalang* and the reformist ulama simply pointed to the glaring weakness of *uleebalang* as a group: their divisiveness, petty squabbles, and inability to organize among themselves against a common threat.[55] By the mid-1940s, it was apparent that the two incongruent normative conceptions of an Acehnese society that had developed in the preceding decades – one based on Islam as represented by PUSA and the other on *adat*, promoted by the Dutch and of which the overarching symbol was the *uleebalang* – were no longer able to co-exist. The Japanese interregnum threw the two opposing worldviews into an even sharper relief as PUSA leaders collaborated with the Japanese military administration to further entrench their influence while most *uleebalang*, now politically out of favour, still supported the Dutch and harboured hope for their eventual return. The conflict finally reached its bloody apogee in the violent *Revolusi Sosial* in 1946 when most of the *uleebalang* were wiped out. The resultant power vacuum from the purge allowed PUSA to consolidate its control of Aceh and govern uncontested for a time.[56]

Aceh-nization of Islamic education in the post-independence years

In explaining the nature of post-independence Islamic education in Aceh, there is a clear linkage between the previously mentioned historical socio-political

52 Some of these long-held traditional beliefs were the exclusion of general subjects from Islamic curriculum and the prohibition of female students being taught by male teachers or vice versa. Morris, Islam and Politics in Aceh, pp. 82–83.

53 Sulaiman, Sejarah Aceh, pp. 62–63; Morris, Islam and Politics in Aceh, pp. 71–72.

54 Ismuha, Ulama Aceh, p. 14.

55 Reid, The Blood of the People, p. 16.

56 Ibid., pp. 204–211.

dynamics and the post-1949 relations between the province and the central government in Jakarta. The late colonial period (late 1800s to 1945) became a pivotal period that precipitated the formation of localized Acehnese Islamic identity that has persisted until today. This localized Islamic identity would remain intact in the post-independence years as Aceh engaged in the struggle against a central government that was bent on tightening its grip over its territory. The post-independence period can be divided into three eras: the Parliamentary and Guided Democracy era (pre-1966), the New Order era (1966 to 1998), and the *Reformasi* era (1998 to present time). While these three eras offer starkly different modes of governance, the Acehnese Islamic identity that was moulded in the pre-independence years remains relatively unchanged and in fact has been fortified as time goes by; only the strategies employed by local Acehnese actors to engage the central government have varied depending on the era. It is through this lens that the chapter will analyse how Islamic education in Aceh has managed to maintain its local character in the past 100 years.

As the only socio-political group that retained significant social influence in the early years of the independence, the ulama, specifically the PUSA-affiliated reformist ulama, were in an unchallenged position to further revamp and develop the Islamic educational system. Madrasah graduates who dominated the newly established provincial government, especially the *Pejabat Agama* and its Board of Religious Education (*Lembaga Pendidikan Agama*), also supported the growth of Islamic education at this time. Private madrasah were made public in 1947 and re-designated as Islamic Primary Schools (SRI) and Islamic Secondary Schools (SMI). The provincial government channelled more subsidies to SRI and the *Normal Instituut Islam* (by this time known as *Sekolah Guru Islam*) and converted madrasah teachers into public employees.[57] The entire cycle in which ulama-dominated state institutions established an Islamic education system that produced graduates who would later populate the ranks of these state institutions, created a positive feedback mechanism that over time further reinforced the localized institutional identity. Nonetheless, despite the dominance of reformist ulama in the post-independence years, the reality was that they did not have the broad autonomy to fully implement their Islamic reforms. Aceh was subsumed under the "national project" of Sukarno's Guided Democracy that allowed very little regional expression. The increasing dominance of Sukarno's regime resulted in discontent among major islands outside of Java and ultimately led to regional rebellions in the late 1950s.[58]

Increased centralization by Sukarno's regime had several impacts on Islamic education in Aceh. The central government stopped subsidies for some SMI in

57 Feener, Shari'a and Social Engineering, p. 70.

58 Traditionalist ulama did not support the rebellion and called it religiously unlawful (bughat) since it created disaster for the people and country. Yusny Saby, Islam and Social Change: The Role of Ulama in Acehnese Society (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2005), p. 96. See also Sjamsuddin, Pemberontakan Kaum Republik, pp. 132–134.

mid-1951 and SRI in January 1952 in order to force the closure of these religious schools and divert their students to government public schools. The central government also built more schools in the neighbouring province of North Sumatra, including in the regency (*kabupaten*) of Tapanuli Utara, which had less than half of the population of the whole province of Aceh.[59] Reformist ulama claimed that the central government was trying to weaken and secularize Aceh's proud tradition of Islamic learning by closing down Islamic schools in the province, building more non-religious public schools in the neighbouring province and forcing Acehnese parents to send their children to these out-of-province schools, so much so the central government was willing to provide scholarships for the students.[60] Aceh's inability to administer its own education system during this time was part of the province's loss of autonomy in all aspects of local governance, which created enough tensions with the central government that in the end they sparked the Darul Islam revolt in 1953.

At the end of the Darul Islam revolt in 1959, as already noted, Aceh was given the status of Special Province (*Daerah Istimewa*), allowing it greater autonomy to experiment with and reform the local educational system. The reality, of course, was not clear-cut. The New Order regime that came to power in 1966 implemented a development (*pembangunan*) ideology that had a significant effect on Islamic education in Aceh. In place of the vanquished *uleebalang*, the new competing local elites were the technocrats and the bureaucrats, whose sole purpose was to carry out the development prerogatives of the central government in Jakarta.[61] In the education arena, they were the non-local staff of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture, employed to promote national education with a heavy emphasis on economic development. They saw Islamic education as a hindrance to the developmental aims of the regime. The reformist ulama, who were still very much in control of Islamic education in Aceh, were alarmed by what they deemed as secularization of the education system by the central government, which they thought could possibly lead to the demise of Islamic education itself, such as abolishing school holidays during Ramadan and making the Islamic Studies subject in public schools non-compulsory. The comparison cannot be starker: in the early 1970s, the Islamic (read: madrasah) education had 32 per cent religious subjects in its curriculum while the national education had only 8 per cent.[62] The New Order regime also placed higher emphasis on supporting government public schools than religious

59 In 1950, there were eight public junior high schools (SMP) in the kabupaten Tapanuli Utara in the North Sumatra province compared to only six SMP in the whole province of Aceh. Sjamsuddin, Pemberontakan Kaum Republik, pp. 71–72.

60 Ibid., p. 74.

61 The parallel between the New Order regime and the later years of Dutch colonial beamtenstaat was uncanny, especially in their centralizing tendency, and in this case, the divide-and-rule policy. Benedict Anderson, "Old State, New Society: Indonesia's New Order in Comparative Historical Perspective", Journal of Asian Studies 42:3 (May 1983), pp. 477–496.

62 Morris, Islam and Politics in Aceh, pp. 278–279.

schools as part of its overall developmentalist agenda in Aceh at this time. In 1983, 68.8 per cent of primary level students in Aceh were in the non-religious school system while 29.7 per cent were enrolled in religious schools.[63] The reformist ulama certainly did not see the technocrats and bureaucrats of the regime as being friendly to their educational objectives, namely supporting the madrasah system and combining general and religious subjects into one.

The issue of dualism in education has always been a major debating point in Muslim-majority societies, Aceh included (see Chapter 5 for further discussion of this topic). The reformist ulama tried to take advantage of the autonomy provided by the *Daerah Istimewa* status in the early 1960s to integrate the religious and secular streams of primary education, *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri* (MIN) and *Sekolah Dasar* (SD) respectively. They were joined in this effort by academics from the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Ar-Raniry and the Education faculty of the Universitas Syiah Kuala. Both the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education and Culture, however, ignored the proposal since they deemed it to be non-contributive to the regime's developmentalist agenda.[64] Even so, the effort to integrate religious and secular primary education was a synthesis of Islamic principles and the Acehnese identity growing out of the *Daerah Istimewa* status that set the course for the future shape of Islamic education in Aceh.[65] It was not only the reformist ulama who sought educational changes at this time; *dayah* education was also going through its own modernization – a few decades after modernist ulama had established their own educational institutions in Aceh. Again, academics from IAIN Ar-Raniry collaborated with the traditionalist ulama to revamp *dayah* curriculum and pedagogy. The first modern *dayah*, *Dayah Moderen Tgk. Cik Panté Kulu*, was established in 1968 in Banda Aceh and was opened by President Suharto himself, which signified the flexibility of the *dayah* system in adapting to the development objectives of the New Order regime.[66] Slowly the distinct character of Islamic education in Aceh began to take hold in the province in the midst of a highly centralizing New Order era. In 1987, Darwis Soelaiman, the head of the Faculty of Education at Universitas Syiah Kuala in Banda Aceh, published a booklet entitled *Kearah Perbaikan Mutu dan Pembaharuan Pendidikan di Propinsi Daerah Istimewa Aceh – Sebuah Model* (Toward the Improvement of Quality and Reform of Education in the Province of Aceh – A Model) that, among its recommendations, urged stronger emphasis on Acehnese culture and Islam in the national

63 Barbara Leigh, The Growth of the Education System in the Making of the State: A Case Study in Aceh, Indonesia. Ph.D diss., University of Sydney, 1992, p. 247.

64 Tim Kell, The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, p. 55.

65 While the academics from IAIN Ar-Raniry who participated in this educational reform effort were graduates of madrasah, which explains their support for the reformist ulama, their counterparts from Universitas Syiah Kuala were mainly graduates of secular public schools. This does illustrate the particularity of Acehnese identity that sees no difference in their obligations as both Muslims and Acehnese. Morris, Islam and Politics in Aceh, pp. 280–281.

66 Feener, Shari'a and Social Engineering, pp. 73–81.

curriculum implemented in Aceh, in an effort to preserve the uniqueness of Acehnese identity.[67] It was not certain if the MOEC took heed of the proposal but it was endorsed by the then Governor, Ibrahim Hasan. Nevertheless, there was a real struggle in Aceh during the New Order era to maintain its local educational identity in the face of a centralizing, development-oriented push from the central government.

One result of the Special Province status in 1959 was the Aceh-nization of the provincial administration, including the territorial military structure.[68] The practice continued even during the New Order period. Though Suharto's installed outsiders, typically military commanders, as local administrators throughout the archipelago, Aceh was the exception. This anomaly allowed Islamic education in Aceh to preserve its uniqueness such as the *dayah* system, despite the pressure from Jakarta to conform. By the 1970s, many ulama and other religious functionaries, upon realizing the futility of oppositional tactics to advance their agenda, decided to join the provincial offices of the national ministries instead, namely the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture.[69] Meanwhile, the regime recognized early on the resiliency of Acehnese local Islamic identity and the importance of coopting the support from local ulama by helping to establish the *Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama Daerah Istimewa Aceh* (MPU) in December 1965, a good decade before the establishment of Council of Indonesian Ulama (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, MUI) in 1975.[70] The local ulama thought they could help to shape MPU policies to preserve aspects that were integral to Acehnese identity such as its *dayah* system, MIN, religious judiciary, Ulama Council (*Majelis Ulama*), IAIN, and even the Ministry of Religious Affairs itself, which they saw as being threatened by the more secular Ministry of Education and Culture.[71] In short, similar to Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah in other provinces, both the traditionalist and reformist ulama in Aceh adopted an accommodationist approach in dealing with the coercive authority of the New Order regime by working with and within institutions that did not share their values and goals. In the long run, this ploy helped to shape the identity of these provincial offices of

67 The booklet suggested that religion and "Aceh" should be make up 35 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively, of the national curriculum. Since the law stipulated that general education content had to make up at least 85 per cent of the curriculum for non-religious schools, it meant that the school hours had to be increased in order to accommodate the proposed change. The booklet proposed the increase of weekly school hours from five hours a day for six days to seven hours a day for five days. Leigh, The Growth of the Education System, pp. 250–251.

68 Morris, Islam and Politics in Aceh, pp. 255–256.

69 Alfian, The Ulama in Acehnese Society, pp. 14–19, Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 202.

70 Moch Nur Ichwan, "Official Ulema and the Politics of Re-Islamization: The Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama, Shari'atization, and Contested Authority in Post-New Order Aceh", Journal of Islamic Studies 22:2 (2011), pp. 194–195.

71 Morris, Islam and Politics in Aceh, p. 284. Also see Chapter 2 for more details on the tensions between Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education and Culture.

the ministries and their district and sub-district branches to become less national-oriented and more Acehnese.[72]

When it came to Aceh, the approach adopted by the New Order regime was somewhat schizophrenic. On the one hand, the central government in Jakarta was hegemonic and uniform in enforcing its developmentalist agenda; on the other hand, the regime did actively promote the uniqueness of Aceh's culture and history. In the words of Edward Aspinall:

> [t]his "special territory" (daerah istimewa) status was accompanied by an energetic process of cultural production that did much to normalize and valorize Acehnese identity. At the same time, the Indonesian state became more authoritarian and centralised, meaning that the promise of special treatment was never realised in practice, despite being constantly celebrated.[73]

While the autonomous benefits of having a special status might not be realized at this time, the incorporation of local ulama into formal national institutions, the hiring of local staff and the vigorous Acehnese cultural production by the central government helped to create a distinct institutional identity that became more prominent and independent in the *Reformasi* years. Institutional identity can be formed through the reproduction of institutional culture. In the case of Aceh, this involved the gradual inculcation and reinforcement of its local Islamic identity by the Acehnese-staffed national institutions that would ultimately take precedence over the formerly irreligious developmentalist values of the central government. The institutional strength of the ulama, especially in maintaining the socio-political influence of the madrasahs and *dayah*, was evident in the electoral wins of the Islamic political parties, Indonesian Muslim Party (*Partai Muslimin Indonesia*, Parmusi) and United Development Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, PPP) in Aceh in the 1971 and 1977 legislative elections, respectively. It did speak to the strength of the local institutional identity that managed to defy the New Order electoral juggernaut in the form of the Golkar party.[74] The organization of traditionalist ulama, PERTI, joined PPP in 1973, which explained PPP's stellar electoral performance in *dayah*-intensive areas. On the

72 An observer of the education system in Aceh during the New Order period noted that, "As that process [state expansion of its preferred stream of schooling] has taken place, it has not just been a matter of Aceh adapting to the wishes of the centre, but also of the centre (the Indonesian state) constituting and reconstituting itself in relation to the regions. The interplay is unevenly weighted in favour of the centre but the dynamic exists nonetheless". Leigh, The Growth of the Education System, p. 213.

73 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 8.

74 PPP won in most sub-regencies (kecamatan) with high student enrollment in madrasah, as were areas dominated by dayah ran by traditionalist ulama. In fact, PPP even managed to slightly expand its support base by winning in kecamatan that had low madrasah enrollment, which was arguably a testament to the strengthening of Aceh's Islamic identity. Morris, Islam and Politics in Aceh, p. 299.

other hand, ulama who joined Golkar in the 1970s found their popularity significantly dwindled due to the public's perception of them being corrupted and greedy.[75] The appointment of Ibrahim Hasan as the governor in 1986 changed Golkar's political fortune in Aceh. Ibrahim Hasan was a highly popular local personality and once appointed, he started to channel money into *dayah* especially those located in PPP strongholds, as a means to win electoral favours from the ulama.[76] By the time he left office in 1993, Golkar had managed to hold the majority of seats in Aceh's provincial assembly.[77] In short, this example illustrates the vitality of the Islamic educational institutions in Aceh despite being at cross-purpose with the aims of an omnipotent central government, a feat that would not have been possible without the active participation of local ulama in the national institutions and their efforts to transform these institutions' culture and identity from within.[78]

High institutional complexity within and between state institutions that oversaw Islamic education during the New Order era also played a crucial role in sustaining Aceh's localized Islamic identity despite the regime's centralizing tendency. As amply demonstrated in Chapter 2, the tension between MORA and MOEC over the issues of single-roof education and abolition of religious subject in public schools, resulted in the inability of the New Order regime to exert more control over Islamic education in the country. The institutional fragmentation allowed advocates for Islamic education in Aceh to withstand any attempt by the central government to secularize Islamic education in the province.[79] In the first half of the New Order era, MORA was preoccupied with what it saw as MOEC's attempts to secularize Islamic education. Major Islamic groups such as MUI, Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, GUPPI and MPU in Aceh rallied around MORA to defend Islamic education from

75 Saby, Islam and Social Change, pp. 97, 107–108.

76 Dwight King and M. Ryaas Rasjid, "The Golkar Landslide in the 1987 Indonesian Elections: The Case of Aceh", Asian Survey 28:9 (September 1988), pp. 919–920. See also Arskal Salim, Challenging the Secular State: The Islamization of Law in Modern Indonesia (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), p. 149.

77 The 1992 provincial assembly (DPRD) consisted of twenty-one members from Golkar, twelve from PPP, three from PDI, and nine military appointees. Tim Kell, The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, p. 62.

78 By the early 1990s, there were 699 madrasahs and 470 dayah in Aceh, an increase from 631 madrasahs and 243 dayah in 1975. Leigh, The Growth of the Education System, p. 249; Taufik Abdullah, ed., Agama dan Perubahan Sosial (Jakarta: C.V. Rajawali, 1983), p. 190.

79 This institutional fragmentation was best exemplified by the controversial topic of school holiday during the fasting month of Ramadan. MOEC issued a directive to abolish the school holiday while MORA issued a circular stating that Islamic schools under MORA would still continue with the Ramadan holiday tradition. "Sekolah2 Agama di bawah Depag libur puasa", Pelita, 12 May 1979.

MOEC and the threat of secularization.[80] As detailed in Chapter 2, these push-pull dynamics between Islamic organizations and the New Order regime's inability to act cohesively, as well as institutional fragmentations that characterized the debate over Islamic education in Indonesia before 1989, in a way helped Aceh to preserve its own localized Islamic education.

Islamic education in Aceh in the Reformasi era

The end of the New Order regime signalled the sudden loosening of the tight control from Jakarta and a stronger centrifugal pull from the periphery for more real autonomy. This change resulted in the passing of Laws 22 and 25 in 1999 that devolved control of several areas of governance to the provincial and district levels, education being one of them. The parliament subsequently passed Law 44/1999 on Special Administration of the Special Province of Aceh (*Undang-Undang Nomor 44 Tahun 1999 tentang Penyelenggaraan Keistimewaan Propinsi Daerah Istimewa Aceh*), the main focus of which was to affirm Aceh's autonomy in four special administrative aspects as laid out under Article 3: religious life, customary life, education, and the role of ulama in the province's policymaking process. The parliament again passed Law 18/2001 on Special Autonomy for the Special Province of Aceh as the Province of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (*Undang-Undang Nomor 18 Tahun 2001 tentang Otonomi Khusus bagi Provinsi Daerah Istimewa Aceh sebagai Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam*) that strengthened Aceh's authority in the overall implementation of the special autonomy framework (Article 3(1)). The effect of these decentralization laws on Aceh was further reinforced with the 2006 Law on Governance of Aceh (*Undang-undang No 11/2006 tentang Pemerintahan Aceh*) that essentially confirmed Aceh's rights to establish a form of governance that suited its particular Islamic culture and tradition. The newly empowered provincial government subsequently passed a provincial law, Qanun Aceh No 5/2008 on the Administration of Education (*Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan*), to align its education system with its Islamic

80 A letter from Majelis Ulama-Ulama Daerah Istimewa Aceh to Pimpinan Komisi Pembaharuan Pendidikan, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, dated 9 February 1979, showed support for the government's attempt to renew the national education system as long as MORA remained fully in charge of Islamic education and schools. No. 420/101, Badan Arsip dan Perpustakaan Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Banda Aceh. Nationally, ulama from major Islamic organizations met up with Minister of Religious Affairs, Alamsyah Ratu Perwiranegara, to air their grievances against MOEC's attempts to secularize Islamic education and demand reassurance from the President that he would not support such attempts. Notulen Pertemuan dengan Menteri Agama Tanggal 8 Mei 1979 tentang Jaminan Presiden, Badan Arsip dan Perpustakaan Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Banda Aceh.

values.[81] The provincial government transferred the management of *dayah*, which used to be under the aegis of *Dinas Pendidikan*, the provincial office of the Ministry of Education and Culture, to the newly created BPPD in 2008. As a result of these decentralizing efforts, the particular Acehnese Islamic identity that was patiently being developed and sustained within the educational arena during the repressive years of the New Order regime now came into full bloom.

One major conundrum that hobbles decentralization of Islamic education in Indonesia is the fact that matters of religion still remain within the authority of the central government, in this case the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This not only means that there are a lot of overlapping of jurisdictions between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture but also between the ministries and the provincial and district governments. Some of the main issues are funding of schools and training of teachers.[82] While Aceh is not spared from this jurisdictional wrangling, its Special Province status has afforded it broad leeway to deal with this problem, as well as the autonomy to interpret the decentralization laws in accordance with its Islamic identity. The creation of BPPD was the perfect example of the provincial government's use of its autonomy to empower its *dayah* learning tradition, seen as an integral part of the Acehnese identity.[83] Since the formation of BPPD in 2008, the *dayah* system has flourished into about 944 schools (traditional and modern) with 142,600 students

81 The general explanation on the intent of the qanun states that:

> The life of an Acehnese society is based on Islamic principles and the uniqueness of a religious life, custom, education and the role of ulamas in determining the policy that provides the main inspiration in the administration of education, not just in the context of national education system but also in the implementation of the [said] special characteristics.

[Translation mine]: *Qanun Aceh Nomor 5/2008 Tentang Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan* (Banda Aceh: Dinas Pendidikan Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, 2008), p. 39

82 The widening gap between the two ministries was such that the Ministry of Home Affairs even issued a circular (903/2429/SJ) on September 2005, which prohibited local governments from funding "vertical" institutions, namely those that fall under the jurisdiction of the central government. After a protest from the madrasah community this directive was revised a year later to include an exemption for madrasahs but other legal obstacles still remained. One such example is the Article 39 of the Law 33/2004 on Fiscal Balance between the Central Government and Regions, which states that discretionary grants that local governments received from the central government, Special Allocation Fund (Dana Alokasi Khusus), cannot be used to fund madrasahs. Risti Permani, "Educational Challenges with Special Reference to Islamic Schooling", in Chris Manning and Sudarno Sumarto, eds., Employment, Living Standards and Poverty in Contemporary Indonesia (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2011), p. 186.

83 The motivation for creating BPPD was not only to strengthen the dayah system, which was seen as an integral part of the Acehnese Islamic identity, but also to spur economic development and to establish more dayah along the border with North Sumatra as a bulwark against deviant Islamic sects and Christian missionary encroachment. Feener, Shari'a and Social Engineering, p. 77fn.

across the province with an annual budget of US$2.77 million in 2015.[84] Even in the office of *Kanwil Agama*, the orientation of which is supposedly directed toward Jakarta, the prevalent institutional sentiment is thick with localized Islamic hue. One official I talked to mentioned, "Our foremost objective here [in *Kanwil Agama Provinsi Aceh*] is to ensure that the Islamic education in the province is in-line with the objectives and spirit of *syariat* Islam in Aceh".[85] In short, when it comes to managing Islamic education, Aceh has finally managed to realize its long overdue autonomy, not least due to decades of identity cultivation within the state institutions in the province.

Implementation and enforcement of MORA's orthodox values at the local level

While it looks like Aceh has been exercising its special autonomy privileges in the Islamic education arena relatively independently of the central government, particularly in the matters of administration and oversight, this does raise the question whether there is any incongruity in the substance and spirit of the Islamic education promoted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the one practised and taught locally; in other words, do we see evidence for competing interpretations of Islamic tenets in Aceh. This question is especially pertinent in light of Aceh's strong localized Islamic identity, as explained in the previous section. In the context of centre-periphery relations, what kind of efforts has the central government made to enforce its version of orthodoxy on Aceh, if there are such efforts, and what actions have Acehnese actors taken to protect and promote their own version of orthodoxy, if they do think themselves as being imposed upon by the central government? These questions, of course, have to be seen within the context of Aceh's broad autonomy as a Special Province and whether the attempt by the central government to impose its own Islamic orthodoxy managed to affect the way Islamic education is administered in the province, be it in terms of curriculum, school tests, school oversight or teachers' training, among others.

One particular point of theology poses the utmost concern to the advocates of Islamic education is the basic beliefs of the faith (*aqidah*). Defining and therefore sorting out which interpretation of the *aqidah* should be permissible and which is not has long been a priority for those in power since Islamic education offers the perfect vehicle to disseminate and inculcate ideas of orthodoxy in the impressionable minds of the young students. Ulama in Aceh have always been

84 There is also an effort to revamp the present jurisdictional arrangement to transfer the control of Junior Islamic High School (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) and Senior Islamic High School (Madrasah Aliyah), which are now under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, to BPPD, which should come into effect some time in 2015. Interview with Bustami Usman, Kepala BPPD, 5 February 2014.

85 Interview with Taharuddin Muhammad, Kepala Seksi Kurikulum dan Evaluasi, Bidang Madrasah, Kantor Wilayah Agama Provinsi Aceh, 4 February 2014.

preoccupied with regulating *aqidah* since colonial times. Despite the differences between the traditionalist and reformist ulama in modernizing Islamic education in Aceh, as far as *aqidah* is concerned, there was a consensus that only *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah* (ASWJ) was to be accepted and enforced. One example is in the 1940s when Teungku Daud Beureueh, along with other prominent ulama in Aceh, crushed a "deviant" Islamic sect in Pidie by using both hard methods (demolishing the sect's congregation place) and soft methods (an intensive public education campaign).[86] The trend continued during the New Order era when the leading ulama in Aceh, as represented by *Majelis Ulama Daerah Istimewa Aceh*, not only defended and promoted the ASWJ orthodoxy but also strived to reconcile it with the objectives of the regime.[87] *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* and *Majelis Ulama Daerah Istimewa Aceh* also collaborated closely to stamp out "deviant" Islamic sects and to defend Islam against the purported Christianization efforts by churches, missionary groups, and Christians within the New Order regime.[88] The *Reformasi* era saw no discernible diversion from the well-established norms with regard to *aqidah*; in fact, the Islamic orthodoxy in Aceh has been promoted even more vigorously as part of Aceh's autonomous *syariah*-based governance. The Deliberating Council of Ulama (MPU), the successor to the *Majelis Ulama Daerah Istimewa Aceh*, is a formal partner of the current Aceh government and the sole arbiter of local orthodoxy, having the authority to issue legally binding rulings (fatwas) and even defy orders from the MUI leadership in Jakarta, though this has never really happened since they always find an agreement in any thorny issue.[89] Throughout its post-independence history, when it comes to the matters of *aqidah*, Aceh has always been able to maintain its version of Islamic orthodoxy, but at the same time remained flexible enough to reconcile differences with the development-focused New Order regime. Since 2005, the special autonomy status has accorded Islamic orthodoxy in Aceh more prominence; it has also given the provincial government more coercive legal

86 Yakub, Gambaran Pendidikan di Aceh, pp. 344–345.

87 In response to a letter of inquiry from an ulama in Aceh Timur about a line in the 1978 Broad Guidelines of State Policy (Garis-Garis Besar Haluan Negara, GBHN) that states "Kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan yang Maha Esa tidak merupakan Agama" (Belief in the One-ness of God does not constitute a Religion), Majelis Ulama Daerah Istimewa Aceh wrote that the phrase was still in line with the constitution (UUD 1945) and it would not lead to the formation of a new religion that was exclusive of the belief in the One-ness of God [translation mine]. Majelis Ulama Daerah Istimewa Aceh's letter to Teungku Abdul Aziz, 23 May 1979, Badan Arsip dan Perpustakaan Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Banda Aceh.

88 Among the alleged Christianization efforts found in the education arena include sending for Christian teachers from East Indonesia and assigning them to public schools, stocking up public libraries with Christian books, providing scholarship for students to study in Catholic schools, and rejecting a Muslim teacher to teach Islamic education subject at a Catholic school in Sukabumi, West Java. Majelis Ulama Indonesia's letter to all MUI chapters in Indonesia, No. A-422/MUI/IV/1979, 20 April 1979, Badan Arsip dan Perpustakaan Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Banda Aceh.

89 Interview with Teungku Lem Faisal, Wakil Ketua MPU, 8 February 2014.

powers to protect the Acehnese values.[90] In short, Aceh's broad autonomy in managing its own local Islamic identity, including the Islamic education system, is integral to the province's ability to preserve and implement its conservative Islamic ideals despite running counter to the more moderate ones promoted by MORA as reflected in the Islamic Studies (*Pengetahuan Agama Islam*, PAI) curriculum.

Schools, as the ground zero for public education, serve as an ideal place to disseminate and enforce ideas of orthodoxy at the level of society. The process takes the forms of streamlined curriculum, mandatory subject testing, and teachers' training. Schools in Aceh mainly fall under two jurisdictional authorities and they overlap each other: madrasahs are under the aegis of Ministry of Religious Affairs by way of its provincial office (*Kanwil Agama*) while *dayah* are being administered by BPPD; since many *dayah* also incorporate madrasah system as part of their modern curriculum, they are also partly under the supervision of *Kanwil Agama*. From my interviews with officials at the *Kanwil Agama*, I received the impression that the *Kanwil Agama* has a broad autonomy to interpret and implement national objectives according to Aceh's particular local context. In other words, despite the *Kanwil Agama* in Aceh being part of the non-decentralized "vertical" state institutions, it acts in an almost similar fashion as other decentralized "horizontal" institutions such as *Dinas Pendidikan*, that is strongly Acehnese in orientation. According to a principal of a modern *dayah* in Banda Aceh, her school is supervised in strict coordination with *Kanwil Agama*; all of its activities must be pre-approved and attendance in a monthly meeting is mandatory.[91] Nevertheless, the school is allowed to develop the mandated curriculum according to its values; it goes without saying that those values must not contradict the ones propagated by the local ASWJ orthodoxy. The schools also have qualified leeway to make up their own Islamic Studies (PAI) subject test as part of the National Standard School Testing (*Ujian Sekolah Berstandar Nasional*), typically done in a group of school teachers (*Kelompok Kerja Guru*, KKG) convened at the *kabupaten* level using the general guideline (*kisi-kisi*) provided by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.[92] Both *Kanwil Agama* and BPPD administer teachers' training programs, not just to provide teachers for madrasahs and *dayah*, but also PAI teachers in non-religious public schools (*sekolah negeri*). These trained teachers are also sent to the rural parts of Aceh especially along the border with North Sumatra to partly serve as a "fort"

90 MPU issued a fatwa in 2011 that lists out thirteen points of what constitutes as a deviant belief (ajaran sesat) and adhering to the teachings that are non-compatible with ASWJ is one. "MPU Aceh tetapkan 13 kriteria ajaran sesat", Tribun News, 13 March 2011 (accessed on 6 August 2014).

91 Interview with Kesuma Nirwana, Kepala Sekolah Madrasah Aliyah of Dayah Moderen Darul Ulum, Banda Aceh, 10 February 2014.

92 Interview with H. Saifuddin, Kepala Bidang Pendidikan Agama Islam, Kantor Wilayah Agama Provinsi Aceh, 4 February 2014.

(*benteng*) against Christian proselytizing efforts and "deviant" Islamic sects, namely obscure *tariqat* (Islamic mysticism) groups.[93]

As a whole, the schools do have some space for interpreting the curriculum and they do exercise that privilege on a regular basis but ultimately, when it comes to the crucial matter of *aqidah*, the schools generally conform to the prevailing local orthodoxy. On rare occasions, there would be teachers who were disciplined by BPPD and *Kanwil Agama* for allegedly promoting "deviant" ideas, but the hegemony of local orthodoxy is such that the only real worry among Islamic educationists in Aceh now is the threat of Christian proselytization in schools.[94] As we can see, values promoted and enforced by local Islamic education authorities in Aceh are far more conservative than those propagated by MORA. However, the pluralist approach of the state Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia allows various religious interpretations to co-exist, including the more conservative form of Islam currently being practised in Aceh. Aceh's special autonomy status and localized state institutions only serve to reinforce this privilege and further weaken MORA's hold over Islamic education in the province.

By historical quirks and the dynamics of centre-periphery relations, the province of Aceh has managed to preserve and invigorate its Islamic education, which this chapter argues is an integral part of its localized Islamic identity. Thus, the present-day vigour in Islamic education in the province does not merely stem from the full realization of local autonomy since 1999; there are much deeper historical roots that led to the current flourishing of Islamic schools and their facilities and the overall strengthening of the Islamic education curriculum. Both the madrasahs and *dayah*, imbued with the localized Islamic identity, will remain central to the Acehnese social life for years to come.

Kelantan: federalization of the state's Islamic education system

History of Islamic education in Kelantan

Pondok or traditional Islamic schools provided the earliest form of education to the predominantly rural Malay-Muslim population in Kelantan. Very scant records about the origin and early years of *pondok* are available but it is said that

93 Ibid.

94 The process of disciplining a teacher accused of "deviant" teaching is quite long and rigorous. Typically acting on parents' or community's complaints, BPPD or Kanwil Agama would report the so-called offender to MPU. MPU would then form a fact-finding team and cooperate with the intelligence agency to gather information. After collecting enough documented evidence, MPU would convene a deliberation team (tim perumus) that consists of its own ulama and technical experts from outside. The alleged offender would be called for questioning by tim perumus. Only after that, MPU would issue a fatwa stating that the teaching is haram and the teacher should be disciplined and rehabilitated. The teacher would still be able to keep his/her job as long as he/she agrees to be reformed. Interview with Teungku Lem Faisal, Wakil Ketua MPU, 8 February 2014.

the form of *pondok* we know now can be traced to northern Sumatra, namely Aceh, and the ethnic Malay kingdom of Patani in southern Thailand. Haji Abdul Samad Abdullah reputedly established the first *pondok* in Kelantan circa early 1800s in Pulai Chondong, about twenty-eight kilometres from the capital Kota Bharu.[95] The term *pondok* originates from the Arabic word *funduq*, meaning "temporary residence". In Malay, the word *pondok* means "hut", which refers to the type of structures that make up the school.[96]

Essentially, traditional *pondok* in Kelantan share similar characteristics with *dayah* in Aceh, or for that matter, *pesantren* in Java and *surau* in West Sumatra. These schools are built by a local ulama (colloquially known as *to' guru*) on a donated (*wakaf)* land to provide boarding for students who come from all over the state and beyond. The longevity of a *pondok* is highly dependent on the skills and charisma of the founding guru; the curriculum consists of studying and memorizing old *kitab* (religious books); they are economically self-sustaining and do not charge a fixed fee ("payment" is made via money donation, in-kind contribution or providing labour for the *pondok*'s economic activities). A remarkable aspect of *pondok* is that they not only cater to young people but also to old folks who prefer to spend the remaining years of their lives in religious learning and surrounded by a highly pious environment.[97] The type and length of learning differs from one *pondok* to another; students tend to study in several *pondok* – one after another – based on the perceived expertise of the *pondok*'s ulama. Traditional *pondok* education was the only educational option for the homogenously Malay society in Kelantan until the entrenchment of British governance in the state and the establishment of Kelantan's Council of Religion and Custom (*Majlis Agama dan Istiadat Kelantan*) in December 1915.

The signing of the Pangkor Treaty in 1874 with the sultan of Perak (a state on the west coast of peninsular Malaysia) set the precedent for the British colonialists' later agreements with other sultanates in British Malaya. One point of the treaty was the prerogative given to the sultan to manage the affairs of Islam and Malay customs in his kingdom. In the words of Iza Hussin:

> In dividing territories of governance amongst themselves [the British] and the Malay rulers, however, religious and racial identity, not previously a major part of Malay elite legitimacy or discourse, became the centre of the Malay elite domain, and the key to their survival.[98]

95 Abdul Halim Ahmad, "Pendidikan Islam di Kelantan" in Khoo Kay Kim, ed. Beberapa Aspek Warisan Kelantan (Kota Bharu: Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Kelantan, 1982), p. 8.

96 William Roff, Studies on Islam and Society in Southeast Asia (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2009), p. 118; see also Robert Winzeler, "The Social Organization of Islam in Kelantan" in William Roff, ed. Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 266fn.

97 Robert Winzeler, The Social Organization of Islam in Kelantan, p. 267.

98 Iza Hussin, "The Pursuit of Perak Regalia: Islam, Law, and the Politics of Authority in the Colonial State", Law and Social Inquiry 32, no. 3 (Summer 2007), p. 770.

This latitude, combined with the bureaucratization of Kelantanese kingdom's governing affairs spurred on by increased penetration of the British colonial administration into the Malay hinterlands, resulted in the creation of the aforementioned Council of Religion and Customs of Kelantan (known from now on as *Majlis Agama*), the first of its kind in British Malaya. Unlike PUSA in Aceh, which was dominated by reformist ulama who were bitterly at odds with the traditional elites, *Majlis Agama* was formed by traditionalist ulama who were aligned to the traditional ruling elites in Kelantan, namely the royal family. Despite their differences, *Majlis Agama* also believed in reforming (read: modernizing) Islamic education in the kingdom of Kelantan, similar to the objective of PUSA in Aceh. On August 1917, *Majlis Agama* established its own modern Islamic school in Kelantan, Madrasah Muhammadiah, which offered three streams of education: Malay, Arabic, and English.[99] The main objective of the school was to provide educated Malays to staff the expanding colonial bureaucracy in the state. Many graduates of Madrasah Muhammadiah later furthered their studies in English-medium schools such as Penang Free School and the Malay College of Kuala Kangsar. By 1918, *Majlis Agama* had expanded its educational program by taking over several *pondok* in Pasir Mas, Pasir Putih, and Kampung Kutan.[100]

There were also many independent madrasahs that operated outside the *Majlis Agama*'s control in the early 1900s. One such madrasah was Al-Khairiyyiah in Kota Bharu, the first of its kind in Kelantan, which was established in 1906. The previously mentioned bureaucratization of Islamic affairs led to a proliferation of madrasah and *pondok* from 1915 onwards that, in turn, provided the necessary workforce to man this bureaucracy, from imam in a village mosque to the mufti of the state. Unfortunately, the popularity of these independent Islamic schools during the early 1900s proved to be their eventual downfall as the state government and *Majlis Agama* co-opted this success by building schools of their own called *Sekolah Agama Kerajaan*, thus injecting more competition into the Islamic education arena in the state. These *Sekolah Agama Kerajaan* were flushed with resources from *Majlis Agama*, as opposed to many of the independent Islamic schools that were typically small, rural and supported by limited revenue base.[101] Adding to the competition was the growth of national public schools since the early 1900s, which included mandatory Islamic subjects as part of their curriculum. Many Muslim parents did not feel obligated to send their

99 Khoo Kay Kim, Malay Society: Transformation and Democratisation (Subang Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1991), p. 135.

100 Nik Ahmad Kamil, the son of Haji Nik Mahmud Ismail, the founder of Majlis Agama, was a graduate of Madrasah Muhammadiah who later completed his law studies in England. Khoo, Malay Society, pp. 135–136.

101 Majlis Agama now assumed the responsibility of collecting and dispensing zakat (personal wealth tax), thus taking away the pondok's main source of income. Majlis Agama also began to issue licenses (tauliah) to all religious teachers, thus eroding their academic freedom and basis of authority. Hashim, Educational Dualism, pp. 28–29.

kids to Islamic schools any more as religious education could now be attained in national public schools, which offered more educational and career options to the students after they graduated.[102]

The wave of Islamization that first hit Malaysia in the late 1970s, which saw a marked increase of religiosity in the national bureaucracy and the society at large, also prompted further attempts by the federal government to absorb more independent Islamic schools into its sphere of influence. Many People's Islamic Schools (SAR), successor to the traditional *pondok*, were taken over by the ministry and renamed *Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan* (SABK). The first SAR in Kelantan taken over by the ministry was Naim Lil Banat in 1977; it was converted into a national religious high school (*Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama*, SMKA) as part of the ministry's effort to incorporate independent schools into the national system.[103] The federal government has so far only managed to acquire and convert twenty SAR to SABK in the state of Kelantan as part of the 2008 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Ministry of Education and Kelantan Islamic Foundation (*Yayasan Islam Kelantan*, YIK).[104] Despite the prerogatives provided by the constitution to the states in administering Islamic affairs, which also include Islamic education, the current practice shows intensive involvement by the federal government to dictate the nature of Islamic education at the state level especially in places like Kelantan, where small, mainly rural private Islamic schools (SAR and traditional *pondok*) form the main support for the Islamic opposition party, Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS), which will be elaborated later in this chapter.

Currently, Islamic schools in Kelantan generally fall under two overlapping jurisdictions: the Ministry of Education (MOE) via the State Education Department (*Jabatan Pelajaran Negeri*, JPN) and YIK, which is an arm of the state government (but not part of the *Majlis Agama*). National religious high schools

102 The decline of pondok education could be chalked up to the students' need to obtain school certificates for government jobs, which only madrasah and Malay vernacular schools could offer, and the fact that many to' guru who founded these pondok joined PAS when the party was established in 1951. Wan Yahya Wan Ahmad, Traditional Islamic Education and Its Modern Development in Kelantan, MA thesis, University of Kent, 1982, pp. 63–67.

103 Overall, eleven SAR were taken over by the ministry in 1977 and converted to SMKA. To date there are 55 SMKA across Malaysia, in contrast to 195 SABK. While both types of schools are managed and funded by the ministry, their main difference lies in the curriculum: SABK uses curriculum from the state's religious council (Majlis Agama Negeri) or in the case of Kelantan, Kelantan Islamic Foundation (Yayasan Islam Kelantan), and SMKA uses the national curriculum set by the ministry. SABK is a relatively new program, introduced by the ministry in 2005 in order to quell political opposition from the PAS-dominated SAR. SABK receives a semblance of autonomy by retaining its land and building ownership. Quick Facts 2013: Malaysian Educational Statistics, Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education; Pengenalan: SABK dan SMKA. www.moe.gov.my/v/sabk-smka (accessed on 11 July 2014); Taklimat Isu Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) 2003, Urusetia SAR, Sektor Pendidikan Islam dan Moral, Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Kelantan, p. 15.

104 "20 SAR kini Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan", Utusan Malaysia, 13 August 2008.

(SMKA) are under total control of the MOE, and while the MOE administers SABK, their curriculum comes from YIK; SAR and state religious schools (*Sekolah Agama Negeri*, SAN), on the other hand, operates under the authority of the state government via YIK. There is also a small section within the Islamic Development Agency of Malaysia (*Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia*, JAKIM) called the Advisory Board for Streamlining Islamic Learning and Education (*Lembaga Penasihat Penyelarasan Pelajaran dan Pendidikan Agama Islam*, LEPAI) that tries to coordinate and implement a standard curriculum for all SAR and SAN in Malaysia, which technically should come into effect soon.[105]

The socio-political roots of present-day Islamic education in Kelantan

The first critical juncture that provided the impetus to shape the character of Islamic education in Kelantan took place in the late colonial period (the late 1800s to 1957), a result of interactions between major socio-political groups in the kingdom. Similar to pre-colonial Aceh, the kingdom of Kelantan also

Table 3.2 Total number of Islamic schools, students and teachers in Kelantan in 2013[106]

	Number of schools	*Number of students*	*Number of teachers*
Pondok	47	320	26
Sekolah Agama Rakyat	42	11,559	893
Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan	22	3,938	490
Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama	6	4,920	423
Total	117	20,737	1,832

105 Since Islamic affairs is a matter that falls under the state jurisdiction, the implementation of national curriculum for SAR and SAN by LEPAI has to be agreed upon unanimously by the sultans and traditional figureheads in all the states. So far Kelantan is the only state that refuses to adopt this proposed national curriculum due to the claim that its curriculum is religiously superior. Interview with Azizan Muhammad, Chief Assistant Director, Islamic Education Branch of JAKIM, 21 March 2014.

106 Data KAFA, Sekolah Agama dan Masjid (Bahagian Kemajuan Islam, Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia [JAKIM], Putrajaya 2013), pp. 14–30; the number for SAR was obtained through a personal interview with Noor Aisyah Ibrahim, Assistant Director of LEPAI, JAKIM, 9 September 2014. Comparatively, there is one Islamic school for every 1,811 Muslims in Aceh and one Islamic school for every 13,965 Muslims in Kelantan, which indicates an overwhelming dominance of non-religious government schools in Kelantan (592 schools and 315,652 students as of 2015). Aceh Dalam Angka 2015 (Banda Aceh: Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Aceh, 2015), p. 102; Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Kelantan: http://jpnkelantan.moe.gov.my/v1/ (accessed on 19 April 2016).

consisted of the royal family that ruled from the capital city Kota Bharu, various local chieftains that reigned over their fiefdoms across the kingdom, and a fractured religious class represented by the ulama and local imams. Also, akin to the more autonomous *uleebalang* in Aceh, the local chieftains in Kelantan were relatively independent of the sultan, though the sultan did have a strategic and geographical advantage. Kota Bharu, which sits at the mouth of Kelantan River, a point of entry along the China-India trade route, controlled the commercial flow and the sultan promptly used this as leverage against the landlocked chieftains in the hinterlands.[107] The signing of the Pangkor Treaty between the kingdom of Perak (on the west coast) and the British in 1874 marked a pivotal point in the way Malay and Islamic affairs were administered, the first critical juncture with a legacy that still resonates to this day as a result of the bureaucratization of Malay and Islamic affairs in every state in Malaysia. Clause 6 of the treaty sets forth the appointment of a British adviser and assistant adviser to give instruction and guidance in all matters of administration other than those touching on Islam and Malay customs.[108] This particular article was incorporated in the British's subsequent treaties with other Malay rulers, which primarily served as a face-saving gesture for the sultans in accepting the humiliation of colonial subjugation. The sultans, who hitherto were already well established as the symbolic fusion of Islam and Malay traditions, at least ritualistically, moved into the new colonial role with ease.[109] In 1909, the British signed a treaty with the kingdom of Siam, which had suzerainty over Kelantan and other parts of northern Malaya, to concede the northern Malay kingdoms to Britain's control. Like other sultans in British Malaya, the sultan of Kelantan was retained as the head of Malay and Islamic affairs within his kingdom.

The Pangkor treaty formalized the sultan's authority over matters of Malay customs and Islam, expanding his reach into Malay society especially in the hinterlands. This was done in tandem with the British rulers' efforts to intensify their colonial footprint, namely through increased bureaucratization. In other words, the sultans were allowed a share in the colonial state-making endeavours

107 Shahril Talib, History of Kelantan: 1890–1940 (Kuala Lumpur: The Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1995), pp. 8–12.

108 The original English wordings were:

> The Sultan of Perak shall receive and name a suitable house for a residence for the officer who is under the British Government called the Resident of Perak and is accredited to the Sultan's Court. The Sultan shall consult with him first on all matters and administration in the State of Perak except that he, the Resident, may not intervene in matters of the Mohammedan religion and Malay customs.

J.M. Gullick, *Rulers and Residents: Influence and Power in the Malay States, 1870–1920* (Singapore and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 31.

109 Gullick, Indigenous Political Systems, pp. xiii–xix. For more historical details on the fusion of Malay traditionalism and British colonial bureaucracy, albeit not so much on the religious aspect, see Donna Amoroso, Traditionalism and the Ascendancy of the Malay Ruling Class in Colonial Malaya (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2014), pp. 65–98.

by the British in an obviously reciprocal relationship: the sultans looked to the British for help in preserving the status quo ante and in further entrenching their privileged position while the British used the sultans' traditional authority as a means of indirect rule and social control. The treaty had allowed

> [t]he preservation and reinforcement of the traditional bases of authority and social organization implicit in this [non-interference] policy, together with greatly improved means of communication and centralization and backed by the effective sanctions now open to British-supported sultans, combined to produce an authoritarian form of religious administration much beyond anything known to the peninsula before. The rulers and traditional elite, much of whose real power to influence the destiny of their states had been stripped from them by the circumstances of British rule, not unnaturally turned to the only fields now left to them, religion and custom, to express what remained.[110]

Administrative modernization efforts undertook by the British in Kelantan following the 1909 Anglo-Siam Treaty entailed setting up district offices across the state, mostly as an efficient means to collect taxes. Local chieftains who used to reign unimpeded now found their traditional fiefdoms being replaced by the generic sounding "districts" and their own influence being subsumed by "district officers", typically non-local agents of the colonial administration.[111] This "forward movement" by the British naturally raised the ire of the local chieftains, which culminated in the failed rebellion by To' Janggut (literally "Old Long Beard") in 1915, suppressed by both the sultan's army and British forces. One important result that came out of the British efforts to modernize the administration of Kelantan was to bring law and order to the kingdom and quell opposition to the royal family; this, in turn, helped the sultan to strengthen his grip on power especially after the establishment of *Majlis Agama* in 1915. In short, "by cooperating with the British, Sultan's authority was secured at the expense of the constellation of chiefs that has previously negotiated power in the Malayan kingdoms".[112]

110 William Roff, The Origins of Malay Nationalism (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 72. See also Iza Hussin, "The Pursuit of Perak Regalia: Islam, Law, and the Politics of Authority in the Colonial State", Law and Social Inquiry 32:3 (Summer 2007), p. 782.

111 Kelantan was initially divided into five districts and the district officer acted as revenue collector, land officer, and a magistrate. In regard to the rebellion, though it was against the "infidel" British colonial administration, Islam was not instrumentalized as a rallying cry, unlike during Prang Sabil in Aceh. Ibrahim Nik Mahmood, "The To' Janggut Rebellion of 1915" in William Roff, ed., Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 67–73; Cheah Boon Kheng, To' Janggut (Old Long Beard): Legends, Histories and Perceptions of the 1915 Rebellion in Kelantan (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2006), pp. 8–12.

112 Hussin, The Pursuit of Perak Regalia, p. 781.

Further accelerating the formalization of religious authority in the hands of the sultan was the conflict between the traditionalist ulama (*Kaum Tua*) and the reformist ulama (*Kaum Muda*) in the early 1900s, akin to what was happening in Aceh. Unlike in Aceh, where the reformist ulama had the upper hand due to their local origin and political cache amassed during the *Prang Sabil* and extended during the Japanese occupation, their counterparts in Kelantan and other parts of British Malaya did not enjoy the same privileges and social acceptance. The reformist ulama barely registered any presence in the Malay heartland since most of them resided in the urban and highly cosmopolitan Straits Settlements of Penang, Melaka, and Singapore. Those who lived in Kelantan were few in number, being based in Kota Bharu and large towns, and were generally not much involved in traditionalist-dominated local politics.[113] But the tepid blow of reformists' criticisms at this time was felt nonetheless, pointedly directed at both the traditional elites and the traditionalist ulama. This resulted in the two traditional groups joining forces to defend the existing status quo. *Majlis Agama* was the entity born out of this alliance, the foremost aim of which was to take advantage of the deep penetrative means provided by modern state-making to entrench their position of religious and political superiority. It was through *Majlis Agama* that the religious authority of the sultan was fully realized as the council was employed to impose a new orthodoxy and quash ideological rivals.[114] One famous case in 1937 that perfectly illustrated the way *Majlis Agama* tried to justify its orthodox values through the modern mode of governance was the great debate between reformist and traditionalist ulama in Kota Bharu regarding the cleanliness of a dog's saliva. The debate took place on the sultan's palace compound and was attended by about 2,000 people. William Roff noted that in defending the conservative position that a dog's saliva was unclean:

> The establishment [*Majlis Agama*] *ulama* chose to appeal not simply to their own, quite traditional, view of the *sharia* but to a supposed obligation, validated extra-Islamically by another form of writ (statute or positive law

113 Manning Nash, Peasant Citizens: Politics, Religion, and Modernization in Kelantan, Malaysia (Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies Southeast Asia Program, 1974), pp. 145–146. In addition to geographic disparity of the reformist ulama, they were also barred from disseminating their ideas by the traditionalist ulama through legal means such as selective issuance of preaching permit, ban on reformist materials from entering the state, and severe penalties for printing or publishing them. Roff, The Origins of Malay Nationalism, pp. 79–80.

114 The inclusion of five ulama in the twelve-member State Council of Majlis Agama provided it with the necessary Islamic imprimatur, namely in preserving the interests of the traditional elites. William Roff, "The Origin and Early Years of the Majlis Ugama" in William Roff, ed., Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 134. Similar dynamics also took place in the northern state of Kedah that precipitated the establishment of its own Majlis Agama in 1948. Sharifah Zaleha Syed Hassan, From Saints to Bureaucrats: A Study of the Development of Islam in the State of Kedah, Malaysia. Ph.D diss., Cornell University, 1985, pp. 119–160.

and its instruments), to derive the *shari'a* in a particular way (solely through the Shafi'i *madzhab*).[115]

In short, as a tool for consolidating power by the traditional Kelantanese elites, it was highly imperative for *Majlis Agama* to ensure that there could be no challenge to its religious interpretation of Islamic precepts lest its control over the Muslim society be weakened; hence, the reliance on positive laws, written legal notices, official certifications and other forms of bureaucratic means to establish and enforce a single truth (in this case, exclusively within the Shafi'i school of thought).

Majlis Agama in many respects paralleled the British bureaucratic administration, and the British colonial state's non-interference policy in Islam and Malay customs provided *Majlis Agama* with the independence to expand its reach further into Kelantanese society. Before the British intervention, highly autonomous imams were in charge of administering Islamic affairs at the local level. Imams held complete authority over their parishes (*mukim*), which, in addition to usual religious responsibilities, also included conflict mediation, land surveying, and poll-tax collection. The colonial bureaucracy began to replace the imams with its own officers to take over the secular tasks, relegating the authority of the imams to merely the religious sphere. Even in their sacral duties, the imams were no longer independent; rapid administrative expansion by *Majlis Agama* had absorbed the imams into its fold. *Majlis Agama* forced the previously independent imams to formally register with the council, closely supervised their activities, and more importantly, obligated them to surrender three-fifth of wealth tax (*zakat*) and seven-eighth of head tax (*fitrah*) collected in their parishes, which hitherto had been their only funding sources. Adding insult to injury, this new submissive role of the imams came largely unpaid by *Majlis Agama*.[116] The bureaucratic over-reaching by *Majlis Agama* created widespread resentment among the predominantly rural imam, which, in turn, set the course for an oppositional politics that has persisted until the present day by driving the

115 William Roff, "When Cometh the Law? Dog Saliva in Kelantan, 1937" in William Roff, ed. Studies on Islam and Society in Southeast Asia (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2009), p. 263. The debate was sparked by the controversy regarding the sultan's decision to keep a pet Dalmatian in the palace's compound. The "pro-dog" side of the debate was represented by reformist ulama from Singapore while the "anti-dog" side was represented by ulama associated with Majlis Agama. The "pro-dog" side argued that talfiq, mixed ruling from various madzhab (school of thoughts), should be applied in this particular issue. The "anti-dog" side, on the other hand, contended that Kelantan was exclusively following the Shafi'i school of thought (taqlid) as enshrined in the state's various legal documents, which meant that other interpretation should not be allowed in this case. In the end, both sides agreed to disagree and the issue was referred to the Fatwa Committee of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, which ruled in favor of the "pro-dog" side. Ibid., pp. 249–263.

116 Clive Kessler, Islam and Politics in a Malay State: Kelantan, 1838–1969 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978), pp. 195–207.

rural religious functionaries into the arms of the Islamic party PAS. The *Majlis Agama*, as noted by William Roff, is:

> [a]n indigenous agent of directed social change, utilizing the institutions of Islam, wedded to Western bureaucratic forms, to further what appears to have been genuinely perceived by its progenitors as the interests of the state as a whole despite the undoubted fact that, on the one hand, it was the peasantry alone who provided the financial basis of its power, and on the other that it was relatively small group among the 'new men' [Western educated Malay elites] who were to benefit most from the processes set in train.[117]

In addition to the imams, there were also local ulama, called *To' Guru*, who founded and taught in many *pondok* across the state. Ideologically, there was no discernible difference between the vast majority of ulama *pondok* and the religious authorities that occupied *Majlis Agama*; both were traditionalists. The major difference was in the political sphere where the ulama *pondok* saw *Majlis Agama* as a tool used by the elites to protect their own wealth and interests, and not as a vehicle to establish true Islamic supremacy in the state. Party politics that started in the early 1950s further sharpened this divide as many high officials of *Majlis Agama* became affiliated with the then-secular Malay political party UMNO through the aforementioned 'new men', who the ulama accused of serving the interests of the elites in Kuala Lumpur and collaborating with the Chinese and Indian infidels at the expense of establishing an Islamic state in Malaysia; consequently, ulama *pondok*, along with other local religious functionaries such as imam and *lebai*, flocked to the PAS in droves.[118]

As mentioned in the previous pages, integral to *Majlis Agama*'s bureaucratic expansion in the first few decades of its establishment was the modernization of Islamic education by building more madrasah or converting dilapidated *pondok* into madrasah. By 1952 there were fourteen *Majlis Agama* madrasah that provided education in both general and Islamic subjects, an increase from four madrasahs in 1918.[119] In addition, there were also vernacular Malay schools established by the British, which incorporated Islamic subjects in their curriculum. Growing options for Islamic education, albeit in varying degrees of

117 Many of these "new men" were sent to the UK by Majlis Agama to further their studies, typically in law, and joined the colonial bureaucracy after they finished. Many of these Malay elites later formed the Malay nationalist party UMNO in 1946. Roff, The Origin and Early Years, p. 215.

118 Nash, Peasant Citizens, pp. 105–108.

119 Arba'iyah Mohd Noor, "Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam di Kelantan", Jurnal Malaysia Dari Segi Sejarah, no. 36 (2008), p. 76. In 1919, Majlis Agama had proposed to transfer all Malay vernacular schools in Kelantan under its management, which would have significantly increased the total number of its schools, but the proposal was rejected by the British colonial administration in Singapore due to financial considerations. Roff, The Origin and Early Years, p. 211.

intensity and comprehensiveness, resulted in stiff competition among the schools. Islamic education at this time not only fulfilled one's spiritual needs but also acted as the means to obtain a career in the expanding *Majlis Agama*'s bureaucracy, not just in Kelantan but in other states as well. The competition forced many *pondok* to transform their curriculum, which they were later re-designated as SAR. SAR then had to be registered with *Majlis Agama* under a program called Schools under the Purview of MAIK (*Sekolah-sekolah di Bawah Naungan MAIK*), which required a uniform curriculum and the teachers to be certified by *Majlis Agama*.[120] These homogenization efforts were indeed part of the overall objective of *Majlis Agama* to exert its influence and assumed the self-proclaimed role of singular religious authority in the state of Kelantan. The period between 1915 and the 1950s witnessed the rapid bureaucratic expansion of *Majlis Agama* and the modernization of Islamic education in Kelantan, which resulted in an apparent urban-rural divide. In the post-independence years, the political gulf between the religious and traditional elites in Kota Bharu and the local ulama *pondok* became more palpable and contentious as electoral politics was added to the mix with *Majlis Agama* right at the centre of it.

Federalization of Islamic education in Kelantan from 1950s to present

The presently fraught relationship between the federal government and the state government of Kelantan can be traced back to the first post-independence election in 1959. At this time, PAS captured the state government in the face of a sweeping nationwide victory by the UMNO-led National Alliance. The PAS victory was a testament to its deep support within the overwhelmingly rural population of Kelantan. As stated above, PAS's core constituency in Kelantan consisted of local religious functionaries such as ulama *pondok*, imam, and *lebai*; UMNO, a political vehicle for the Malay elites, was not able to reach beyond the backing of those who had benefitted handsomely from the pre-independence status quo, namely the aristocrats, English-educated civil servants, and wealthy landowners. Prior to the election, UMNO had tried to penetrate into the rural heartland where PAS drew its political succour by enlisting the help of *Majlis Agama*. *Majlis Agama*, with its deep-reaching bureaucracy and helmed by local Malay elites who were also UMNO partisans, used its formal authority to restrict the influence of PAS by using a carrot-and-stick approach. On the one hand, *Majlis Agama* publicly claimed that only UMNO could bring development to the rural areas by building new stone-and-cement mosques and madrasah while attempting to persuade people that UMNO was as Islamic as PAS; on the other hand, since the early 1960s, *Majlis Agama* also prohibited its imam from talking about politics during Friday sermons (*khutbah Jumaat*) since most of them were PAS supporters. *Majlis Agama*, in the words of Clive Kessler, was "an explicit instrument of the old elite's bid, back in Kuala Lumpur and in UMNO garb, to

120 Noor, "Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam", p. 79.

reassert its control over the state".[121] The problem with employing *Majlis Agama* to extend UMNO's electoral reach in the heartlands of Kelantan was that *Majlis Agama*'s influence was only limited to bureaucratic control. It simply did not have much sway in influencing the political allegiance of the mostly pro-PAS rural religious functionaries as reflected in the continued electoral dominance of PAS. To further muddy the situation, federal grants promised by *Majlis Agama* were contingent on its ability to deliver the Kelantan state government to UMNO.[122] Because PAS remained in control of the state until 1978, there was no money forthcoming, severely affecting the financial solvency of many Islamic schools that were dependent on *Majlis Agama*.[123] The gradual decline of *Majlis Agama* schools finally reached its nadir in 1974 when control of the schools was surrendered to its rival institution in the state government.

Since Islamic affairs are strictly the prerogative of the state with the sultan as its head, any attempt by the federal government to impose its will would have to be done with tact, lest it would be seen as usurping the power of the sultan. *Majlis Agama* was the ideal local institution for UMNO to manipulate in order to garner support without being perceived as interfering since *Majlis Agama* was an institution under the jurisdiction of the sultanate. The sultan, on the other hand, can be quite fickle in his political identification as his legitimacy mostly rests with how well he deals with local court intrigue, not on approval from the federal government. This centre-periphery dynamic has driven the nature of *Majlis Agama* and by extension, Islamic education, in the post-independence years. PAS's electoral victory in the state election in 1959 forced the sultan to use his influence in *Majlis Agama* to gain favour from the new PAS state government and to develop support against pretenders to the throne by burnishing his religious image and thus increasing his popularity among the population. To achieve these goals, the sultan packed the *Majlis Agama* with PAS's partisans, who later gained control of the institution and promptly used it as a source of patronage, mainly expanding its bureaucracy to allow more Islamic school graduates to be hired; and hence, further increasing PAS's support among the

121 Kessler, Islam and Politics, pp. 293–297.

122 The then Deputy Prime Minister, Abdul Razak Hussein, promised RM500 million special development allocation for Kelantan during the 1969 campaign, contingent on PAS's loss. Since PAS won the election, Kelantan did not see a single cent of the promised development fund. James Chin, "Politics of federal intervention in Malaysia, with reference to Sarawak, Sabah and Kelantan", The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics 35:2 (1997), p. 108.

123 Based on interviews with officers at the national economic planning agency such as the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) at the Prime Minister's Office there was a marked difference in development support from the federal government to Kelantan before and after UMNO took over the state government in 1978. Nik Mahmood Nik Ibrahim, Some Constraints of a Federal System of Government on the Development Performance of a Component State: The Case of Malaysia with Special Reference to the State of Kelantan. Ph.D diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1984, pp. 108–112.

rural population, where most of these schools were located.[124] On the downside, being a PAS-controlled institution meant that no federal funding was flowing into *Majlis Agama*'s coffers; as a result, there was no funding for many of the Islamic schools under its purview.[125]

Ever since the 1950s, the decision of the UMNO-led federal government to use a proxy institution to advance its political interests in Kelantan, especially in the state's Islamic affairs, was not so much out of respect for Kelantan's constitutional rights and the federal system in general but mainly due to the saliency of Islam as a determinant in the federal government's political legitimacy. UMNO simply did not want to be perceived by the largely religiously conservative Malay population in Kelantan as hostile to the interests of Islam. The UMNO-led federal government, however, did try to financially starve the Islamic schools under *Majlis Agama* before 1978 with hopes that the ulama would become desperate enough to defect from PAS, which did not materialize. In 1976, financial woes finally forced *Majlis Agama* to cede control of Islamic schools under its purview to the Islamic Foundation of Kelantan (YIK), which was established by the PAS-controlled state government in 1974 (under the old name of Department of Islamic Schools or *Jabatan Sekolah-Sekolah Agama*, JASA).[126] Now the battleground for control of Islamic schools in the state, which included *Sekolah Agama Negeri* (State Islamic Schools), *Sekolah Agama Rakyat* (People's Islamic Schools), and *pondok*, had effectively shifted from *Majlis Agama* to YIK, which was packed with PAS partisans.

When UMNO managed to take control of the Kelantan state government in 1978, however, it started to funnel subsidies and allowances to Islamic schools and their teachers through YIK in a blatant attempt to gain their support. The financial remunerations were of course dependent on the level of support the UMNO state government received from each *pondok*; it goes without saying that the more fervent a *pondok* was in showing support for UMNO, the more money it received.[127] The abysmal result of this patronage strategy was clearly evident in the 1990 election when PAS re-took the reins of state government. This election also witnessed the ascendancy of the ulama leadership within the party, led

124 Ibid., pp. 186–187.

125 A poor rural-based state like Kelantan did not want to increase its tax receipts in order to compensate for the loss of funding from the federal government since the state government was heavily dependent on rural votes for winning the election. Shafruddin, The Federal Factor, p. 61.

126 The institution was originally named Foundation of Islamic Education of Kelantan (Yayasan Pelajaran Islam Negeri Kelantan, YPINK) and was renamed Yayasan Islam Kelantan in 1983. The history of Yayasan Islam Kelantan's establishment can be found at: www.yik.edu.my/v2/latarbelakang/sejarah-penubuhan-yik (accessed on 11 July 2014).

127 Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Pondok, Pilihanraya dan Pemerintahan di Kelantan", in Nik Safiah Karim and Wan Abdul Kadir Yusuf, eds., Kelantan Dalam Perspektif Sosio-Budaya: Satu Kumpulan Esei (Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Pengajian Melayu Universiti Malaya, 1985), pp. 330–333.

by the newly elected Chief Minister, Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat.[128] The sultan was once again involved in the political feud as UMNO accused him of "playing politics" and supporting the opposition coalition that won the election.[129] The failure of UMNO to employ YIK as a source of patronage to win the hearts and minds of PAS partisans among the rural religious functionaries could be attributed to the deep ideological commitment of these religious functionaries to PAS's political ideals and its promise of establishing a true Islamic state in Kelantan.

The socio-political landscape of Malaysia changed quite drastically after the late 1970s, which, in turn, altered the way the federal government dealt with the PAS-controlled state government especially when it came to Islamic education. The Islamic revivalism that hit Malaysia in the late 1970s propelled Islamic narratives to the forefront of public discourse as the Malay-Muslim society became more religious. The onset of Islamic revivalism provided the critical juncture that reshaped the strategies used by the federal government to gain an upper hand in Kelantanese politics. To be perceived as un-Islamic would have delivered a death knell to UMNO's political legitimacy; hence, the federal government had a proactive approach to riding the Islamization wave.[130] Even when it came to Islamic education in Kelantan, letting it wither through financial starvation would now not have been a viable option as in the past, lest UMNO would be seen as anti-Islam. Plus, there were many teachers appointed by the Ministry of Education who were teaching in YIK's schools, and it would have seemed unwise to sacrifice these teachers at the altar of political retribution.[131]

128 In 1991, as a retaliation against the victorious PAS in the Kelantan's state election, the federal government redirected development allocations under the Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991–1995), previously earmarked for the Kelantan state government, to a newly created state-based federal agency called State Development Office. The federal government also slashed the development allocation for Kelantan during the midterm review of the Sixth Malaysia Plan. Francis Loh, "Restructuring Federal-State Relations in Malaysia: From Centralised to Cooperative Federalism?", The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs 99:407 (2010), p. 135.

129 The coalition was called Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah and it consisted of PAS, Semangat 46, and Berjasa (the latter two were off-shoots from UMNO but now defunct). Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, a Kelantanese aristocrat, led Semangat 46. Previously, Tengku Razaleigh narrowly lost to the Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in the highly controversial 1987 UMNO's presidency election. He subsequently left UMNO and founded Semangat 46. Inclusion of Tengku Razaleigh might have explained why the sultan was supportive of the coalition. After Semangat 46 disbanded in 1996, Tengku Razaleigh rejoined UMNO. Lotfi Ismail, Serambi Mekah Di Bawah Pimpinan Ulama: Bahagian 2 (Kota Bharu, Kelantan: Walijah Publications, 1991), p. 29.

130 Employment of Islamic discourse as a political tool by UMNO is still alive and well to this day. "Use politics to fight for Islam, Zahid tells UMNO members", Malaysiakini, 8 December 2015; "Umno urged to bring Islamic politics to greater heights", Malaysiakini, 14 September 2016; "Najib: UMNO champions Islam, that's why PAS likes us", Malaysiakini, 17 June 2017.

131 When PAS took over the state government in 1990 there were 179 Ministry of Education teachers teaching in 90 YIK's schools across the state. Lotfi Ismail, Serambi Mekah Di Bawah Pimpinan Ulama: Bahagian 4 (Kota Bharu, Kelantan: Walijah Publications, 1991), p. 130.

The PAS-led state government, however, did take a measure of precaution to guard against potential federal government's backlash by allocating a sizeable RM16.2 million (US$4 million) to YIK in 1990, which by 1999 was significantly increased to RM32.5 million (US$8 million).[132] However, despite the state government in Kelantan being controlled by PAS, the federal government kept channelling money and various resources to Islamic schools in the state, mainly through the Ministry of Education's state education department (JPN) and even YIK.

Federal grants kept flowing unimpeded into the state's Islamic education sector until the early 2000s when the federal government charged some SAR with being hotbeds of Islamic radicalism and subversive activities, and thus suspended their funding. The former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad proclaimed, "SAR teachers have deviated from the real purpose of education and taught students to hate the government and other Muslims".[133] In March 2003 the then Education Minister Musa Mohamad announced in the Parliament that government funding for SAR nationwide, which at the time numbered 268 schools with 74,453 students and 4,429 teachers, would be diverted to national Islamic schools due to their dismal academic performance and anti-government activities, which resulted in the transfer of almost 15,000 SAR students and 2,000 teachers to other schools.[134] By suspending the funding for SAR, the federal government risked being perceived as hostile to Islamic interests, which it had been trying to avoid since the late 1970s. As a compromise, the federal government decided to resume funding for SAR in 2004 in return for SAR's registration with the Ministry of Education.[135]

The federal government announced in November 2011 a RM35.6 million (US$8.6 million) in financial assistance for religious schools (including 22 SAR) in the state of Kelantan. In his speech the then Education Minister, Muhyiddin Yassin, stated that "this financial assistance proves that the federal government does not play favourite when it comes to elevating the standard of national education".[136] The MOE was well aware of the importance of funding SAR despite

132 Riduan Mohamad Nor, Sumbangan PAS dalam Bidang Pendidikan di Malaysia (1951–2004) (Kuala Lumpur: Jundi Resources, 2013), p. 121. In 2013 the budget allocation for YIK further ballooned to RM83 million (US$20.3 million). "RM83 juta akan dibelanjakan YIK tahun 2013", Sinar Harian (edisi Kelantan), 6 March 2013.

133 "SAR advocates not swayed by Mahathir's assurance", Malaysiakini, 14 February 2003.

134 "Jalan terbaik bagi SAR", Utusan Malaysia, 24 November 2003. It is not stated how many SAR in Kelantan were affected by the suspension of federal grant but in 2008 YIK agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education to convert 20 SAR in Kelantan into Government Assisted Islamic Schools (SABK) with five more waiting for approval.

135 Azizi Umar et al., "The History of the Institutionalization of People's Religious Schools in Malaysian National Education Policy", Advances in Natural and Applied Sciences 6:7 (2012), pp. 1047–1048.

136 "79 sekolah agama terima RM35.6 juta", Utusan Malaysia, 24 November 2011. More recently in 2017, the federal government allocated RM20.88 million to 38 pondok, 49 SAR and 28 tahfiz (Quranic memorization) schools in Kelantan. "Najib hands out RM80m for Islamic religious schools", Malaysiakini, 25 April 2017.

its tendency to sympathize with PAS. In an internal circular, the MOE stated two reasons for the continuation of funding: first, SARs' command widespread bipartisan appeal in the Parliament and MOE would be subjected to intense questioning by members of Parliament if SARs' funding was suspended; and second, it is more politically beneficial for the federal government to cultivate and strengthen its relationship with SAR, rather than severing the ties.[137] In short, it was clear that the federal government saw Islam as an integral component of its legitimacy, which thus leavened its approach when it came to dealing with the politically recalcitrant Islamic schools in Kelantan, namely SAR.[138] At the same time, despite its obvious disdain for federal government, YIK still acquiesces to offer financial assistance from MOE as evidenced by its willingness to cede partial control of 25 SAR, which was quite intriguing in light of its previously mentioned healthy budget.[139] When it comes to Islamic affairs in Malaysia, there is a delicate dance between the federal government's proclivity to dominate and the state's need to be autonomous, where one is cautious not to step on the other's toes.

The federalized institutional identity of Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Kelantan

The last aspect of centre-periphery relations is institutional identity. Here I investigate what prevalent sentiment is held by the staff of the state educational department of the MOE in Kota Bharu and YIK, either projected outward toward the federal government or directed inward toward the local Kelantanese identity? Since PAS's win in the first state election in 1959, Kelantanese identity has been framed as uniquely Islamic, in contrast to the rest of the country and especially to the supposedly secular federal government in Kuala Lumpur. In the eyes of mostly rural PAS supporters, a vote for PAS means supporting the preservation of village culture that is steeped in traditional Islamic values and defending it against the threat of elite interests and corrupting non-local influence, in this case represented by UMNO. Since the late 1970s, however, when Islamic discourse has dominated the public sphere, the framing of Kelantanese identity has shifted to one of religious credibility: who is more Islamic? Both PAS and UMNO jostle to become the sole representative of the interests and aspirations of the

137 "Bantuan kewangan SAR", MOE Internal Memo, KP.R (JAPIM) 011/2 Jld 5(18), October 2011, National Archive of Malaysia.

138 There are parallels between SAR and pondok in Kelantan and southern Thailand in terms of the centrality of Islamic education in both areas' oppositional identity against the central governments in Putrajaya and Bangkok, respectively. Joseph Liow, Islam, Education and Reform in Southern Thailand: Tradition and Transformation (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009).

139 YIK's burgeoning budget is also puzzling since it fails to pay overdue payroll deductions from its teachers to relevant agencies. This financial mismanagement, despite the RM85 million (US$19.9 million) federal funding for YIK's administrative expenses in 2015, prompted an UMNO state legislator to call for the ministry's takeover of the rest of Islamic schools managed by YIK. "Kelantan akui tidak bayar caruman, potongan gaji guru YIK RM14.6 juta", The Malaysian Insider, 2 November 2015.

Malay-Muslim community, and it is this dynamic that animates the institutional identity of the two aforementioned state institutions. Similar to Aceh, almost all civil servants in Kelantan, in the state education office and YIK, are local Kelantanese. Browsing through the profiles of top-level officers in Kelantan's state education department bears out the fact that most senior officials have spent their entire careers in Kelantan.[140]

The MOE and Kelantan state education department share the objective of improving and developing the Islamic education in Kelantan by drawing on the resources of the federal government. I term the institutional behaviour of the Kelantan state education department as the "federalized" institutional identity. In other words, there is low degree of institutional complexity or rivalry when it comes to the relationship between MOE and the Kelantan state education department. As one of the officials at the state education department sums it up, "We are not at all political here. All we care about is the well-being of Islamic education in Kelantan, and the best way to help is through the federal government, which has all the resources at its disposal".[141] Meanwhile in YIK, where one expects a more prominent display of anti-federal defiance, the oppositional tendency seems to be more subdued amidst a decidedly robust Kelantanese identity. There has been occasional bickering between YIK and the federal government but the relationship is generally cordial and cooperative.[142] One YIK official relates to me that for the most part the interaction between YIK and MOE is of equal partners but MOE does act unilaterally sometimes such as posting its own teachers to YIK's schools without consulting YIK even though the appointment should be made jointly.[143] In contrast to Aceh, where Acehnese identity, which is clearly demarcated from the central government, permeates every nook and cranny of local and central institutions, the picture in Kelantan is blurrier. While there is a strong Kelantanese identity in both local and federal institutions and a widely shared belief in the utmost importance of protecting it, the boundary and relationship between the two levels are more permeable and negotiable, with the power balance tilting in favour of the federal government by virtue of its superior resources as demonstrated by the assistance given by MOE to many Islamic schools in the state and YIK.

Oppositional sentiment is perceptibly more pronounced at the school level, however, as evidenced by the history of the SAR jealously guarding their autonomy

140 For example, the director and the deputy director of JPN have spent their whole teaching and administrative careers in Kelantan. Profil Korporat Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Kelantan: http://jpnkelantan.moe.gov.my/v1/index.php/gerbang-korporat-4/profil (accessed on 12 August 2014).

141 Interview with Amran Mamat, Deputy Director of Sektor Pendidikan Islam, Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Kelantan, 30 July 2013.

142 One relatively recent spat was regarding federal subsidies for students in three Islamic schools in Kelantan. "YIK nafi tidak beri kerjasama", Utusan Malaysia, 2 February 2012.

143 Interview with Che Zainah Abdul Lah, Deputy Director of Academic, Yayasan Islam Kelantan, 30 July 2013.

and being suspicious of the federal government. Even an official of the MOE's state educational department admitted that it is extremely difficult to dispel SARs' distrust of the federal government despite the department's many efforts to provide financial, teachers' training, and other forms of assistance.[144] One SABK principal, whose school is considered troublesome by the state education department due to its connection with PAS, related to me that while his school has been treated fairly by the department and was given the freedom to use its own pedagogical system, he was still wary of the real agenda of the federal government. According to him, when the federal government cracked down on SAR in the early 2000s, MOE announced that SAR teachers would be unconditionally accepted as federal employees but they were told later that their absorption into the ministry was completely dependent on them supporting the ruling coalition to win the 2004 election.[145] Despite the suspicions and strong anti-federal sentiment in some Islamic schools, especially SAR, the schools' dire financial condition unfortunately necessitates them acquiescing to the dictates of the federal government in return for assistance.

Near total conformity to conservative interpretation promoted by the state Islamic orthodoxy also contributed a great deal to the low degree of institutional complexity in the interactions between MOE, state education department, and the schools. Theologically speaking, there are no fundamental differences between the version promoted by the ministry and the one espoused by the schools, or even those that are deemed to be pro-PAS. The differences come to a head only when political disagreements are seen and interpreted in a black-and-white religious context. For instance, the principal of the aforementioned school is a staunch PAS supporter, but he does not believe in "outright political indoctrination" in the classrooms. He said that:

> Our [PAS version of the] truth (*kebenaran*) is of course more superior and the way we incorporate and demonstrate that truth in our classroom teaching is by making it self-evident to the students without resorting to political indoctrination. It is much more effective this way because the students would feel genuinely in their hearts that we hold the ultimate truth (*kebenaran mutlak*).[146]

In the fierce competition to "out-Islamize" each other in order to gain religious credibility to govern, both UMNO and PAS have propelled the Islamic public

144 This only applies to SAR that have been converted to SABK, which then fall under the supervision of MOE. Interview with Amran Mamat, Deputy Director of Sektor Pendidikan Islam, Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Kelantan, 30 July 2013.

145 The principal personally refused to be absorbed by MOE when his school came under the jurisdiction of MOE in 2008 even though the remunerative package was much more attractive. He, along with eleven other SAR principals (out of twenty), chose to remain with YIK, despite the lower pay and narrow career option. He calls this his own jihad fisabilillah (religious struggle). Interview with Tajudin Mahmood, Principal of SABK al-Fitrah, Tanah Merah, 31 July 2013.

146 Ibid.

discourse into an increasingly conservative pitch. JAKIM has a close working relationship with state religious authorities including Kelantan, which it meets regularly to streamline views on Islamic-related issues at the national and state levels.[147] JAKIM also provides sizeable financial assistance to *Majlis Agama* in Kelantan despite the state government being in control of the opposition party PAS.[148] High ideological congruity between the federal and state governments and the schools leads to low degree of overall institutional complexity, which, in turn, has allowed the federal government to gradually increase its control over Islamic schools in Kelantan.

It is obvious that there is an existential struggle within the schools, which pits their quest to remain autonomous against their desire to find the solutions to their financial woes. SAR are typically the option for less well-off families looking to send their children for a comprehensive Islamic education above and beyond what is offered by the national schools; hence, SAR are not able to charge sufficiently high school fees to cover their own administrative expenses. Herein lies the conundrum as financial solvency equals autonomy, and for as long as this remains an issue, SAR will always be financially dependent on the federal government.

The *pondok* system, while remains an integral part of the Islamic identity of Kelantan, is only tangential to our discussion of Islamic education in the state, namely because *pondok* are not part of the national education system and are therefore not subjected to uniform standard imposed on other types of schools in the state. YIK oversees the *pondok* system in Kelantan but the informal nature of *pondok* education means that each *pondok* has the freedom to create its own curriculum and to follow its own pedagogical methods. Nevertheless, despite the dwindling popularity of *pondok* education, as evidenced by the figures shown earlier, the UMNO-led federal government does not ignore *pondok*'s history as a pocket of resistance against its rule, especially in Kelantan. The federal government has made efforts to subdue *pondok*'s resistance, namely through financial assistance.[149] In short, the fading significance of *pondok* education in Kelantan over the years, in comparison to other types of schools, can be attributed to the demands of Kelantanese parents who want a modern Islamic education to help secure a better future for their children, rather than a result of the federal government's attempt to quash political opposition to its rule.

Conclusion

Both Aceh and Kelantan are known for being the Verandah of Mecca (*Serambi Mekah*) for a good reason: both have illustrious Islamic traditions that are inherent to their identities. Islamic education has long formed a major component of

147 Persidangan Ketua Jabatan/Majlis Agama Islam Negeri Seluruh Malaysia (PKJ) Kali Ke-97: www.islam.gov.my/node/51923 (accessed on 19 February 2016).

148 "JAKIM salur RM63.17 juta kepada Kelantan", Utusan Malaysia, 12 May 2015.

149 "RM25j disalur kepada pondok tahfiz", Sinar Harian, 23 March 2016.

this identity, which means that changing the nature of Islamic education is tantamount to changing the unique identity that both places have so assiduously ascribed to themselves. As this chapter has demonstrated, the current nature of Islamic education in Aceh and Kelantan is indissolubly intertwined with the historical dynamics between major socio-political groups and the oft-contentious centre-periphery relations in the post-independence era.

The socio-political events that occurred in both places during the late colonial period (the late 1800s to independence) helped local institutions overseeing Islamic education in Aceh and Kelantan to develop a particular institutional identity. In the case of Aceh, the reformist ulama shaped the local institutional identity from the ground up, while in Kelantan there was a top-down approach brought on by the increased bureaucratization of Islamic affairs in the state from the early 1900s. As such, while both institutional identities claim to be fiercely localized, the institutional identity found in Aceh is much more resilient, since it represents the interests and aspirations of the Acehnese society in general. In Kelantan, however, *Majlis Agama* was first established as a means to preserve and perpetuate the ruling privilege of the traditional elites via expansion of the modern bureaucracy, which came into conflict with the pre-existing rural Malay cultural norms. In other words, Kelantan's localized institutional identity was based on shaky ground and needed to be propped up by outside influence, be it the British or the UMNO-led federal government.

The critical juncture that occurred in the late 1970s at the onset of the Islamic resurgence influenced Islamic education in Aceh and Kelantan differently. This global phenomenon did not have much political impact on Indonesia but in Malaysia Islamic social forces became galvanized, which forced the federal government to co-opt the Islamized public discourse in order to maintain its legitimacy. In the case of Kelantan, the federal government started to play a more direct role in the state's Islamic education system by absorbing many SAR and SAN into the MOE's jurisdiction as a way to keep the Islamic opposition in check since these schools were known to be strongholds of PAS. In Indonesia, on the other hand, the highly centralizing New Order regime (1966–1998) in fact helped to preserve the localized institutional identity by actively promoting Aceh's unique tradition and history. In contrast to Kelantan, where many ulama joined PAS to oppose the federal government, most of the ulama in Aceh decided to cooperate with the central government in their quest to preserve Aceh's local Islamic learning traditions.

Therefore, the contemporary independence and revival enjoyed by Islamic schools in Aceh, especially the *dayah* system, is not merely a product of the series of decentralization laws passed since 1999; it is a manifestation of hopes and aspirations that have been simmering under the surface since the late colonial years. Islamic education in Kelantan, on the other hand, is still thriving but its functions are slowly being taken over by the federal government in Putrajaya. The changes seen in the nature of Islamic education in Kelantan over the years also speak to the fact that it is class, and not religion that shapes the oppositional dimension of the Kelantanese Islamic identity as the PAS-led Islamic opposition

distinguishes its rural bucolic self from elite predation of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya.

In sum, both Aceh and Kelantan have presently succeeded in protecting the Islamic education that is core to their local Islamic identity, but they have done so by taking very different paths. The adaptability of the religious elites in Aceh, especially during the New Order era and the GAM insurrections, contributes to the preservation of local control of Islamic education in the province. On the contrary, the oppositional stance taken by most ulama in Kelantan ends up inviting more federal intrusion into the Islamic education in the state. As such, the differences lie to the extent each place has managed to resist the centralizing attempt from the central government, which ultimately leads to localized institutional identity in Aceh and federalized institutional identity in Kelantan.

4 The image of tolerance

Islamic education in Nusa Tenggara Timur and Sarawak

This chapter deals specifically with how Islamic education survives and persists in a milieu where Muslims are the minority. The two case studies are Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), a province in the eastern part of Indonesia, and Sarawak, a state in Malaysian Borneo. The population of NTT, based on 2012 statistics, comprises 9.5 per cent Muslims and 90 per cent Christians.[1] The 2010 Malaysian census shows that the Muslim community in Sarawak constitutes slightly less than 30 per cent of a total state population that is predominantly Christian and animists.[2] Because of the dominance of national and missionary schools in these places, Islamic schools do not play a big role in shaping the Islamic identity of the local Muslim community and acting as the ground for political mobilization.[3]

In this chapter, I analyse the nature of present-day Islamic education in both places from a historical perspective, looking at both the pre- and post-independence eras through the prism of centre-periphery relations. My analysis will also look at the existence of long-standing traditions of Islamic education in both areas, interactions between the major socio-political groups over time, colonial policies and intra-group rivalry. The focus of this chapter is to see how the Islamic schools in NTT and Sarawak have managed to persevere since the colonial era until the present day. By focusing on these factors, I argue that the overall conditions of Islamic schools found in these two areas are shaped by similar forces of inter- and intra-group dynamics and centre-periphery relations

1 Total population of NTT in 2013 was 4,953,967. Badan Pusat Statistik, Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur: http://ntt.bps.go.id/linkTabelStatis/view/id/18 (accessed on 1 September 2014).

2 The Muslims in Sarawak are mainly represented by three major communities: Malay, Melanau, and Kedayan. The 2010 decennial census only provides specific categories for Malay (568,113) and Melanau (123,410) while lumping the much smaller Kedayan under the category "Other Bumiputera". The total population of Sarawak according to the 2010 census was 2,471,140. Sarawak: Facts and Figures 2011 (State Planning Unit, Chief Minister's Department: Kuching, 2011), p. 12.

3 Currently, there is one Islamic school for every 1,783 Muslims in the NTT, compared to one Islamic school for every 32,232 Muslims in Sarawak. The huge disparity between NTT and Sarawak points to the overwhelming dominance of non-religious public schools in Sarawak, in addition to the state's lack of long-standing Islamic learning tradition.

with one glaring difference: the influence of the Muslim minority in local politics. In NTT, Muslims are marginal in the province's politics while in Sarawak they have managed to play a leading role by getting the backing of the federal government in Putrajaya. It is this power differential that explains why Islamic schools in NTT have withered while those in Sarawak have prospered.

When it comes to patterns of Islamization, NTT and Sarawak are distinct from Muslim-majority areas of Indonesia and Malaysia. Historically, Islamic influence was not as strong and widespread in NTT and Sarawak as in other parts of Indonesia and Malaysia. Major Indonesian Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah were barely present in NTT during the colonial period. In Sarawak, there was no sultan to act as the traditional symbol of Islam as in in the peninsular Malaysia. The wave of Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s also did not have serious political effect on Sarawak as it did in the peninsula. The localized character of Islamization in NTT and Sarawak helps to explain why Islamic education in these two areas takes the shape it does now.

The patterns of Islamization in turn determine types of responses from the state, and in this case, the degree in which the central government distributes resources plays a pivotal role in shaping the political strength of the Muslim minority relative to the Christian majority in NTT and Sarawak. Since the central government in Jakarta does not rely on Islamic discourse to prop up its legitimacy, it does not feel a strong political need to allocate resources to the Muslim minority in NTT. Meanwhile, the decentralization laws of 1999 make it difficult for cash-strapped Islamic schools in NTT to ask for assistance from the local government in order to supplement the meagre allocation they receive from the central government. In contrast, the UMNO-led federal government in Putrajaya desperately needs the support of the Malay-Muslim community in Sarawak for its political survival. Therefore, the federal government has lavished resources on Sarawak through the state's Malay-Muslim political leaders. This funding, in turn, helps to strengthen the Muslim community's political position vis-à-vis the majority Christian community.

In NTT, the bodies that oversee Islamic education such as *Kanwil Agama* have assumed a localized institutional identity. In other words, the local state institutions behave in a manner consistent with the local culture and traditions, which might be incongruent with the institutional norms of their ministries in the central government. This is due to two factors: first is the central government's lack of financial resources, which prevents it from exerting more oversight over its provincial offices in NTT, a problem that is further compounded by the sheer geographic distance between Jakarta and NTT. The second factor is the pervasive influence of the local culture that also shapes the institutional identity of the provincial office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (*Kanwil Agama*), helped by the weak influence of the central government. It is the opposite situation for Sarawak where a federalized institutional mindset pervades the state institutions that oversee Islamic education, such as the State Education Department (*Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri*, JPN) and the Islamic Council of Sarawak (*Majlis Islam Sarawak*, MIS). This mindset places a high importance in the role of federal government in developing Islamic education in the state despite

Sarawak's purported autonomy. This particular institutional behaviour can be explained by the local state institutions' dependence on the federal government for resources and the vital role of Sarawak as a vote bank that ensures the unbroken electoral dominance of the *Barisan Nasional*-led federal government.

The chapter is divided into two parts: one on NTT and the other on Sarawak. Each part has similar organization. It starts with the history of Islamic education from the late colonial period (late 1800s) until the present day. It is then followed by a discussion of the socio-political dynamics between Muslims and Christians in the pre-independence period. The same discussion continues into the post-independence period when party politics became part of the inter-communal dynamics. The analysis then moves to the issue of centre-periphery relations and how they affect Islamic education in these two areas. Finally, each section looks at how effectively the policies of the respective national ministries are implemented at the local level.

Nusa Tenggara Timur

The history of Islamic education in Nusa Tenggara Timur (late 1800s to present)

The famous British naturalist, Sir Alfred Russel Wallace, illustrates the social diversity of eastern Indonesia when he arrived in Kupang, the present-day provincial capital of Nusa Tenggara Timur, in 1857 as:

> The inhabitants of Coupang consist of Malays, Chinese, and Dutch, besides the natives, so that there are many strange and complicated mixtures among the population. There is one resident English merchant, and whalers as well as Australian ships often come here for stores and water. The native Timorese preponderate, and a very little examination serves to show that they have nothing in common with Malays, but are much more closely allied to the true Papuans of the Aru Islands and New Guinea.[4]

This diversity continues until today, with Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, animists, and other faiths co-existing relatively peacefully in the territory.

Islam first spread to NTT sometime in the seventeenth century, much later than in the western part of present-day Indonesia. As in many other parts of maritime Southeast Asia, Islamic missionary work in NTT was carried out mainly by Muslim traders, in this case from the neighbouring island of Sulawesi. They were later joined in the nineteenth century by Yemeni traders who married local women and made NTT their permanent residence. Political exiles from Java and Sumatra, sent away to NTT by the Dutch as a punishment, also helped

4 Alfred Russel Wallace, The Malay Archipelago, Vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1869), Chapter XIII.

spread Islam in the region.[5] Despite the gradual spread of Muslims in NTT, especially in the nineteenth century, Catholic and Protestant Christian communities were already well established under Dutch and Portuguese sponsorship. As a result, Muslim communities settled along the coast, engaging in trade and fishing.

For centuries, Islamic education in NTT remained informal and was confined to the mosques and the homes of local *ulama*. It was not until 1910 that the first modern Islamic school (*madrasah*) was established on the island of Alor at the initiative of local nobles.[6] The Dutch soon shut down the school as they perceived it to be a potential hub for political mobilization. Dutch policy in Java and Sumatra in the early 1900s allowed Islamic organizational activities to prosper but no such policy was applied in NTT. In 1925, a few Muslim leaders in Kupang tried to establish a local chapter of Muhammadiyah, the modernist Islamic organization, but were rebuffed by the Dutch.[7] The Dutch were resistant to Islamic organization in NTT because they wanted to prevent the mainly Muslim political exiles from Java and Sumatra from using Islam to organize resistance and because they aimed to create and foster loyal Christian enclaves.[8] The failure of Islam to gain a strong foothold in NTT was due not only to its late arrival in the region but also to Dutch policy, which contributed significantly to the weak political position of NTT Muslims, a situation that persists to the present day.

The first *madrasah* that did not get closed down by the Dutch authorities was Madrasah Al-Chairiyah, which was built in Kupang in 1935. Alor re-established the aforementioned banned *madrasah* in 1938, which was later followed by another *madrasah* in the neighbouring western island of Solor in 1942. Nonetheless, the number of madrasah in NTT paled in comparison to the number of Christian missionary schools. For many Muslim students the only schooling option available in their areas were the Christian mission schools.[9]

The growth of Islamic education in NTT only took off during the New Order era (1966 to 1998) when the central government's transmigration program relocated significant numbers of mainly Muslim people from the densely-populated islands of Java and Madura to less-populated regions of the country. The number of migrants into NTT increased tremendously from 10,218 people in 1971 to

5 Munanjar Widiyatmika, Sejarah Agama Islam di NTT (Jakarta: Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se-Indonesia, 1995), p. 53.

6 Ibid., p. 88.

7 Ibid., p. 100.

8 Gerry van Klinken, The Making of Middle Indonesia: Middle Classes in Kupang Town, 1930s–1980s (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 143–144. See also Syarifuddin Gomang, The People of Alor and Their Alliances in Eastern Indonesia: A Study in Political Sociology. MA thesis, University of Wollogong, 1993, pp. 113–117.

9 Educational report in the early twentieth century shows that the student body of some Catholic missionary schools in Ende and Nangapanda were all Muslims. Widiyatmika, Sejarah Agama Islam di NTT, p. 101.

106,053 in 2000.[10] The regime, spurred by its developmentalist policies, was also expanding its bureaucracy by opening up offices in the far reaches of the country and staffing them with mostly non-locals, many of whom were Muslims.[11] The influx of Muslims into NTT had naturally created a demand for Islamic education, which saw the sharp rise in numbers of Islamic schools. In 1993, there were 128 madrasah in the province with 12,992 students.[12] Presently, every district (*kabupaten*) has at least one *madrasah* to serve the growing Muslim population in the province. As in other parts of Indonesia, most madrasah in NTT were private.[13]

Currently, despite the increased number of Islamic schools especially madrasah in NTT, most of these schools were in poor shape and woefully underfunded. State madrasah (*madrasah negeri*) receive the bulk of their funding from the Ministry of Religious Affairs while private *madrasah* (*madrasah swasta*) and Islamic boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*) largely depend on school fees and donations. Moreover, many of the private *madrasah* are in remote areas where they serve the educational needs of the small and often impecunious Muslim communities there; hence, they are typically very rudimentary, lacking

Table 4.1 Number of Islamic schools and students in NTT in 2012[14]

	Total schools	*Total students*
Madrasah Swasta (private)	192	23,050
Madrasah Negeri (state)	49	13,644
Pondok Pesantren	23	2,158
Total	264	38,852

10 Riwanto Tirtosudarmo, Dampak Politik Migrasi: Perbandingan Orde Baru dan Pasca Orde-Baru: www.bkkbn.go.id/materi/Documents/DITDAMDUK,%20Seminar%20Exekutif/Dampak%20Politik%20Migrasi%20Final.pdf (accessed on 26 April, 2016).

11 In 1984, the Ministry of Religious Affairs finally opened up a small office, Kantor Urusan Agama (KUA), in sub-district (kecamatan) Amarasi, about 50 km outside of the provincial capital Kupang, to cater to the religious needs of the small Muslim minority there, which comprised civil servants, community health centres (puskesmas) staffs and traders, mainly from South Sulawesi, Alor, and Java. Laporan Penelitian Konfigurasi dan Transformasi Kehidupan Beragama Menjelang Tinggal Landas Pembangunan Nasional di Kecamatan Amarasi Kabupaten Kupang Propinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur (Badan Penelitian dan Perkembangan Agama, Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia: Jakarta, 1991), pp. 99–104, 206.

12 The number of madrasah comprises all formal levels from primary (Ibtidaiyah) to senior high school (Aliyah). Widiyatmika, Sejarah Agama Islam di NTT, p. 102.

13 It is quite an achievement since in some places in NTT Islam did not even make its way until well into the 1950s. Laporan Penelitian Konfigurasi, p. 221.

14 Buku Statistik Pendidikan Islam Tahun Pengajaran 2011–2012, Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia: http://pendis.kemenag.go.id/index.php?a=artikel&id2=bukustat20112012#.VhQJ7aTGYy5 (accessed on 4 October 2014).

many basic facilities, and not having enough qualified teachers to teach general subjects such as science or mathematics.

The decentralization laws of 1999 worsened the already precarious financial situation of these madrasah. These laws greatly enriched district governments but these local governments often refused to provide funding to madrasah since they see Islamic education as being part of religious affairs, which is one of the policy areas that still remains under the ambit of the central government in Jakarta (see Chapter 2 for more details). As a result, poorly equipped schools with dilapidated infrastructure and serious shortages of certified teachers are the norm. Many Islamic schools, sometimes in cooperation with the *Kanwil Agama*, have managed to find creative ways to deal with the problems, even to the extent of bucking directives from the ministry, as we will see later in the chapter. In the context of the argument made in this chapter, it is important to note that the politically weak status of the Muslim minority in NTT forces them to seek ways outside official channels (i.e. local governments) to sustain Islamic education in the province, especially given that the support from the central government is less than robust.

Christian–Muslim socio-political dynamics in the NTT in the late colonial era

The province we now know as NTT had yet to come into existence during the colonial period. Administered by a Dutch Resident, Assistant Resident, and native elites, who formed the *pamong praja* bureaucracy, it was known as the Timor residency, with Kupang as its capital.[15] When it came to dealing with Islamic influence, as mentioned above, Dutch policy differed between the western part of the Indies, namely Java and Sumatra, and the eastern part, which included Timor. In Java and Sumatra, Dutch Islamic policy was guided by the ideas of C. Snouck Hurgronje, the well-known Dutch Islamologist. The thrust of this policy was to promote the religious practice of Islam while drastically curtailing its political tendencies.[16] Furthermore, the Dutch administration did not allow Christian missions to establish schools in Java, forcing them to the Outer Islands, including Timor.[17]

In contrast, Dutch policy in east Indonesia took on a wholly different tack. Here, due to the significant number of Christian adherents, both Catholics and Protestants, the Dutch administration instead promoted Christianity as a bulwark

15 Sejarah Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur, Pemerintah Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur: http://nttprov.go.id/ntt/sejarah-provinsi-nusa-tenggara-timur/ (accessed on 7 March 2015).

16 Harry Benda, "Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje and the Foundations of Dutch Islamic Policy in Indonesia", The Journal of Modern History 30:4 (December 1958), pp. 338–347.

17 The ban was lifted in 1851 but the construction of mission schools was still very limited due to pressure from the local Islamic kingdoms and the Dutch's reluctance to inflame the sensitivity of the Muslim majority population. J.S. Furnivall, Educational Progress in Southeast Asia (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1943), pp. 16–18.

against the encroaching influence of Islam in the region. This was a three-pronged strategy: first, the Dutch colonial administration completely surrendered responsibility to educate locals to the Catholic and Protestant missionary organizations; second, the colonial administration radically restructured local societies by constructing roads and demolishing traditional villages, while urging the native population to live in new villages in small families as a form of social control; and third, the colonial administration enlarged local political structures by creating new administrative districts and appointed Catholic or Protestant tribal chiefs to govern them.[18] Furthermore, until the end of the colonial era in 1949, the Dutch colonial government financed all church activities in the Timor residency including the missionary schools.[19] The limited presence of Islam along with the vigorous promotion of Christianity by the Dutch authorities allowed Christianity to prosper in all aspects of life in the eastern part of the Netherlands East Indies.

By mid-1941, there were 247 Catholic schools with 33,522 pupils and 572 teachers in the Timor residency, alongside eighty-seven Catholic priests. In the island of Sumba alone, there were sixty-nine Protestant schools and about 6,000 students. A similar situation was also taking place in other major islands in the Timor residency.[20] Graduates of the missionary schools went on to populate the ranks of the enlarged bureaucracy as the Dutch carved out Muslim enclaves to make way for new (Christian) districts. Sons of pagan native rulers were also sent to the missionary schools with the hope that they would convert and later rule over their territories as Christian chiefs.

The Muslims in the Timor residency in the early 1900s were isolated from the socio-political changes that were happening elsewhere in the region. Their access to education was very limited and most Muslim parents refused to send their children to the missionary schools lest they be converted to Christianity. Religiously neutral government schools were scarce and could only be found in urban areas like Kupang. Madrasah education did not provide adequate educational qualifications for Muslim students to pursue a career in the bureaucracy, a problem that was compounded by the schools' poor quality. Poor education would have effectively barred Muslims from joining the bureaucracy, even without the Dutch preference for Christians. The result was that the newly established Christian intelligentsia thoroughly dominated the socio-political arena in

18 Jan Sihar Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink, eds., A History of Christianity in Indonesia (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), p. 239.

19 Subsidies from the Dutch colonial government to missionary schools steadily increased from 497,863 Dutch florins in 1875 to 892,819 in 1916. Alfian. Muhammadiyah: The Political Behavior of a Muslim Modernist Organization under Dutch Colonialism (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1989), p. 143. See also Aritonang and Steenbrink, A History of Christianity in Indonesia, p. 138.

20 Aritonang and Steenbrink, A History of Christianity in Indonesia, p. 240.

the Timor residency, forming a nascent bureaucratic elite class who would later dominate local politics in the post-independence era.[21]

Christian–Muslim socio-political dynamics in NTT in the post-independence era

The Christian intelligentsia was the beneficiary of the extensive schools established by the missionaries. Their educational qualifications allowed them to enter careers in the colonial bureaucracy, in which they remain embedded until well after the independence. During the immediate years following Indonesia's independence (1945–1950), the Timor residency became part of the State of East Indonesia (*Negara Indonesia Timur*, NIT), a federal state of the Republic of the United States of Indonesia (*Republik Indonesia Serikat*, RIS) that was under de facto control of the Dutch with Makassar as its capital.[22] The NIT kept the pre-independence governing structure intact, which meant that there was no radical change to the bureaucratic and political dominance of the Christian intelligentsia. However, many of the Christian intelligentsia were also nationalists and wanted to dissolve NIT into the Indonesian republic, which ultimately led to NIT's demise in 1950.[23] Sukarno dissolved RIS on 17 August 1950 and turned Indonesia into a unitary state. Some parts of the now defunct NIT made up the Lesser Sunda province (*Provinsi Sunda Kecil*) that comprised Bali, Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB), and Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT).[24] It was not until 1959 that NTT finally became a province in its own right.

When a series of regional rebellions broke out in the Outer Islands in the late 1950s, this new bureaucratic ruling class in NTT was sucked in along with those in the neighbouring Sulawesi and Maluku. As a way of appeasement, the central government in Jakarta issued Presidential Decree no. 69/1958, which created NTT as a new province in 1959, largely delineated along religious lines.[25] The new province was overwhelmingly dominated by the Christian faith. Muslims,

21 Jacqueline Vel, "Reading Politics from a Book of Donations: The Moral Economy of the Political Class in Sumba", in Gerry van Klinken and Joshua Barker, eds., State of Authority: The State in Society in Indonesia (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 2009), p. 123.

22 Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Koesalah Soebagyo Toer and Ediati Kamil, Kronik Revolusi Indonesia, Jilid II (1946) (Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 1999), pp. 559–564. Opponents of NIT mocked NIT's pro-Dutch orientation by calling it Negara Ikut Tuan (a state that followed its master). M.C. Ricklefs, A History of Modern Indonesia since c.1200 (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), p. 276.

23 Predictably, pro-Dutch Christians in eastern Indonesia were opposed to the dissolution of NIT, which then sparked a rebellion in South Maluku islands to establish the Republic of South Maluku (Republik Maluku Selatan, RMS). Ricklefs, A History of Modern Indonesia, p. 285.

24 Sejarah Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur, Pemerintah Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur: http://nttprov.go.id/ntt/sejarah-provinsi-nusa-tenggara-timur/ (accessed on 7 March 2015).

25 In the eastern part of Indonesia, the provincial delineation was along religious lines: Islam for Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB), Hindu for Bali, and Catholic and Protestant for NTT. van Klinken, The Making of Middle Indonesia, pp. 192–193.

while constituting about 10 per cent of the population, were mainly located at the western end of this collection of 566 islands, closer to the neighbouring province of NTB.[26] The seat of power, the capital Kupang, was at the eastern end of the province, and in 2014 comprises 98 per cent Christians and only 1.5 per cent Muslims.[27] In short, the establishment of NTT resulted in a much smaller and thus politically weak Muslim population that was separated from the Muslim-majority province of NTB.

While Christians dominated the bureaucracy in NTT during the New Order period (1966–1998), at this time the highly centralizing regime was firmly in control of the local political situation. The central government placed its own appointees in leadership positions at the local levels of governance. The regime typically appointed people who were not drawn from the local elites to these positions, while appeasing the local elites with non-political positions such as *adat* (traditional) leaders or as heads of state-sanctioned farmers' groups and religious associations.[28] Similar to the New Order's self-contradictory policy toward Aceh as seen in Chapter 3, the regime tried to exploit the unique local traditions of NTT such as its ethnic diversity and inter-religious tolerance to promote its own notion of national identity based on unity in diversity, while at the same time tightening its control over the province.[29] Anthropologist Rita Smith Kipp noted that:

> The Indonesian government [New Order regime] attempts both to control ethnicity and to use it. That it requires control goes without saying: ethnic and regional secession recurrently threaten modern states; short of that, ethnic animosities can flare into violence, destroying lives and property. On the other hand, indigenous cultures provide a repository of traditions and symbols that leaders can use to forge national identity and foster a sense of community.[30]

The highly centralized New Order regime, with its tentacles reaching deep into the society, ensured that local aspirations for political autonomy were never realized. However, the regime's active promotion of local traditions, cultures and history cultivated an invigorated localized identity that permeated the locally

26 According to the 2010 census, main urban areas in the western part of NTT such as Ende consisted of 26 per cent Muslims while in Manggarai Barat it was 19.2 per cent. Data Sensus Penduduk 2010, Badan Pusat Statistik Republik Indonesia: http://sp2010.bps.go.id/index.php (accessed on 1 September 2014).

27 Badan Pusat Statistik: Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur: http://ntt.bps.go.id/ (accessed on 1 September 2014).

28 Y. Argo Twikromo, The Local Elite and the Appropriation of Modernity: A Case of East Sumba, Indonesia. Ph.D diss., Radboud University Nijmegen, 2008, p. 13.

29 Rita Smith Kipp, Dissociated Identities: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in an Indonesian Society (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 110–114.

30 Ibid., p. 105.

staffed state institutions in NTT. This localized identity persists until the present day, as we shall see below.

During the New Order period, the rate of transmigration shot up as NTT became incorporated into the regime's overall development program.[31] These transmigrants were engaged in the agricultural sector as small landholders planting rice, cassava, and other cash crops. In noting the poor socio-economic background of the transmigrants, Heinz Arndt wrote:

> It must be remembered that most of the transmigrants are not average Javanese. The majority are recruited from among the landless and poorest. To them, even an average migrant's standard of living, including a piece of land of their own, represents a big improvement.[32]

While the influx of Muslim transmigrants from Java and Madura during the New Order era did increase the size of the Muslim population in NTT, they were too geographically dispersed to be organized politically.[33] The population of NTT grew from 2,737,166 in 1980 to 4,953,967 in 2013.[34] The arrival of impoverished Muslims from Java and Madura did not have any discernible effect on the political strength of the Muslim community in NTT. Increase in the number of Muslims did not translate into an organizational movement that could be used to bargain with the more dominant Catholic and Protestant communities, because these transmigrants were isolated in rural parts of the province and too preoccupied eking out a living. In remote areas where there were sizeable transmigrant populations, the Ministry of Religious Affairs built madrasah and set up *kecamatan*-based Office of Islamic Affairs (KUA) to serve the religious needs of these communities. But with respect to political organization, no such activity was known to take place in areas outside of the major towns.

31 The New Order regime's five-year development plan (Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun, Repelita) showed a remarkable increase of transmigration in a fifteen-year period. Repelita I (1969–1974) enlisted 45,133 families but the number went up exponentially to 81,000 families in Repelita II (1974–1979) and 535,474 families in Repelita III (1979–1984). Dietrich Kebschull, Transmigration in Indonesia: An Empirical Analysis of Motivation, Expectations and Experiences (Hamburg: Verlag Weltarchiv GmbH, 1986), pp. 50–51.

32 Heinz Arndt, "Transmigration: Achievements, Problems, Prospects", Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies 19:3 (1988), p. 56.

33 According to the Ministry of Workforce and Transmigration, the number of Transmigration Settlement Unit (Unit Permukiman Transmigrasi, UPT) in NTT in 2014 is 12 settlements (mukim) with 1,301 families. Moreover, these mukim are dispersed among the many islands in NTT. Comparatively, the number of transmigrants in NTT is less than other provinces such as West Kalimantan (19 settlements, 4,250 families), Central Sulawesi (21 settlements, 4,055 families), and South Sumatra (13 settlements, 3,090 families). www.depnakertrans.go.id/pusdatin.html,9,542,ptrans (accessed on 21 October 2014).

34 Badan Pusat Statistik, Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur: http://ntt.bps.go.id/linkTabelStatis/view/id/18 (accessed on 1 September 2014).

Meanwhile, in urban areas such as the provincial capital Kupang, Muslim communities were more visible, as evidenced by the number of mosques and vibrant commercial activities. Many of these urban Muslims were West Sumatran, Bugis and Makassarese migrants who were predominantly traders. The concentration of Muslims in the economic sector happened by default since they were shut out of the Christian-dominated politics and bureaucracy – the situation was akin to the experience of the Chinese in Java. The historical grip of Christians on the provincial bureaucracy, providing a steady stream of income and pensions explains why middle-class Christians were less inclined to get involved in commerce. There was also social prestige in being a civil servant.[35] Thus, the main religious communities each had their own sphere of influence, but tensions between them later came to a violent head in the months following the fall of Suharto in May 1998.

The Reformasi period: the Kupang incident

The fall of Suharto's New Order regime on 21 May 1998 signalled a new era of political openness in Indonesia. The new democratic space provided opportunities for local elites in NTT to finally realize their political ambitions that had been hitherto suppressed by the New Order regime's system of direct appointment of local leaders. The passing of Law no. 32/2004 on Regional Governance heightened political competitiveness among local elites by allowing direct elections for heads of local governments (*Pemilihan Kepala Daerah*, Pilkada). Political competition in NTT largely takes place between Catholic and Protestant candidates representing the two biggest religious communities in the province. Amidst the electoral tussles between these two religiously dominant communities the political weakness of the Muslim community is laid bare, as exemplified by the so-called Kupang incident in late 1998.

The incident was a communal conflict between Muslims and Christians that broke out in Kupang on 30 November 1998 and lasted for three days. It started on a day of mourning when the whole city was closed down as an act of solidarity with the victims of the so-called Ketapang incident in Jakarta that had happened a week earlier, in which several Christians had been killed.[36] Some people spread the news that a Catholic church, *Gereja Katedral Kristus Radja*, had been

35 Sylvia Tidey, Performing the State: Everyday Practices, Corruption and Reciprocity in Middle Indonesian Civil Service. Ph.D diss., University of Amsterdam, 2012, pp. 63–64.

36 The conflict took place in Jalan Ketapang, which is located in West Jakarta. It started on 21 November 1998 when one of the Ambonese enforcers from a gambling den in the neighbourhood beat up a local Muslim kid. The altercation quickly escalated into a communal riot between the Christian Ambonese and the local Muslims, which in the end resulted in sixteen deaths, along with sixteen churches, three mosques and one school destroyed. One-hundred-and-fifty-nine Ambonese preman (gangsters) were also deported back to Ambon in the aftermath. Jan Aritonang, Sejarah Perjumpaan Kristen dan Islam di Indonesia (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2004), pp. 533–535.

burned down by a group of Muslims, which then sparked retaliatory action by the Christian crowds. They burned and destroyed several mosques and many Muslim-owned shops and thousands of Muslims had to seek refuge in the compound of the provincial police headquarters.[37] Since independence, there had not been previously any inter-religious conflict in NTT, and there has been none since then. NTT has always prided itself as the example par excellence of harmony and tolerance among diverse ethnic and religious groups.[38]

While the severity of the Kupang incident pales in comparison to the more violent and bloody communal conflicts in Poso, Ambon and other places, it is worth looking at why the conflict erupted. According to one study, two interrelated underlying factors led to the conflict: economic and political factors, with Islam being at the centre of them.[39] As mentioned above, the Muslims dominate the commercial sphere in Kupang. The market-oriented development strategy pursued by the New Order regime in the decades leading to the conflict solidified the economic position of the Muslims in Kupang. The Muslim community's prosperity, according to the study, could be measured by the increase in the number of mosques, with construction funding mostly coming from private donations.[40] The wealth of the Muslims created resentment among those who were less successful, which conflict actors exploited.

The political dimension of the conflict, meanwhile, revolved around the power struggle between the Protestants and the Catholics. For the first time in NTT post-independence history, a Protestant, Piet Alexander Tallo, had been chosen to be the governor in 1997, much to the chagrin of the Catholics, who had long held the post. While Protestants constituted a majority in Kupang (about 55 per cent), Catholics formed the majority in the province. The appointment of governors had never given rise to open conflict during the New Order era since the military took up all the important political positions in the province and the regime was more than willing to use force to maintain order. The loss of the governorship in 1997, however, meant the drying up of one of the major patronage sources for the Catholic community, many of whom depended on the provincial bureaucracy for their livelihood.[41] In her study of the local bureaucracy

37 For more details about the chronology of events and supposed reasons for the Kupang communal riot, see: Riza Sihbudi and Moch. Nurhasim, eds., Kerusuhan Sosial di Indonesia: Studi Kasus Kupang, Mataram, dan Sambas (Jakarta: Grasindo, 2001), pp. 42–100.

38 Jamie Davidson, From Rebellion to Riots: Collective Violence on Indonesian Borneo (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008); John Sidel, Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Dave McRae, A Few Poorly Organized Men: Interreligious Violence in Poso, Indonesia (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

39 Sihbudi and Nurhasim, eds., Kerusuhan Sosial, pp. 42–100.

40 By November 2000 (two years after the conflict), there were thirty-two mosques in the city of Kupang, compared to ninety-six Protestant and sixteen Catholic churches. The study states that proportionally speaking the number of mosques is high for the Muslim population size, which is the third largest (about 18 per cent) especially when it eclipses the number of Catholic churches that serve Catholics, who make up 27 per cent of the city population. Ibid., pp. 43, 63.

41 Ibid., pp. 89–94.

in Kupang, Sylvia Tidey estimates that almost half of the city's population relied on the civil service in one form or another.[42]

Thus, one possible explanation offered by Sihbudi and Nurhasim for the Kupang incident is that it was a ploy by disaffected parties who had lost their source of patronage in the governor's office to try to sabotage the new administration and showcase the ineptitude of the governor by fomenting chaos and lawlessness. The provocateurs easily stirred up hostility against the Muslims through the long simmering resentment of their economic success.[43] The Kupang incident is relevant to this study because it shows the weak political position of the Muslims in NTT that led to them being targeted by the two feuding Christian groups. The Kupang incident was the bloody and extreme culmination of this deeply lopsided political dynamics, but less violent and more mundane examples abound in daily affairs, and some will be explored in subsequent sections.

Centre-periphery relations in the Reformasi era

NTT is one of the poorest provinces in Indonesia. Its economic output is predominantly derived from the agricultural and fishery sectors. The NTT government is highly dependent on the central government, with about 84 per cent of its income coming from Jakarta in the form of the Equilibrium Fund (*Dana Perimbangan*), which consists of Revenue Sharing Fund (*Dana Bagi Hasil*), General Allocation Fund (*Dana Alokasi Umum*), and Special Allocation Fund (*Dana Alokasi Khusus*).

Table 4.2 Income for NTT in 2012 (in US$)[44]

Provincial Original Income (*Pendapatan Asli Daerah*)	72 million
Equilibrium Fund (*Dana Perimbangan*)	824.5 million
Other Legal Incomes (*Lain-lain Pendapatan Yang Sah*)	80.5 million
Total Income	977 million

42 She groups these people in a category called "political class", which includes bureaucrats, businessmen, and family members of the bureaucrats. Tidey, Performing the State, p. 40.

43 Tapes that contained an inflammatory speech by Theo Syafei, a Christian Bugis who was a former major general in the military and a PDI-P stalwart, were circulated among the Christians in Kupang before the conflict and was pinpointed as a catalyst that ratcheted up the tension. In the speech he was allegedly heard making derogatory comments about Islam, the Quran, the then President, B.J. Habibie, and the possible Muslim takeover of the political power in Christian-majority areas. "Madu dan Racun di Tangan Theo", Tempo, 15 July 2002.

44 NTT's total budget for the fiscal year 2012 was Rp1.335,183 miliar (US$1.02 billion), which resulted in deficit spending. Tinjauan Ekonomi dan Keuangan Daerah: Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur. (Jakarta: Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia, 2012), pp. 31–32.

In the decentralization era, the bulk of the budget allocated to the Islamic education sector comes from the central government.[45] As mentioned in Chapter 2, there was a directive from the Ministry of Home Affairs on September 2005, circular (903/2429/SJ), that prohibited local governments from funding "vertical institutions", namely those that fall under the jurisdiction of the central government. This directive particularly hit the cash-strapped madrasah, and after widespread protests the instruction was later amended to exclude madrasah but with the stipulation that additional local funding must not come from the Special Allocation Fund (*Dana Alokasi Khusus*), which is typically used to fund education, among others.[46] The Ministry of Home Affairs reaffirmed the directive when it issued the Ministerial Regulation 39/2012 (*Permendagri Nomor 39 Tahun 2012*), which listed the criteria to be used by local governments in funding "vertical institutions". The order came under heavy criticism especially from officials of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, who were hoping that local governments could pick up part of the tab for funding madrasah in their provinces.[47] The Home Affairs Minister later backtracked and issued circular 503/961/SJ on 28 December 2012 to clarify the "misunderstanding". He stated that there was no restriction per se for local governments to fund Islamic schools; only that the funding need not be mandatory and continuous.[48]

The Minister's pronouncement meant that – after a period of uncertainty – local governments now have the full discretion to fund religious schools in their areas. In this context, areas with a strong Islamic presence and politics, such as Aceh and West Java, have chosen to lavish funds on madrasah (see Chapter 3 for the case of Aceh). In NTT, where Christianity permeates every aspect of public space, local governments also channel funds to Christian schools. Catholic and Protestant groups assiduously lobby the local governments to fund their activities, including their schools. The major Protestant church in the province, *Gereja Masehi Injili Timur* (GMIT), set up a foundation called Economic Foundation (*Yayasan Perekonomian*) specifically for the purpose of lobbying local governments. GMIT also established the Christian Education Foundation (*Yayasan Pendidikan Kristen*, Yapenkris) as an advocate for its network of schools. In 1976, GMIT-run schools in NTT numbered at 445 and increased to

45 Ministry of Religious Affairs' funding for madrasah is channelled through School Operational Assistance (Bantuan Operasional Sekolah, BOS), which is based on the number of students enrolled in the madrasah and their level. The figures of 2015 are as follow: for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (primary school), it is Rp800,000 per student per year; for Madrasah Tsanawiyah (junior high school), it is Rp1,000,000 per student per year; and for Madrasah Aliyah it is Rp1,200,000 per student per year. Bidang Pendidikan Islam, Kantor Wilayah Kementerian Agama NTT: www.pendisntt.com/berita-144-juknis-bos-pada-madrasah-ta2015.html (accessed on 12 January 2015).

46 Risti Permani, "Educational Challenges with Special Reference to Islamic Schooling", in Chris Manning and Sudarno Sumarto, eds., Employment, Living Standards and Poverty in Contemporary Indonesia (ISEAS Publishing: Singapore, 2011), p. 186.

47 "Kementerian Agama Protes Larangan Hibah APBD Untuk Madrasah", Tempo, 6 January 2013.

48 "Mendagri: Tak Ada Larangan Madrasah Dapat Dana APBD", Republika, 7 January 2013.

548 schools by 2012.[49] There are also more ministry-appointed teachers (*Pegawai Negeri Sipil*, PNS) working at GMIT schools, compared to teachers hired directly by Yapenkris, indicating a heavy reliance of GMIT schools on the *Dinas Pendidikan NTT* for support.[50] Moreover, there is much overlapping between members of the political establishment (including the bureaucracy) and the church, which further blurs the line between the sacred and the profane. The symbiosis represents what Frank Cooley, a church historian, calls "the forged bond between religion, politics and government in NTT".[51]

The dominance of Christian groups means that there is barely any money left for Islamic schools in NTT.[52] Islamic schools in urban areas such as Kupang, Manggarai and Ende fare better than their counterparts in the countryside since the Muslim communities in major towns are better off and able to make financial contributions to schooling themselves. But the overall state of Islamic education in NTT is bleak and would have been worse without community support. The head of the NTT chapter of Indonesian Ulama Council (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, MUI) claimed that: "We Muslims cannot rely on the local government for assistance because they will not give us anything. The central government, too, ignores us. We only look to our own community for support".[53] While the political weakness of the Muslim community in NTT can be partially chalked up to its lack of numbers relative to the Catholics and Protestants, absence of support from the central government also plays a major role. First, there is no coherent policy from the central government when it comes to buttressing the position of Islam in the country especially in non-Muslim-majority areas. The central government in Jakarta does not rely on political instrumentalization of Islam as a means to strengthen the state legitimacy, unlike its counterpart in Malaysia, and does not need to formulate a coherent official policy to further enhance its Islamic credentials. The aforementioned conflicting policies between the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Religious Affairs

49 Frank Cooley, Memperkenalkan Gereja Masihi Injili Timor, Benih Yang Tumbuh XI (Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian dan Studi Dewan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia, 1976), p. 241. See also Melky Manafe, Eksistensi SD GMIT di Rote Ndao. MA thesis, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, 2013.

50 In 2010 there were 2,450 PNS teachers teaching at GMIT schools, compared to 461 Yapenkris teachers. "Penarikan Guru PNS dari Sekolah Swasta agar Ditangguhkan", Suara Pembaruan, 23 December 2010. See also Melky Manafe and Bambang Ismanto, "Eksistensi SD GMIT di Rote Ndao", Satya Widya 29:2 (December 2013), p. 69.

51 Cooley, Memperkenalkan Gereja Masihi, p. 348.

52 For fiscal year 2012, the total Bansos (social assistance) allocation for education in the NTT's provincial budget was Rp22,580,480,000 (US$1.8 million) though it was not stated how much of this funding went to madrasah. Laporan Keuangan 2012 (Pejabat Pengelola Keuangan Daerah, Pemerintah Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur). According to the Head of Planning at the Regional Agency for Planning and Development (Badan Perencanaan dan Pembangunan Daerah, Bappeda), Wayan Darmawan, the funding for madrasah is outside the jurisdiction of the provincial government, so therefore there is no allocation for it in the provincial budget (APBD). But he also mentioned that some madrasah do occasionally receive Bansos funding from the provincial government in the form of project grants. Personal communication, 3 November 2014.

53 Interview with Abdul Kadir Makarim, head of the NTT chapter of MUI, Kupang, 10 April 2014.

regarding local government funding of madrasah is a good example of the incoherence of the central government. Despite being the patron of Islamic education, the budget of the Ministry of Religious Affairs is stretched too thinly to adequately fund the tens of thousands of Islamic schools that are scattered across the country. One official at the Ministry of Religious Affairs relates that:

> I wish we [ministry officials] could do more to help the financially struggling madrasah but we are just not able to. Our budget is not sufficient and most local governments do not want to help out because they see it as our responsibility.[54]

As a result, the situation of the politically weak Muslim community in NTT remains unchanged, as it is stuck between the hegemonic rule of the Christians and the inability of the central government to help. Ties between the Christian political class, the churches and Christian group such as GMIT create a positive feedback mechanism that helps to perpetuate lopsidedness in communal resource distribution and power allocation.

One example that clearly illustrates the skewed power relations between Christians and Muslims came in the aftermath of the 2007 mayoral election in Kupang. The winner, Dan Adoe, a Protestant backed by a coalition that also included Islamic parties, promised to appoint a Muslim to the position of Regional Secretary – a Catholic person already took up the position of deputy mayor. Instead of making good on this promise, Adoe left the position unfilled for years for fear of angering his Christian supporters.[55] The fact that the newly elected mayor was able to ignore his coalition partners' price for supporting his candidacy attests to the deeply skewed balance of power in the province.

More mundane everyday examples of this unequal power relation abound. One official at the *Kanwil Agama* NTT lamented that:

> It is common that official functions here are held during Muslim prayer times, for example on a Friday afternoon or in the evening during *Maghrib* prayer. Attendance is usually mandatory for civil servants, even for us Muslims. We then have to make up the prayer later, so we can attend these events. It is not ideal and quite insensitive to our needs, but what can we do?[56]

But as we can see in the following section, social adaptability and creativity in problem solving have helped the Muslims in NTT to deal with this bleak sense of powerlessness.

54 Interview with Imam Tolhah, Kepala Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Pendidikan Agama, Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, Jakarta, 19 December 2012.

55 Tidey, Performing the State, p. 120.

56 Interview with Husen Anwar, Ketua Bidang Pendidikan Agama Islam, Kanwil Agama NTT, Kupang, 7 April 2014.

Policy implementation at the local level

Similar to other parts of Indonesia, Islamic education in NTT falls under the jurisdiction of the provincial office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), better known as the *Kantor Wilayah Agama* (*Kanwil Agama*). Geographic disparity certainly plays an important role in shaping the relationship between *Kanwil Agama* NTT and MORA in Jakarta. The two places are separated by 1,900 km. Supervisory visits from the ministry are infrequent, and MORA mostly leaves the *Kanwil Agama* NTT to its own devices.

Ironically, the lack of funding from the ministry has a positive effect on the way Islamic education is managed in NTT. Most Islamic schools in NTT, as we can glean from the preceding section, are resource-poor and struggle to stay afloat. One major issue the schools have in common is a lack of qualified and certified teachers. According to an official at *Kanwil Agama* NTT, the ministry in Jakarta specifically disallows non-Muslims from teaching in madrasah but this directive disadvantages the schools in NTT since there is a serious shortage of Muslim teachers in the province.[57] At the same time, there are qualified Christian teachers who are willing to teach in the madrasah. This is the conundrum faced by the *Kanwil Agama* NTT and the madrasah. In the absence of strict supervision from the ministry, *Kanwil Agama* NTT decided to defy the directive and occasionally allowed Christian teachers to teach in madrasah. One Catholic teacher was even promoted as assistant principal of a madrasah in Mangarai.[58]

Another reason for recruiting Christian teachers, according to the *Kanwil Agama* NTT, is cultural. Muslim teachers from outside of NTT, especially Java and Sumatra, might not be familiar with the unique NTT culture that values tolerance and diversity. Christian teachers might not share the same faith as their students, but at least they are natives of NTT and typically come from the local area where the madrasah is located and are often connected to students by kinship ties. Therefore, they have a much deeper understanding of the culture of the madrasah, which is coloured and shaped by local traditions.[59] For the *Kanwil Agama* official, this flexibility is the ultimate expression of what NTT stands for, even if this approach contradicts the one-size-fits-all policy that is passed down from the ministry in Jakarta.

57 Ibid. Legally there is no explicit prohibition against recruiting non-Muslim teachers to teach in madrasah. Article 29 of the Central Government Regulation Number 19/2005 Concerning National Education Standard (Pasal 29, Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 19/2005 Tentang Standar Pendidikan Nasional) clearly states three qualifying criteria for hiring teachers: 1) minimum academic qualification; 2) tertiary educational background in education or relevant discipline; 3) teaching certificate for the intended school level. Undang-undang Sisdiknas, UU RI Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 dan Undang-undang Guru dan Dosen, UU RI Nomor 14 Tahun 2005 (Jakarta: Asa Mandiri, 2009), p. 113.

58 Another example, a pastor was confirmed as a permanent teacher in a pesantren in Ende. Interview with Husen Anwar, Ketua Bidang Pendidikan Agama Islam, Kanwil Agama NTT, Kupang, 7 April 2014.

59 Ibid.

Joel Migdal's "state in society" framework helps explain why such intransigence occurs at the lower rungs of the hierarchy of the state. It will be recalled that the state, according to Migdal, projects an image of a coherent whole, but in practice it is comprised of various components that might be working at cross-purposes with the overall prerogatives of the higher officials. Agents of the state in the field are much closer to the society than the policymakers in the capital; hence, their actions are typically shaped or at least partially influenced by the culture and norms of their immediate surroundings, which sometimes lead the state's local agents to pursue their own agendas that contravene those they are asked to implement.[60] The action of the *Kanwil Agama* NTT is an example of this phenomenon. These local officials are what Migdal terms "implementors", who work at the state's "dispersed field offices". Their main responsibility is to carry out orders from their superiors in the "central office".[61] But given the distance from the capital, and their proximity to the local community, the implementors are often caught between the state's totalizing mission and the particularities and demands of the local community. More often than not, they also come from the local area themselves and share its values and sentiments. It is no wonder then that they decide to cast their lot in with the local community they serve, instead of the state institution they work for.

Of course, this is not true in every case. Locally recruited staff of the local office of the ministry can also shift into the opposition mode and become staunch cheerleaders and executors of central government policies while paying scant attention to the influence of local culture. The Sarawak case in the second half of this chapter will further demonstrate this institutional behaviour, which I term "federalized institutional identity". In the case of NTT, the officials of the *Kanwil Agama* assume a "localized institutional identity", in which they direct their institutional orientation locally, instead of toward the MORA in Jakarta.

The lowest rung in Migdal's "state in society" is what he calls the "trenches". In the context of this research, the trenches are the schools where the educational policies of the state are finally realized and enforced. The schools are mostly in contact with the state educational office in the province, the so-called "implementors", and not the national ministry.[62] The principal of one madrasah in Kupang explained that while the school did follow the national curriculum – which was mandatory – it did have wide latitude to adapt the curriculum to the local culture and the school's own norms and values. He also added that "local application" (*penerapan lokal*) of the school curriculum happens in the classroom, typically by the teachers' own initiative. For instance, teachers can apply examples from NTT's

60 Joel Migdal, State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform Each Other and Constitute One Another (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 15–16.

61 Ibid., pp. 117–124.

62 Interestingly, supervisory visits to madrasah are carried out by officials of Christian schools, and vice versa. It is called cross supervision (pengawasan silang), which seems to be quite a common practice in NTT. Interview with Ahmad Betan, principal of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Kupang, 8 April 2014.

traditions of inter-communal tolerance when explaining the concept of pluralism found in the *Pengetahuan Agama Islam* curriculum.[63] It is for this reason that the school preferred teachers from NTT, rather than from Java, since local teachers are more understanding of NTT's unique culture of religious harmony and tolerance.[64]

On the other hand, as previously mentioned, the weak tradition of Islamic learning in the province allows the central government to play a deeper role in developing the province's Islamic education by providing technical assistance. One example is the final exam questions used for the National Standard Madrasah Exam (*Ujian Akhir Madrasah Berstandar Nasional*), which in NTT are solely prepared and provided by MORA in Jakarta.[65] In some areas of Indonesia where Islamic education has long been part of the local tradition, the ministry allows Islamic educators, typically a group of teachers from several schools on a district (*kabupaten*) level organized in a Teachers' Working Group (*Kelompok Kerja Guru*, KKG), to formulate their own exam questions based on the guidelines (*kisi-kisi*) supplied by the ministry. In NTT's case, there is no such Islamic educational legacy; therefore, the schools are dependent on the ministry for guidance and instructions. The schools' dependence on technical assistance from the MORA is mainly due to the dearth of locally grown Islamic educators and the weak tradition of Islamic learning in the province.

In sum, there are opposing dynamics at work when it comes to how the schools in NTT deal with the ministry. On the one hand, the schools have discretion to interpret and adapt the national curriculum to the particular aspects of their local culture. On the other hand, the lack of Islamic educational legacy in the province means that there is a shallow pool of resources for the schools to draw upon and thus forcing the schools to turn to the ministry for technical assistance such as formulating the content of the curriculum and developing assessment and academic achievement standards. It is this dichotomy that characterizes the nature of Islamic schools in NTT.

The localized institutional identity found in state institutions overseeing Islamic education in NTT is also the result of high institutional complexity. As demonstrated earlier, there are two interrelated aspects that explain this high institutional complexity: the post-1999 jurisdictional wrangling between MORA and the *Dinas Pendidikan* (decentralized provincial department of MOEC) over the funding of madrasah; and the weak supervision of MORA over *Kanwil Agama* NTT and the madrasah in the province. The reluctance of *Dinas Pendidikan* NTT to provide regular funding for madrasah means that madrasah in NTT are completely dependent on MORA and local Muslim communities for assistance. But as mentioned before, MORA operates on an overstretched budget, having to support and oversee tens of thousands of madrasah across the

63 Interview with Husen Anwar, Ketua Bidang Pendidikan Agama Islam, Kanwil Agama NTT, Kupang, 7 April 2014.

64 Interview with Ahmad Betan, principal of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Kupang, 8 April 2014.

65 Ibid.

country, and therefore is unable to allocate significant resources to madrasah in NTT. This dearth of funding from MORA forces *Kanwil Agama* NTT and the madrasah to become self-reliant and find creative solutions to their problems, which contributes to the localized institutional identity found in the province. MORA's resource shortage, coupled with the geographic distance between NTT and Jakarta, also means that supervisory visits from Jakarta are rare, which weakens the central government's influence over *Kanwil Agama* NTT and the madrasah while at the same time strengthening their localized identity.

Sarawak

Islamic education in Sarawak in the late colonial period

A British colonial administrator and naturalist based in Sarawak during the time of the first White Rajah, James Brooke, once noted rather colourfully when comparing Islamic practices in Sarawak and the Middle East that:

> From what has been stated respecting their religion, it will be easily seen that the intolerant bigotry of the western Mahometan is entirely unknown to these people; and I am strongly inclined to believe that a rigid Turk, being set down in their country, would scarcely allow that they had a chance of safely skating over the narrow bridge into the paradise of the Prophet.[66]

The observation is a typical characterization of the open and tolerant nature of Islamic practice in Sarawak found even until today. This openness, which has long been seen as the unique characteristic of Sarawak's Islamic practice, is largely a product of the great ethnic diversity in the territory. High social fluidity between the local ethnic groups in Sarawak requires a degree of flexibility from individuals when practising their faith, which sets the Muslims in Sarawak apart from their counterparts in the peninsula, a key point we will visit later in this chapter.

Sarawak was under the suzerainty of the Brunei sultanate until 1841 when the Sultan of Brunei gave it to James Brooke, the so-called "White Rajah", in exchange for pacifying local rebellions. Unlike in peninsular Malaysia, where the sultan is the symbol of Islam and Malay culture in his kingdom, no such cultural tradition existed in Sarawak, even before the arrival of James Brooke. The Sultan of Brunei was far removed from the Muslim communities in Sarawak, which were ruled by local lords appointed by the sultan called *pengiran*. These local lords, while being Muslims, were not seen as religious leaders or symbols, and their authority was mainly derived from controlling trade flows along the rivers, not unlike the *uleebalang* in Aceh. The major difference with Aceh is that there was no distinct and independent ulama group in Sarawak. In the

66 Hugh Low, Sarawak; Its Inhabitants and Productions: Being Notes during a Residence in That Country with His Excellency Mr. Brooke (London: Richard Bentley, 1848), p. 126.

mid-1800s, Islamic education in Sarawak was informally conducted at the mosques, *surau* (small praying spaces) and the houses of local Islamic figures; no traditional Islamic schools like the *pondok* system in peninsular Malaysia or the *dayah* in Aceh existed.[67]

On the other hand, quite a number of Christian missionary schools came into being in the early 1800s and proliferated during the White Rajah's reign.[68] The Malay communities perceived the growth of Christian missionary schools as a threat and decided to establish their own schools. They built the first Malay vernacular school, *Sekolah Kampung Jawa*, in Kuching in 1883. The curriculum in this school was a mix of Islamic instruction and general subjects such as English, mathematics, geography, reading, and history. The school proved to be so popular that the Malay communities built another school in Kuching, *Sekolah Kampung Gersik*, in 1893.[69] The Brooke government also established an obscure educational institution called The School for the Study of Mohamedan Theology in Sibu in 1899, which offered subjects such as reading and writing in both Roman and Arabic scripts, Quranic exegesis (*tafsir*), and mathematics, among others.[70]

A local Indian Muslim community ultimately built a formal Islamic school in Kuching in 1917, which was spearheaded by a local ulama named Datuk Hakim Imam Abang Haji Murshidi. It was eponymously called Madrasah al-Mursyidiah, but later changed its name to Madrasah al-Islamiyyah. Since Sarawak did not have a tradition of Islamic learning, the newly formed madrasah adopted its curriculum from the renowned Madrasah al-Junaid in Singapore. The madrasah's modest objective was to provide local Muslim students with a proper foundation of Islamic learning before they went off to peninsular Malaysia, Singapore or the Middle East for further education. Despite its limitations, Madrasah al-Islamiyyah has managed to produce several prominent Muslim figures in Sarawak such as the former state mufti Datuk Abdul Kadir, Ustaz Anis Abot and Ustaz Awang Pon. Its importance is such that it still exists until today and is managed by a school board, unlike other Islamic schools that fall under the combined jurisdiction of Sarawak Islamic Council (MIS) and the Ministry of Education.[71]

67 Sabihah Osman, Malay-Muslim Political Participation in Sarawak and Sabah 1841–1951. Ph.D diss., University of Hull, 1983, pp. 59–60.

68 Sarawak was under the sovereign rule of the Brooke family (James, Charles and Vyner) from 1841 to 1941 before it was finally designated as a British Crown Colony.

69 Wan Kamal Mujani and Noranizah Yusuf, "Islam dan Missionari di Sarawak: Kesan terhadap Pendidikan pada Zaman Crown Colony, 1841–1941", Sosiohumanika 3:2 (2010), p. 236.

70 Not much else is known about this school or what has become of its fate. Muda @ Ismail Abd Rahman and Farah Salwani Ismail, "Peranan Ulama Sarawak dalam Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam di Sarawak", in Farid Mad Zain and Izziah Suryani Mat Resad, eds., Prosiding Nadwah Ulama Nusantara II Sumbangan Ulama dan Tokoh Agama Borneo: Ulama Penggerak Pembangunan Masyarakat (Bangi: Fakulti Pengajian Islam Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2003), p. 527.

71 Suffian Mansor, "Cabaran Perkembangan Islam di Sarawak Zaman Pemerintahan Keluarga Brooke: Satu Kajian Umum", in Farid Mad Zain and Izziah Suryani Mat Resad, eds., Prosiding Nadwah Ulama Nusantara II Sumbangan Ulama dan Tokoh Agama Borneo: Ulama Penggerak Pembangunan Masyarakat (Bangi: Fakulti Pengajian Islam Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2003), p. 560.

Islamic education in Sarawak in the post-colonial period

The management of Islamic education system in Sarawak differs from that in peninsular Malaysia due to the facts that Muslims are a minority in the state and that the state lacks a formal Islamic learning tradition. As a result, Sarawak has always been dependent on the federal government in Kuala Lumpur, and later Putrajaya, for funding to sustain its Islamic education system.[72]

Among the main issues encountered by Islamic schools in Sarawak are a lack of qualified Islamic studies teachers, especially from the local population, poor infrastructure and learning materials, lukewarm support from the community in general, and inadequate financial support from the state government, including the MIS.[73] MIS is the state religious authority, similar to the ones found in every state in Malaysia (see Chapter 3 for discussion on the Islamic Council of Kelantan or *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan*). The root of most of these problems is money, and MIS does not have enough of it since the small Muslim population in the state means small revenue collection from *zakat* (wealth tax) and *fitrah* (head tax), hence less support to the financially fledgling Islamic schools in the state. Shortage of Islamic studies teachers requires MIS to recruit teachers from the peninsula, which further adds to its financial burden. Ultimately in August 2011, MIS decided to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Education and enlist all of its schools (ten in total) in the Government-Assisted Islamic Schools (*Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan*, SABK), a federal program that entailed dual-management of Islamic schools in the state. MIS still holds authority over the management of school infrastructure and land-holding, but the curriculum, teacher recruitment and training and financial management fall completely under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education.

Table 4.3 Islamic schools in Sarawak in 2014[74]

Types of Islamic school	*Number of schools*
MIS schools under SABK	10
National Islamic School (*Sekolah Kebangsaan Agama*)	3
Private Islamic Schools	2
Sekolah Agama Rakyat (half-time)	8
Total number of schools	23

72 "Najib hands out RM80m for Islamic religious schools", Malaysiakini, 25 April 2017.

73 Abang Haji Atei Abang Medaan, "Matlamat dan Masa Depan Sekolah-sekolah Agama Islam di Sarawak", in Ismail Rahman, ed., Pendidikan Islam di Malaysia (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1992), pp. 86–87.

74 Biro Perkhidmatan Pendidikan Majlis Islam Sarawak: http://bppmis.com/?page_id=1121 (accessed on 8 September 2014).

The two private Islamic schools follow the national school curriculum, in combination with their own specific Islamic curriculum. Meanwhile, Sekolah Agama Rakyat offer purely Islamic education in the afternoon as a complement for students who go to national schools in the morning and as a way for them to strengthen their Islamic knowledge. The supervision of these schools comes from MIS but the council barely provides any financial support as these schools are for the most part self-funded through student fees and community support.

For all intents and purposes, therefore, de facto authority to manage and supervise Islamic education in Sarawak rests in the Ministry of Education in Putrajaya. There is no pre-existing local Islamic education system outside of MIS to compete for influence with the federal government. The State Education Office (JPN) in Sarawak represents the Ministry of Education and the Islamic Education Sector (*Sektor Pendidikan Islam*, SPI) within the JPN oversees Islamic education in the state, which means that JPN is effectively in control of Islamic schools in Sarawak.

Malay-Muslim politics in Sarawak during the late colonial period (late 1800s to 1960s)

One aspect of early British colonization in Malaya was the expansion of the bureaucracy as a way to streamline colonial administration and extend its reach into the population. Even though Sarawak was not officially part of the Crown Colony until 1941, the "White Rajah" who reigned supreme there, James Brooke, introduced a similar state-making policy. Like the British residency system in the peninsula that enlisted the service of local elites, notably the royal families, to indirectly rule the various Malay kingdoms, Brooke also embarked on a co-optation strategy in Sarawak when he took control in 1841. In his case, he preferred to recruit the politically weak Malay chiefs and remove the Bruneian nobles and the Arab *Sharif* from Sarawak, whom he saw as potent challengers to his authority.[75] This policy marked the political ascendancy of the local Malay-Muslim community.

The Brooke administration employed local Malay-Muslim leaders to help rule Sarawak but the scope of their authority was circumscribed; for example, they were no longer allowed to collect taxes for their own personal benefit. Customary positions such as *Datu Patinggi* (premier lord), *Datu Bandar* (lord mayor) and *Datu Temenggung* (commander-in-chief) were repurposed to fit with the bureaucratic objectives of colonial rule. Brooke also created two more customary positions: *Datu Hakim* (head of Malay judges) and *Datu Imam* (head of Islamic affairs).[76] In short, the bureaucratization of colonial rule in Sarawak was not

75 Naimah Talib, Administrators and Their Service: The Sarawak Administrative Service under the Brooke Rajahs and British Colonial Rule (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 7.

76 Sharif are local nobility of Arab descent who claimed to have a direct lineage to Prophet Muhammad through his grandson, Hasan. Osman, Malay-Muslim Political Participation, pp. 29–30.

accompanied by the expansion of Malay traditional authority through bureaucratization of Malay and Islamic affairs as seen in the case of Kelantan in Chapter 3.

Another shared characteristic between the Brooke administration and its counterparts in the peninsula was their minimal interference in Malay and Islamic affairs. The only exception was the creation of the position of *Datu Imam*, which Brooke exploited to rally the Malay community to his side while alienating the more powerful Bruneian nobles and Arab *Sharif*. This move effectively split the local Muslim community, and with the assistance of British naval power, the Brooke administration ultimately crushed all local opposition.

Unlike the sultanates in the peninsula, which parlayed their symbolic religious authority into an official function with coercive powers that came with colonial bureaucratic expansion (see Chapter 3), no such dynamics arose in Sarawak. This was due to two interrelated reasons. First, there was no sultan-like figure, even on a symbolic level, who was perceived as the head of Islamic affairs in the state. The creation of a *Datu Imam* did not change this fact, as the *Datu*'s function was merely to advise the White Rajah on matters related to Islam. Second, due to the absence of traditional Islamic authority, Islam figured very little as a means of attaining political legitimacy in Sarawak. The establishment and expansion of an Islamic bureaucracy in the form of the State Islamic Council (*Majlis Agama Islam Negeri*), such as what occurred in the peninsula, was not replicated in Sarawak. The Sarawak Islamic Council (MIS) only came into existence in May 1955. It was established by the British colonial administration when it took over Sarawak from the Brooke family in 1946.

In this context, political contestation within the Malay-Muslim community in Sarawak simply took on a different shape than what had transpired in the peninsula during the pre-independence period. In the peninsula, conservative traditional elites instrumentalized Islam to gain a stake in the colonial order. In Sarawak, political contestation within the Malay-Muslim communities took the form of class struggle between the traditional Malay elites and the rising Malay intelligentsia, a product of the Malay vernacular education.

In what ways then did political dynamics within the Malay-Muslim community affect the nature of education among the Malay-Muslims in Sarawak during the colonial period? As mentioned above, James Brooke and his successor, Charles and Vyner, preferred to staff the state bureaucracy with local Malays, a ploy to split the local Muslim communities and isolate the supporters of the Sultan of Brunei. In the first few decades of the White Rajah's reign, Brooke did not expend much effort in developing an organized educational system that could produce educated human capital, despite the incorporation of Malays into the colonial bureaucracy. His main focus at this time was to quell uprisings, expand territory and cultivate support from the inland Dayak tribes. In this latter regard, the Malay elites were useful because many of them had gained their diplomatic skills through their long experience of river trading.

It was only in the late 1800s and early 1900s that native education in Sarawak became more formalized. This happened as the kingdom finally stabilized and needed more employees for low-level clerical positions. Pioneering Malay

schools such as *Sekolah Kampung Jawa* and *Sekolah Kampung Gersik* came into in Kuching, and were soon followed by similar schools in other urban areas in Sarawak. In 1903, Charles Brooke, the successor to James Brooke, created the National College, also known as Government Lay School, for the sole purpose of training native Sarawakians, mainly Malay, Iban and Chinese, for clerical positions in the colonial government.[77] In 1931, the Malay section of the National College merged with *Sekolah Kampung Jawa* and became *Madrasah Melayu*, popularly known as the Malay College, styled after the elite Malay College of Kuala Kangsar (MCKK) in the state of Perak.[78] Unlike MCKK, however, *Madrasah Melayu* did not exclusively cater to the traditional Malay elites but all Malays regardless of their class and socio-economic background. This policy ultimately led to the creation of a new Malay intelligentsia, whose political presence would become apparent in the post-World War II years when many of the new Malay intellectuals argued for independence during the so-called "cessation debate" in Sarawak.[79]

At the same time, in the early decades of the twentieth century, Islamic education still remained largely informal and unsystematic, mainly due to colonial policy that encouraged the growth of Malay vernacular schools and the preference of Muslim parents to send their children to the government schools given the better job prospects of graduates, especially in the colonial administration. As mentioned above, the Muslim community established the first modern Islamic school, *Madrasah Mursyidiah* (later known as *Madrasah al-Islamiyyah*), in 1917 but its objective was to prepare students to further their religious studies in the peninsula and elsewhere in the region, not for employment in the colonial government. Other formal Islamic schools did not exist at this time. Meanwhile, the Islamic Studies (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*) subject was largely absent from the Malay vernacular schools in Sarawak until the federal government made it mandatory in 1976.[80] *Majlis Islam Sarawak* waited three decades after its inception in 1955 before it

77 The classes at the National College were ethnically segregated with each major ethnic group – Malay, Iban and Chinese – was taught in its own native language. Malay students would attend religious classes in the morning at Sekolah Kampung Jawa and Sekolah Kampung Gersik before going to the National College at 9:30am. Osman, Malay-Muslim Political Participation, pp. 70–71; Sanib Said, Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946–1966: The Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 24.

78 English was used as a medium of instruction and students were selected from the Kuching area by the more meritocratic entrance exam. Vernon Porritt, British Colonial Rule in Sarawak, 1946–1963 (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 310.

79 The cessation debate sharply divided the Malay-Muslim community into two camps. The traditional elites wanted Sarawak to be ceded into the British Empire (cessationists) while the new Malay intelligentsia agitated for independence (anti-cessationists). Said, Malay Politics in Sarawak, p. 25.

80 The Education Act of 1961 made Islamic education subject mandatory in schools that have fifteen or more Muslim students. The requirement was not implemented until much later despite guaranteed funding from the federal government due to severe shortage of qualified local teachers and the unwillingness of many teachers from the peninsular to work in Malaysian Borneo. Zainal Abidin Abdul Kadir, "Pendidikan Islam di Sabah dan Sarawak: Masalah dan Perlaksanaannya", in Ismail Rahman, ed., Pendidikan Islam di Malaysia (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1992), p. 61.

started to build its own network of Islamic schools, starting in Kuching and gradually in major population centres in Sarawak. By 2011 it had established ten schools (eight secondary and two primary). The *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan*, described in Chapter 3, pursued bureaucratic expansion and the growth of modern Islamic education system to help traditional elites to entrench their interests and suppress politico-religious rivals. The *Majlis Islam Sarawak* engaged in no such manoeuvre. Unlike in Kelantan, jockeying for power within the Malay-Muslim community in Sarawak occurred in the Malay vernacular school system. The weak tradition of Islamic learning, and the fact that Islam was not suited for political mobilization meant that the Islamic education system in the territory was largely disconnected from political contestations.

The post-World War II years saw the rising influence of the Malay intelligentsia in Sarawak. This intelligentsia was the product of the expanding Malay vernacular school system. Despite their educational qualifications, they were largely shut out of the upper ranks of the colonial bureaucracy, which remained the sole preserve of the traditional elites (*perabangan*).[81] Many of these non-elite, educated Malays took up teaching positions in Malay vernacular schools across the state. The friction between them and the *perabangan* began to intensify in 1946 when the Brooke dynasty abruptly ended. This collapse resulted in a raging debate and even violent struggle between the cessionist faction, led mostly by the *perabangan*, who favoured Sarawak to be folded into the British Empire and the anti-cessionist group that was predominantly comprised of Malay intellectuals, who wanted Sarawak to declare independence.[82] The leaders of the anti-cessionist movement were mainly Malay civil servants and school-teachers. They staged major acts of protests against cession, such as a mass resignation of 400 civil servants and 87 Malay teachers, which led to the closing of 22 schools.[83] Despite receiving widespread support, the anti-cessionist movement had fizzled out by 1951 due to internal fissures and repression by the colonial authorities. The two feuding Malay factions managed to come to an uneasy truce in 1952, until the proposal that Sarawak should join the federation of Malaysia in 1961 once again put them at loggerheads.

Class and historical animosity, as opposed to religion, took centre stage in these contentious politics. Islam, and by extension the Islamic schools, did not make a mark on the political landscape of Sarawak until well after the territory joined the Malaysian federation on 16 September 1963. Moreover, even Islam finally became more prominent in Sarawak's Malay-Muslim communities in the

81 Osman, Malay-Muslim Political Participation, p. 94.

82 Rosli Dhoby, a seventeen-year old teacher of a Malay school in Sibu and a member of the Rukun Tigabelas group, a radical off-shoot of the anti-cessionist movement, stabbed to death the newly appointed colonial Governor of Sarawak, Sir Duncan Stewart, during a street parade in December 1949. He, along with three co-conspirators, were arrested and later hung. "Singkap Perjuangan Rosli Dhoby", Utusan Malaysia, 13 January 2013.

83 Said, Malay Politics in Sarawak, pp. 51–52.

late 1970s, the effect of Islamization on local politics was different than in the peninsula, as we shall see.

Malay-Muslim politics in post-independence Sarawak

The incorporation of Sarawak into the Malaysian federation in September 1963 changed the nature of Malay politics, and the politics of Sarawak as a whole. The Malays in Sarawak, who had hitherto been seen as only distant cousins of the Malays in the peninsula, now found their fates more closely intertwined with their peninsular cousins. They began to be drawn into the pattern of ethno-religious politics that was played out in the peninsula. To be sure, the multi-ethnic makeup and more fluid social interactions in Sarawak have not allowed peninsula-style ethno-religious politics to take root in the state.[84] Nonetheless, Sarawak is still affected by the political discourse emanating from the peninsula. Malay leaders in both Sarawak and the peninsula find themselves in a symbiotic relationship: Malay leaders in Sarawak depend on the might of the federal government to help buttress their authority, especially given their minority status in Sarawak; the UMNO-led federal government needs Sarawak for its own self-preservation, often relying on Sarawak MPs to form government.[85] These mutually-reinforcing dynamics have benefitted Islamic education in Sarawak, developed years after the state became part of the Malaysian federation, and it has prospered as a result.

By mid-1962 there were five political parties in Sarawak, each representing a major ethnic group: the Sarawak Party (*Parti Negara Sarawak*, PANAS), which was mainly established by the conservative cessionist Malay elites; Sarawak Natives Front (*Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak*, BARJASA), which largely comprised the anti-cessionist Malay intelligentsia; Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), which represented the Chinese community; Sarawak National Party (SNAP) and *Parti Pesaka Sarawak* (PESAKA), which was formed by the leaders of Iban tribe, the largest ethnic group in the state.

In the early 1960s, the federal government used the question of Sarawak becoming a member in the Federation of Malaysia in its attempt to intervene in the local politics of the state. To do so, it employed a style of ethno-politics that was familiar in the peninsula. The federal government played up the threat of communism, implying complicity of the Chinese community since the membership of Malayan Communist Party was predominantly Chinese.[86] The ploy

84 "Report: Umno's absence key to harmony, says S'wak DCM", Malaysiakini, 31 December 2016.

85 According to Faisal Hazis, there are five demands from the federal government that have to be met by the Malay leaders in Sarawak: safeguarding national interests; maintaining Malay political dominance; ensuring BN's continued dominance in the state and parliamentary elections; transferring the rights to the state's petroleum and gas reserves to the federal government; and providing political stability. Faisal Hazis, Domination and Contestation: Muslim Bumiputera Politics in Sarawak (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Studies, 2012), pp. 83–96.

86 Said, Malay Politics in Sarawak, p. 88.

succeeded in unifying the Malay and Iban parties, with both ethnic groups considered as *Bumiputera* (native sons of the soil), behind the Malaysian federation plan while alienating the anti-Malaysian Chinese party SUPP. Sarawak ended up joining the federation on 16 September 1963.[87]

The second intervention of the federal government into Sarawak's internal politics happened barely three years after the federation agreement was signed in 1963. Sarawak's first Chief Minister, Stephen Kalong Ningkan, a Christian Iban leader from SNAP, decided to adopt a Sarawak-first stance against the wish of the centralizing federal government by refusing to speed up the use of Malay language in Sarawak and replacing the expatriates in the state bureaucracy with locals, among others. The federal government then engineered a constitutional crisis in Sarawak that led to the ouster of Stephen Kalong Ningkan in 1966.[88] Another Christian Iban leader from SNAP, Tawi Sli, promptly replaced him and who later proved to be more compliant. After the 1969 state election, the state legislature chose a Muslim leader from the Malay intelligentsia, Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, as the Chief Minister. This marked a watershed moment in Sarawak because it was the first time a member of a minority group became the Chief Minister, a political arrangement that has remained unbroken until the present day.

It was clear from the start that the federal government in the peninsula had no intention of respecting the autonomy promised to Sarawak in managing its own internal affairs. The two aforementioned examples foreshadow the type of relationship we see today between Sarawak and the federal government, which overwhelmingly tilts in favour of the federal government in Putrajaya.[89] The unequal relationship also holds true when it comes to the question of Islam and its place in the Malaysian society. Unlike in the peninsula, where Islam is constitutionally enshrined as the official religion of the federation, Sarawak is exempted from such a clause by Paragraph 15(1) of the 1963 Agreement. Consequently, Sarawak has formal autonomy to manage its own religious matters without any interference from the federal government. The agreement also explicitly states in Paragraph 15(3) that no federal financial assistance should be permitted for Islamic schools or education without the concurrence of the state government. The same paragraph also mentions that such financial assistance should instead

87 SUPP wanted Sarawak to remain independent and therefore rejected the plan to join the Malaysian federation in 1963.

88 The crisis started with a dispute over legislation on land tenure, which would allow land ownership for non-natives. The opponents of the legislation sought help from the federal government, which subsequently declared a state of emergency in Sarawak in order to oust Stephen Kalong Ningkan. Michael Leigh, The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974), pp. 102–112; James Chin, "Politics of federal intervention, with reference to Sabah, Sarawak, and Kelantan", The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics 35:2 (1997), p. 101.

89 Another example of the federal government asserting its supremacy is when it overturned the ban on lottery instituted by the then Chief Minister of Sarawak, Taib Mahmud, in 1992. Taib later on did an about-face and supported the federal government's action by saying that the ban would only drive gambling underground and thus worsen the problem. Hazis, The Politics of Islam in Sarawak, p. 211.

be channelled to social welfare programs in the state.[90] Paragraph 17 of the agreement deals specifically with education, stating that "[t]he present policy and system of administration of education in North Borneo and Sarawak (including their present Ordinances) should be undisturbed and remain under the control of the Government of the State until that Government otherwise agrees". It also states that federal requirements regarding religious education (as part of the 1961 Education Act) are not applicable to Sarawak.[91] The agreement makes clear that matters of religion, particularly Islam, and education are integral to Sarawak joining the Malaysian federation. This clause was inserted as a way to pre-empt any future centralizing attempts by the federal government.[92]

Despite the aforementioned delineation of powers stated in the 1963 Agreement, as we can see in the following sections of this chapter, the jurisdictional boundary between Sarawak and the federal government in practice is not clear-cut. This is partly because of the power imbalance that heavily tilts in favour of the federal government, but also because of the strength and adaptability of local leaders in Sarawak, particularly those from the Malay-Muslim communities, who manage to resist the total hegemony of the federal government while at the same time using federal support to further entrench their political influence locally.

One key aspect of the political relationship between Sarawak and the federal government is the patronage system in the form of the heavy reliance of Sarawak on the federal government's resources.[93] In the case of Sarawak, patronage assumes a more important role for Malay-Muslim politicians than for non-Malays as it helps to ensure their political dominance despite their minority status. They selectively use largesse from federal government such as development projects to cultivate support in various constituencies and to ameliorate grievances from the majority Christians. The federal government realized early on at the formation of the Malaysian federation that it needed to co-opt local leaders in Sarawak in order to quell anti-federalist forces and assert its dominance. Federal leaders learned that the most effective way to achieve these objectives was to deploy the government's vast resources as a means to muster political support. Throughout the 1960s, the federal government sponsored local Sarawakian leaders, both Muslims and non-Muslims and on all levels of state governance, by providing them with overseas travel junkets, funding for minor rural projects, and appointments to the boards of federal agencies.[94] The practice

90 Malaysia: Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee, 1962 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office [HMSO], 1963), pp. 9–10.

91 Ibid., p. 12.

92 The agreement also includes a provision that safeguards Borneo from any amendment to the federal constitution that is germane to its interests (Paragraph 30) and the Borneanization of the public service that stipulates a hiring preference of local Borneans over Malaysians from the peninsular (Annex B). Ibid., pp. 30, 44–45.

93 See Hazis, Domination and Contestation; Chin, Politics of Federal Intervention; Leigh, The Rising Moon.

94 Leigh, The Rising Moon, pp. 118–123.

persists to this day as Malay-Muslim leaders in Sarawak still look to the federal government for approval and support in the form of development funding and other material assistance.[95] In return, they provide the federal government with the necessary electoral victory to ensure the continuing dominance of the National Front (*Barisan Nasional*) coalition.[96]

The dominant position of the Malay-Muslim community in Sarawak, despite its minority status, can be attributed to the patronage politics practised by Malay-Muslim "strongmen" such as Abdul Rahman Ya'akub and Taib Mahmud, who use their vast resources to establish client networks that help to cement their political influence, and fend off challenges from non-Muslims. Patronage politics in the form of selective distribution of resources not only assists the Malay-Muslim leaders in Sarawak to maintain the support and unity of the Malay-Muslim community but also allows them to woo and appease the non-Muslims.[97] As a result, the Malay-Muslim community in Sarawak has managed to protect and develop its communal interests by using the resources of both the state government and the federal government, despite being heavily outnumbered by the non-Muslims.[98]

The viability of Islamic education in Sarawak illustrates the strength of the Malay-Muslim community. As previously stated, in the 1963 agreement it was

95 Here is one example from the 2016 Sarawak state election of federal government using development funding as an electoral ploy. "Zahid pledges RM500k for school if BN wins, says opposition 'dry taps' ", Malaysiakini, 29 April 2016.

96 The most recent example is when 49 BN MPs were lured on an agricultural study trip to Taiwan on September 2008, to obviate their supposed impending defection to the opposition camp, planned to commence on 16 September 2008. The defection would have given the opposition coalition a simple majority in the parliament and thus the control of the federal government. Out of the forty-nine MPs, twelve were from Sarawak. Suffice to say the party-jumping ploy orchestrated by the opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim failed in the end and BN remained in power still. "49 BN MPs off to Taiwan beginning today", Malaysiakini, 8 September 2008.

97 Faisal Hazis uses Joel Migdal's notion of "strongmen" to describe the rise and longevity of the Malay-Muslim leaders in Sarawak. The rift within the non-Muslim communities especially the Dayaks, namely Iban, the largest Dayak group in the state (about 30 per cent of the population) also contributes to the Malay-Muslim dominance. The notion of Iban unity poses a real threat to the political position of the Malay-Muslim leaders in Sarawak, and it is imperative to co-opt at least one Dayak faction as a part of the leading political party, as represented by the PESAKA component of Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB). Hazis, Domination and Contestation, pp. 98–99. For factors that explain the divisions within the Iban community, see Peter Searle, Politics in Sarawak, 1970–1976: The Iban Perspective (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 48–66; James Chin, "PBDS and Ethnicity in Sarawak Politics", Journal of Contemporary Asia 26:4 (1996), pp. 512–526; and Jayum Jawan, The Iban Factor in Sarawak Politics (Serdang: Penerbit Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, 1993).

98 Majlis Islam Sarawak (MIS) headquarters in Kuching, known as Kompleks Islam, cost RM100 million (US$30.8 million) to build with funding exclusively from Tabung Baitulmal Sarawak, a state agency in charge of the collection and management of zakat (wealth tax), wakaf (donated land) and sedekah (alms). "Kompleks Islam Sarawak", Utusan Malaysia, 29 January 2009. Meanwhile, the Islamic Department of Sarawak (Jabatan Agama Islam Sarawak, JAIS), the secretariat of MIS, receives RM36.5 million (US$11.2 million) in 2014 from the federal government. www.sarawakiana.net/2014/09/peruntukan-rm365-juta-kepada-jabatan.html (accessed on 30 September 2014).

agreed that the federal government would not give financial assistance to Islamic schools and Islamic instruction in national schools without the concurrence of the state government. With the federal government becoming more Islamized in the wake of Islamic revivalism in the late 1970s, and the Malay-Muslims in control of the state government in Sarawak from 1969, an Islamic agenda assumed an increasing role in the relationship between the federal government and state government in Sarawak. This Islamic agenda included funding for Islamic education, despite Sarawak's initial fear that Islamizing efforts would disrupt religious tolerance.[99] Nevertheless, the instrumentalization of Islam as a political means assumes a different dynamic than what is happening in the peninsula.

Facets of Islamization: locally moderate, nationally conservative

Malay-Muslim leaders in Sarawak and the peninsula employ Islam as a political tool in markedly different ways. These differences became visible from the late 1970s onwards as Islamic revivalism became deeply embedded in the Malaysian political landscape. While Islam as a faith remained essential to Malay identity in both Sarawak and the peninsula, it took on a different political significance in these two places. In the peninsula, Islamic political discourse began to saturate the public sphere and offer the federal government an alternative way to govern and seek political legitimacy. The two major Malay-Muslim parties in the peninsula, UMNO and PAS, heatedly engaged with each other within this Islamic political paradigm.

The same dynamics did not take place in Sarawak, even though its Malay-Muslim leaders also used Islamic symbolism to strengthen their political influence. Instead, they used Islam as a political tool to gain approval from and curry favours with the federal government. This involved merely displaying an Islamic façade.[100] Islam does not serve as a source of political legitimacy for Malay-Muslim leaders in Sarawak, unlike for their counterparts in the peninsula, due to lack of saliency of Islamic discourse.[101] In Sarawak, Malay-Muslim leaders also used Islam to politically unite the heterogeneous Muslim communities consisting of Malays,

99 In 2014, the Ministry of Education provides RM9.05 million (US$2.8 million) funding for ten Government Assisted Islamic Schools (SABK) and RM310,000 (US$95,135) for 12 People's Islamic Schools (Sekolah Agama Rakyat, SAR) in Sarawak. "Baik Pulih: RM9.05 juta diberi kepada SABK, RM310,000 diberi kepada SAR", Borneo Post, 26 September 2014.

100 The federal government typically tries to avoid meddling in socio-political affairs in Borneo unless if they become a threat to its political existence. For example, the federal government does not engage in the Islamization process in Sarawak with the same zeal like it does in the peninsula since it does not want to unnecessarily inflame the non-Muslim majority and will continue to do so as long as Sarawak remains a reliable vote bank that ensures the continued dominance of an UMNO-led federal government. Chin, Politics of Federal Intervention, p. 116.

101 Faisal Hazis, "The Politics of Islam in Sarawak" in Faisal Hazis and Stanley Bye Kadam-Kiai, eds. Politics and Local Government in Sarawak (Kota Samarahan: Penerbit Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 2013), p. 206.

Melanau, and Kedayan. Islamic identity for the Muslim communities in Sarawak transcends their ethnic differences. The need for political unity became more pressing when Malay-Muslims took on the political leadership of Sarawak, following the 1969 election. A split within the Muslim communities would have allowed the numerically superior non-Muslim ethnic groups to dominate state politics, as happened earlier in the 1960s when the Iban community was in control. Therefore, in the context of the political constellation in Sarawak, Islam serves as a distinct identity marker that differentiates the Muslim and non-Muslim communities when it comes to resource distribution and power arrangements; its influence is much less so in the social realm, as we will see in this chapter.

Despite social fluidity among the various ethnic groups in Sarawak, political representation still largely breaks down along ethno-religious lines, with the main fissure separating Muslims and non-Muslims.[102] The Malay-Muslim leaders in Sarawak do use Islam to further entrench their position within the Malay-Muslim communities but not with the similar rhetoric found in the peninsula. They do so primarily by enmeshing Islam in development politics such as building mosques and providing financial assistance to Islamic schools and organizations. The Islamic revivalism in the past thirty years has served to intensify the Islamic identity of the Malay-Muslims in Sarawak, which has, in turn, translated into increasing political support for the only Malay-Muslim party, PBB, which won all the seats it contested in predominantly Malay-Muslim constituencies.[103] Despite the strong ethno-religious appeal in Malay-Muslim constituencies, as evident by the electoral support for PBB, one finds a different type of Islamic discourse employed in Sarawak as electoral strategy, compared to the type of Islamic discourse found in the peninsula.

Table 4.4 PBB's performance in the parliamentary elections, 1982–2004[104]

	1982	*1986*	*1990*	*1995*	*1999*	*2004*
% of votes won by PBB in Muslim-majority seats	77.56	68.15	74.72	82.83	68.71	82.75
Number of seats won by PBB in Muslim-majority seats	5 out of 5	5 out of 5	7 out of 7	8 out of 8	7 out of 7	7 out of 7

102 The exception is the Dayak-majority constituencies, where Chinese candidates have been known to succeed against Dayak candidates. But the political representation on the whole is still clearly divided along ethno-religious line as no non-Muslim candidates ever contest, much less win, in Muslim-majority constituencies. Jayum Jawan and Victor King, Ethnicity and Electoral Politics in Sarawak (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2004), pp. 48–53.

103 After the 2013 general election, Sarawak has thirty-one parliamentary seats and twenty-nine of them belong to BN component parties in Sarawak. PBB holds sixteen out of the twenty-nine BN parliamentary seats, eight of which are in Muslim-majority districts. The other eight seats are in Muslim-minority districts, several of which are represented by PBB's non-Muslim MPs, a testament to PBB's appeal across the religious line through the power of patronage. Election Commission of Malaysia: www.spr.gov.my (accessed on 7 March 2016).

104 Hazis, Domination and Contestation, p. 169.

In essence, Malay-Muslim leaders pursue an Islamization strategy in Sarawak not because they need political legitimation as a result of a dominant role of Islam in public discourse locally. They are not compelled to engage on a theological level about what the normative Islamic governance should be, unlike in the peninsula, where the two main Malay-Muslims parties, UMNO and PAS, battle each other to claim sole interpretive authority over the place of Islam in Malaysian public life. For instance, issues such as the implementation of the *hudud* law and the use of the term Allah by non-Muslims, which find strong resonance among the Malay-Muslims in the peninsula, do not acquire similar traction among the Malay-Muslims in Sarawak.[105] As a result, one finds the nature of Islamization of the Malay-Muslim societies in Sarawak since the 1970s to be more moderate, in contrast to the more conservative dynamics found in the peninsula.

Malay-Muslim leaders in Sarawak pursue local Islamic policies that facilitate the practice of Islam in people's daily lives. It means implementing development projects to build mosques, *surau* (small prayer room or building), and Islamic schools. Furthermore, these "Islamic projects" are often timed to coincide with the state or parliamentary elections, a clear illustration of their objective as an electoral strategy. The heightened religiosity among Muslims in Malaysia since the late 1970s was also apparent in Sarawak as reflected in the increasing number of "Islamic projects" since the mid-1980s to accommodate the rising demand from the Muslim community in the state.

Table 4.5 "Islamic projects" promised or distributed by the BN leaders during Sarawak elections, 1982–2004 (election years in bold)[106]

	Number of "Islamic projects"	*Total costs of "Islamic projects" (in RM millions)*
1982	2	n.a.
1983	0	0.0
1986	1	0.06
1987	6	0.128
1990	5	5.405
1991	13	0.94
1995	14	0.865
1996	8	7.01
1999	7	14.57
2001	8	6.25
2004	16	2.255

105 "Adenan: Sarawak BN parties united against hudud", The Star, 2 April 2015.

106 "Islamic projects" here refer to the construction of mosques, surau and Islamic schools, in addition to financial grants to Islamic organizations in the state. Hazis, Domination and Contestation, p. 195.

The strategy has so far proven to be successful as demonstrated by PBB's wins at the polls since the early 1980s. Despite using Islam as a means for political survival, the Malay-Muslim leaders have not transformed the tone and substance of Islamic discourse in the state to parallel the high-pitched, deeply acrimonious climate in the peninsula. Faisal Hazis states that there are two reasons for this divergent trend: the absence of an influential Islamist movement that can challenge Sarawak's official Islam; and the need for the Malay-Muslim strongmen–politicians to allay the fear of the non-Muslims.[107]

Turning to the first of these explanations, the absence of an influential Islamic movement that can offer a counter-narrative to that presented by the state government has allowed the state's leaders to pursue moderate Islamic-oriented policies. The biggest Islamic organization in Sarawak is *Harakah Islamiah* (HIKMAH), which was established in April 1969, with the then Chief Minister, Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, as its first patron.[108] HIKMAH is a *dakwah*-based organization, with the overarching objectives of strengthening the Muslim community in Sarawak and reaching out to the non-Muslims (not necessarily to convert them). While HIKMAH is registered as a non-governmental organization, it is inextricably linked to the state government, so much so that its main office building is located on state-owned land.[109] HIKMAH's *dakwah* efforts typically involve cultural approaches such as sports and music, paying acute sensitivity to the fluidity of inter-religious norms of Sarawak. In other words, HIKMAH's modus operandi is no different than that practised by the Malay-Muslim leaders in the state, which is based on moderation, tolerance, and flexibility.

Despite its dominance in the Islamic civil society milieu, HIKMAH is still challenged to a certain extent by another Islamic organization, namely *Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia Negeri Sarawak* (ABIMNS). ABIMNS is the state chapter of the *Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia* (ABIM), an Islamic civil society organization founded in 1972 by Anwar Ibrahim, the former Deputy Prime Minister and currently the Opposition leader. ABIMNS is a mirror image of its peninsular counterpart, as it promotes a modernist version of Islam that eschews cultural influences deemed to be un-Islamic (*bid'ah*). This strict interpretation of Islam sets ABIMNS on a collision path with local Islamic organizations that adopt a more culturally-flexible approach, particularly HIKMAH. ABIMNS members claim that HIKMAH's *dakwah* through cultural and sporting activities is not sanctioned by the Quran. ABIMNS also charges HIKMAH with being highly

107 Ibid., p. 194.

108 Before August 1994, HIKMAH was known as Angkatan Nahdatul Islam Bersatu (BINA). Juanda Jaya, "Organisasi Dakwah Bukan Kerajaan di Sarawak: Sejarah dan Peranan" in Anwar Fakhri Omar, Ezad Zaraai Jamsari and Jaffary Awang, eds., Islam di Sarawak dan Sabah (Bangi: Penerbitan Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2003), pp. 89–96.

109 The land is owned by Lembaga Amanah Masjid Sarawak, a state agency in charge of building and maintaining mosques. One example of the closeness of HIKMAH to the state government is when it suffered financial woes between 1985 and 1991 after some of its leadership decided to join the opposition against the state government. Ibid., p. 92.

politicized and dominated by self-interested politicians only looking to expand their influence; it is not neutral and therefore unfit to act as a vehicle for *dakwah*.[110]

The challenge by ABIMNS has failed to put a dent in HIKMAH's supremacy as the most influential Islamic organization in Sarawak for two reasons: first, the state government provides unstinting support to HIKMAH, as already explained; and second, ABIMNS's main strategy of "internal dakwah" (*dakwah dalam*) emphasizes individual behavioural change over political organizing, and so does not constitute a significant threat to HIKMAH. Despite its obvious disagreement with HIKMAH's alleged collusion with the political establishment, ABIMNS has never mounted any serious challenge to the state government. ABIMNS realizes that a hard-line approach toward *dakwah*, similar to those widely prevalent in the peninsula, would not sit well with the more open inter-religious dynamics found in Sarawak. Therefore, its programs solely focus on education, such as kindergartens and Quranic schools and youths. As such, ABIMNS has had little impact on public Islamic discourse, unlike in the peninsula.[111]

The second aspect that explains the moderate nature of Islamization efforts in Sarawak is the awareness of the Malay-Muslim leaders that they should avoid upsetting the non-Muslim majority by making overt displays of religious piety. The fear that Islam could disrupt the tolerant multi-ethnic coexistence in Sarawak was evident when Sarawak agreed to join the Malaysian federation in 1963. Paragraph 15(1) of the agreement states that Islam should not be the official religion of Sarawak as it is in the peninsula.[112] As mentioned above, the notion of Dayak unity presents a clear threat to the Malay-Muslims' hold on power, and the Malay-Muslim leaders try to avoid at all cost providing any pretext that might rally the Dayak tribes against them. Since most Dayaks are Christians, any effort to exert a more aggressive form of Islamization in Sarawak might have such an effect.[113] Accordingly, the prevalent thinking among Malay-Muslims in Sarawak is that religious conflict should be avoided whenever possible. One official at the Islamic Council of Sarawak (MIS) said that the rigid form of Islam practised in the peninsula was simply not relevant to Sarawak, and even if it was implemented it would only cause unnecessary tension with the non-Muslim community, which, in turn, would not be good for the Muslim minority in the state.[114]

Furthermore, since the political legitimacy of the Malay-Muslim leaders in Sarawak does not depend on them adopting more orthodox views as a way to

110 Ibid., pp. 96–99.

111 For in-depth analysis of ABIM's role during the wave of Islamic revivalism in Malaysia, see Mohammad Nor Monutty, Perception of Social Change in Contemporary Malaysia: A Critical Analysis of ABIM's Role and Its Impact Among Muslim Youth. Ph.D diss., Temple University, 1990, pp. 155–198. See also Chapter 5 in this book.

112 Malaysia: Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee, pp. 9–10.

113 "Hudud will be 'last straw' for Sabah, Sarawak," Free Malaysia Today, 6 April 2015.

114 Interview with Latif Abdul Karim, Ketua Sektor Pendidikan Islam, Majlis Islam Sarawak, 28 April 2014.

strengthen their Islamic credentials, they are free to pursue a moderate approach when it comes to Islamic-oriented policies. Even the Islamic party PAS in the peninsula, the agenda of which includes implementation of *hudud* (Islamic criminal law), chooses to exclusively focus on bread-and-butter issues such as poverty, corruption and poor infrastructure when it campaigns against PBB in Malay-majority areas in Sarawak; *hudud* and other religiously controversial issues such as the use of the term Allah in Malay-language bible are nowhere to be found on its campaign platform.[115] In short, Malay-Muslim leaders in Sarawak adopt a moderate approach when it comes to the Islamization process. This approach is borne out of political necessity, lest they incur the wrath of a non-Muslim majority already feeling anxious about the encroachment of Malay-Muslim polemics from the peninsula.[116]

Federalized institutional identity of SPI-JPNS and MIS

Unlike other state Islamic councils in Malaysia, which are deeply involved in Islamic educational affairs in their states especially in establishing the curriculum and hiring teachers, the Islamic Council of Sarawak (MIS) does not have comprehensive control over Islamic education in the state. Since a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between MIS and the federal government in August 2011, almost all Islamic schools in Sarawak now have fallen under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, administered by the ministry's state educational office (*Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Sarawak*, JPNS) in Kuching. The management and supervision of Islamic education are under the purview of the Islamic Education Sector (*Sektor Pendidikan Islam*, SPI) of JPNS. JPNS, in turn, has thirty-one district offices (*Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah*, PPD) across the state with eleven PPDs having their own "religious supervisor" (*penyelia agama*) in charge of Islamic educational affairs.[117] MIS still plays a role in maintaining the school infrastructure and retaining ownership of the land on which most of the schools are built, but the administration and supervision of the Islamic schools, their curriculum and the hiring of their teachers are now firmly within the authority of the federal government. The federalization of Islamic schools in Sarawak raises the questions: how autonomous are federal agents of the state (the staff of JPNS and PPD) in implementing the Islamic educational policies from the ministry? To what extent does Sarawak's multi-ethnic culture influence their institutional behaviour?

A significant majority of the employees of SPI-JPNS and MIS are local Sarawakians. This fact is a result of Borneanization of the civil service, as required by the 1963 agreement. A few staff are Malays from the peninsula, but

115 "PAS launches 'Untukmu Sarawak' to woo Sarawakians", Borneo Post, 27 May 2014.

116 "Sarawak starts feeling the heat of peninsular feud over religion", Aliran Online, 2 August 2014.

117 Only PPDs with large enough Muslim population receive religious supervisors.

most of them have been residing in Sarawak for a long time, mainly because of marriage with locals.[118] Despite the overwhelming representation of Sarawakians in the state educational office, the prevalent institutional sentiment in the office tilts toward the federal government. Local officials mostly emphasize the value of having a uniform standard from the federal government and the need for federal assistance in order to develop Islamic education in the state. There is little evidence of a local institutional identity shaped by the peculiarities of Sarawak's multicultural dynamics. The federalization of local institutional identity seen in Sarawak's state educational office can be explained chiefly by the fact that there has not been a long-standing history of formal Islamic education in the state, unlike in Kelantan. This absence allows the federal government to fill in the void, namely with a uniform standard and a supply of its own teachers. Furthermore, MIS does not engage in oppositional relationship with the federal government when it comes to managing Islamic education in the state, in contrast to the dynamics seen in Kelantan between the *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan*, *Yayasan Islam Kelantan*, and the federal government.

While the majority of the staff of SPI-JPN are Sarawakians, the collective institutional mindset is a mirror image of that in the federal government. One high-ranking official of SPI-JPNS states that there should not be any difference between the policies formulated by the ministry and the way they are implemented and enforced in Sarawak; in other words, local culture has no bearing on the interpretation of federal policies in Sarawak.[119] When officials of SPI-JPNS mix up local culture with Islamic educational policy, they say they do so as part of their obligation to carry out the policies of the ministry, not as a sign of tolerance.[120] In short, the belief in unadulterated implementation of a uniform federal standard by the staff of SPI-JPNS is a testament to the pervasive influence of the federal government on the institutional mindset of SPI-JPNS.

The minimal role of MIS also correlates to the increased federalization in the management of Islamic education in Sarawak. Currently, MIS is only in charge of maintaining the school infrastructure and is allowed to retain the ownership of the land on which the schools are built. As mentioned before, MIS lacks the resources and capacity to manage the schools under its jurisdiction; hence, they had to be given up to the federal government on August 2011. One commonly

118 Interestingly the director of SPI-JPNS is originally from Perak, a state on the west coast of the peninsula. The position was left vacant for almost two years before it was finally filled by a non-Sarawakian appointee in July 2011.

119 Interview with Arip Sa'aya, Pengarah SPI-JPNS (the aforementioned personnel), 10 July 2013.

120 Examples given are when the non-Muslim principals at Sekolah Kebangsaan (National Primary School) Batu Lintang and Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina (Chinese-Type National School) Sematan decided to host Majlis Khatam Quran (an event to celebrate one's accomplishment in finishing the Quran) in their school. Their act was seen not as an accommodation of the religious needs of the Muslim students but as simply following orders from the federal government. Interview with Zaini Hasbollah, Ketua Unit Dakwah dan Syiar Islam, SPI-JPNS, 8 July 2013.

cited reason for this move is that Sarawak lacked a comprehensive Islamic curriculum at the state level due to its weak tradition of formal Islamic education.[121] There is also a dearth of local teachers capable of teaching Islamic subjects and many have to be recruited from the peninsula.[122] Since August 2011, the federal government has provided curricula for all Islamic subjects, along with the mandatory subject testing, and the hiring and placement of teachers. The 2011 MoU nonetheless states that MIS has the authority to assign principals to Islamic schools that used to be under its jurisdiction but in practice the decision has to be done in consultation with SPI-JPNS. In sum, the weakened function of MIS in managing Islamic education in Sarawak directly contributes to the ability of the federal government to exert more influence in the state, namely through SPI-JPNS.

The present-day dynamics illustrate an overwhelming influence of the federal government on Islamic education in Sarawak. In contrast to the case of Kelantan in Chapter 3, where the Islamic Foundation of Kelantan (*Yayasan Islam Kelantan*, YIK) serves as a (largely ineffective) foil against the federal juggernaut, MIS is simply incapable or unwilling to play a countervailing role. Therefore, based on my interviews with two top officials of SPI-JPNS, it is clearly evident that the Islamic education arena in Sarawak is effectively monopolized by the federal government, and the dominance the institutional identity of SPI-JPNS that is heavily in favour of the federal government with nary a consideration for local particularities.

In the context of the argument of this book, the federalized institutional identity seen in Sarawak can be attributed to low institutional complexity between institutions that oversee Islamic education in the state. Weak tradition of Islamic learning and dearth of resources create an institutional dependency within SPI-JPNS and MIS on the federal government, which, in turn, minimizes the friction between the federal government and these Sarawak-based institutions. Localized institutional identity can be developed in opposition to the institutional norms found in the centre, a sign of high institutional complexity, as seen in the case of Aceh and NTT, and to a much smaller and futile extent, with YIK in Kelantan. Such oppositional dynamics are absent in Sarawak, which has allowed the federal government a free rein in managing Islamic education in the state despite the explicit Borneaization of the civil service in Sarawak.

121 Interview with Latif Abdul Karim, Ketua Sektor Pendidikan Islam, Majlis Islam Sarawak, 28 April 2014.

122 "Sarawak kekurangan guru Pendidikan Islam: Ahmad", Borneo Post, 1 August 2014. More recently, an appointment of a religious teacher from the peninsular as the principal of a predominantly non-Muslim Dayak national public high school (SMK Sungai Paoh) in the rural area of Sarikei has caused quite a stir in the state. "Stop appointment of religious teacher to Sarawak rural school, Dayaks tell Adenan", The Malaysian Insider, 7 November 2015.

Implementation and enforcement of orthodox values in schools

Despite the fact that the officials in charge of Islamic schools are heavily influenced by the federal government's Islamizing agenda, the influence of Sarawak's more open multicultural interaction is obvious at the school level. While the staff and students of Islamic schools are predominantly Malay-Muslims, unlike other types of schools that are more ethnically diverse, the schools' collective ethos is a reflection of the society at large. When it comes to implementing the national curriculum, the students' and teachers' lived experience plays a crucial role in how they interpret and adapt the learning materials in order to make them relevant to their lives. Indeed, the principal of one Islamic school says that it is not only necessary for the teachers to adapt their pedagogical style and curriculum to the cultural reality of Sarawak for the sake of relevancy but the action itself can also be seen as a form of *dakwah*.[123] The reason, she explained, was that the teachers and students can better comprehend and internalize the teachings of Islam if they do not find them alien and off-putting.

Since the national curriculum originates from the peninsula, its cultural references are based on the Malay life in the peninsula, which can be starkly different from the Malay-Muslim experience in Sarawak. A personal friend, who is a local Sarawak Malay businessman, relates that his first experience of living in the peninsula for his university study was "shocking and suffocating".[124] This is the point made by the aforementioned principal. An effective *dakwah*, according to her, has to be built on existing culture and should not set out to displace it. Many of the Malay-Muslim students in the school come from multi-religious families, which is almost unheard of in the peninsula, and the pedagogical approach in the classroom has to take that fact into consideration. For example, classroom learning focuses less on differences between religions and sects in Islam and more on common ideals such as universal moral values and that everyone is equal in the eyes of God. Her remark stands in stark contrast to the state Islamic orthodoxy on religious pluralism embodied in the *Pendidikan Islam* curriculum shown in Chapter 1, which it will be recalled, suggests that the *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah* version of Islam as the absolute truth, and therefore superior to other interpretations of Islam and non-Islamic religions. In addition, she also says that curriculum development is actually part of an official ministry policy called Skills for Thinking Creatively and Critically (*Kemahiran Berfikir Secara Kreatif dan Kritis*, KBKK), which tries to encourage students and teachers to expand on

123 Interview with Affida Helmi, principal of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama (SABK) Tun Ahmad Zaidi, Kuching, 8 July 2013.

124 It was a culture shock for him and suffocating in a sense that his peninsular Malay friends were constantly telling him how to behave like a "proper Muslim". Interview in Kuching, 3 July 2013.

the knowledge enclosed in the official curriculum.[125] The teachers use the pretext of KBKK to mould the national curriculum into a form that is more suitable to the local peculiarities of Sarawak. For instance, there is no mention of multi-religious family in the national high school curriculum for *Pendidikan Islam*, which as stated before, is a common aspect of communal life in Sarawak. Local teachers, thus, use KBKK policy to incorporate discussion on multi-religious family in the *Pendidikan Islam* subject in order to make the subject more relevant to lived experience of the students.

Therefore, the school's view that a certain degree of leeway is needed to interpret the *Pendidikan Islam* curriculum is not congruent with the one-size-fits-all policy of the federal government demonstrated earlier. This then brings us to the question of enforcement and compliance: how do the school and federal government (as represented by the state educational office) navigate the apparent ideological differences and manage not to step on each other's toes? Visits of schools by officers from SPI-JPNS take place about two or three times a year, and include financial auditing and classroom observation. Visits from ministry officials are infrequent due to staff shortages and logistical challenges. According to the principal of SMKA (SABK) Tun Ahmad Zaidi, "deviancy" from official directives tends to be overlooked by the officers from SPI-JPNS when they observe the classroom. The focus of their supervision is mainly on the school's financial management, teaching competency, and coverage of materials in the syllabus.[126] Actions taken against "deviant" teaching in the classrooms typically stem from complaints made by parents or local communities, not from these regular supervisory visits.

There is also a contradiction between the homogenous image of the national curriculum and its pluralist implementation at the local level as exemplified by the KBKK policy.[127] When asked about this, an officer at SPI-JPNS says that adaptation is indeed allowable as long as it does not go against the principles of *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah* and corrupt the faith (*aqidah*) of the students.[128] In short, the federal government does acknowledge the importance of local culture

125 The principal herself comes from a mixed background. She was born to Chinese parents but was given up for adoption to a Malay-Muslim couple, who brought her up as a Muslim. She still keeps close contact with her biological parents and whenever she visits them, they always make sure that the served food is prepared using utensils that are pork-free. She keeps referring to her own background as a way to emphasize the importance of adapting the curriculum to the local culture.

126 Interview with Affida Helmi, principal of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama (SABK) Tun Ahmad Zaidi, Kuching, 8 July 2013.

127 The Ministry of Education first introduced the KBKK policy in 1994 as an effort to encourage critical thinking skills among students and move teachers away from simply being a vessel of knowledge to interactive classroom figures that foster innovation and creativity. Rafiei Mustapha, Kajian Tentang Kemahiran Berfikir Secara Kritis dan Kreatif (KBKK) Dalam Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Bahasa Melayu Sekolah Menengah (Putrajaya: Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1998), p. 2.

128 Interview with Zaini Hasbollah, Ketua Unit Dakwah dan Syiar Islam, SPI-JPNS, 8 July 2013.

in curriculum development but somehow this is not apparent in the attitude of the officers of SPI-JPNS. One explanation is that the political dominance of Muslims in Sarawak means that the focus of the religious authorities, including SPI-JPNS, is not on guarding the faithful against competing interpretations of Islam but to defend them against the threat of Christianization, whether perceived or real.

The fear of Christianization is understandable given that the Malay-Muslim minority is surrounded by a Christian majority. Hence, one of the main focuses of SPI-JPNS is to neutralize this "threat", not so much in Islamic schools but more importantly in national schools, where the student body is more religiously and ethnically diverse. SPI-JPNS is in charge of the *Pendidikan Islam* subject and the needs of Muslim students in national schools, which includes protecting their faith against seeping Christianization.[129] According to a SPI-JPNS officer, the Ministry of Education's target is zero "deviant activities" (*aktiviti penyelewengan aqidah*) according to official guidelines, which specifies, among other such activities, the spread of Christian teachings in schools.[130]

As well as education, another issue that relates to the Christianization effort is the practice of inter-religious marriage among Sarawakians. Inter-religious marriage is common in Sarawak even between Muslims and non-Muslims, though the non-Muslim partner has to convert to Islam in accordance with Malaysian law.[131] Nonetheless, it is also common for new Muslim converts to maintain their old non-Islamic lifestyle, and some even revert back to Christianity after the marriage falls apart.[132] The increased influence of rigid Islam as practised in the peninsula in the past three decades has drawn a sharp wedge between the Muslims and non-Muslims in Sarawak when it comes to the issue of inter-religious marriage. The major sticking point in this issue is the requirement to convert to Islam before marriage for non-Muslim partners and the prohibition on reversion out of Islam (apostasy or *murtad*) in the case of a divorce. The Islamic Development Agency of Malaysia (*Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia*, JAKIM), the main arbiter of Islamic orthodoxy in the country, has made its position clear when it comes to inter-religious marriage. While JAKIM encourages inter-religious (i.e. inter-ethnic) marriage for variety of reasons, including as a form of *dakwah*, for fostering inter-ethnic harmony and due to the evidence of high IQ

129 Examples offered by SPI-JPNS of Christianizing efforts in schools include inviting pastors to lead the prayer for Christian students in the school when there's a concurrent Muslim prayer (typically during solat hajat before the national exams), attempts to establish student Bible study groups, and principals who allow Malay-language Bibles to be freely placed in classrooms. Ibid.

130 He also adds that since the state educational department (JPNS) as a whole is dominated by Muslims, Christian activities in schools can still be easily contained. Ibid.

131 Welyne Jeffrey Jehom, "Ethnic Pluralism and Ethnic Relations in Sarawak" in Zawawi Ibrahim, ed., Representation, Identity and Multiculturalism in Sarawak (Kuching and Kajang: Dayak Cultural Foundation and Persatuan Sains Sosial Malaysia, 2008), pp. 98–100.

132 "Sarawak won't adopt anti-apostasy law", The Sun, 14 November 2011.

among children of mixed marriage, it also stipulates that the non-Muslim partner has to convert to Islam and that reversion to their former faith upon divorce cannot be allowed and should be punishable by death.[133] This official view makes its way into the national curriculum for *Pendidikan Islam*, a mandatory subject for all Muslim students in which they also have to sit a national exam.[134] The effect of this orthodox view has slowly taken root in Sarawak over the years with an increasing number of non-Muslims becoming averse to marrying Muslims.[135] While the present-day inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in Sarawak remain more fluid and far less contentious than in the peninsula, the polarization between Muslims and non-Muslims is becoming more apparent as the polemics and orthodox views of the peninsula slowly make their way across the South China Sea, including through the *Pendidikan Islam* curriculum.

Conclusion

This chapter has compared Islamic education in two Christian-majority areas – Nusa Tenggara Timur in Indonesia and Sarawak in Malaysia – analysed through the lens of power relations between the minority Muslims and majority Christians. In relation to the central argument put forth by this book, it is the differences in power dynamics between the two religious communities, explained by factors such as the institutional mindsets of the agencies that oversee Islamic education, patterns of Islamization, and control of resources by the central government, that allow the state in Malaysia to exert more influence and control over Islamic education, compared to the state in Indonesia.

This chapter argues that the sad state of Islamic education in NTT is a result of the politically weak position of the Muslim community in the province, which officially constitutes about 10 per cent of the total population. As we can see from the comparison with Sarawak in Malaysia, where being a minority does not

133 While apostasy is not punishable by death in Malaysia, it is still considered an offence that falls under the purview of various states' syariah legal systems, of which the punishment can range from mandatory counselling and rehabilitation to imprisonment and caning. For JAKIM's view on inter-religious marriage, see: Tanya Ulama JAKIM: http://apps.islam.gov.my/ka/questions/vie "Najib hands out RM80m for Islamic religious schools", Malaysiakini, 25 April 2017 (accessed on 28 April 2017). "Jakim: Kahwin beza agama tidak dibenar", Sinar Harian, 27 September 2013 and http://piswi.islam.gov.my/index.php/himpunan-fatwa/31-himpunan-fatwa/akidah/72-kembali-kepada-agama-asal-murtad-dan-minta-nama-ditukar-semula (accessed on 15 January 2018). For fatwa on the death penalty for apostasy, see JAKIM's e-fatwa page: www.e-fatwa.gov.my/fatwa-negeri/hukum-menolong-orang-yang-hendak-murtad-0 (accessed on 15 October 2014). See also Mohd Aizam Mas'od, "Apostasy is not human rights", Bahagian Aqidah, JAKIM: www.islam.gov.my/sites/default/files/apostasy_is_not_human_rights.pdf (accessed on 15 October 2014).

134 Maimon Husin, Apendi Sahi, Zulhazmi Omar and Mohammad Zaini Yahaya, Nexus Tuntas SPM 4–5: Pendidikan Islam. (Kuala Lumpur: Sasbadi Sdn. Bhd, 2014), p. 47.

135 Hew Cheng Sim, "Praying Together, Staying Together: Islamisation and Inter-ethnic Marriages in Sarawak, Malaysia", International Journal of Sociology of the Family 36, no. 2 (Autumn 2010): pp. 208–214.

translate into powerlessness, the Muslim community in NTT does not have features that could enable it to gain political advantage and resist Christian-centric policies and values promoted by the provincial government and local society. For one, the population of Muslims in NTT is one-third of that in Sarawak and they are also more widely dispersed among hundreds of islands across the province.[136] Another reason is there is hardly any support from the central government in Jakarta to the Muslim community in NTT since Islamic political legitimacy is not very important for the government. Hence, the central government can avoid helping to uplift the political status of the Muslim community in NTT without being accused as "un-Islamic" and therefore unfit to govern. It is within this context that the poor state of Islamic education in NTT can be explained.

In contrast, despite its minority status, the Malay-Muslim community in Sarawak has managed to persist and prosper in the midst of a Christian-majority environment. This political strength is illustrated by the viability of Islamic education in the state, despite competition from the far more numerous national schools. The healthy state of Islamic education in Sarawak is in no small part due to the politically dominant position of the Malay-Muslims in the state, which is in turn backed by the might of the federal government in the peninsula. Their politically privileged position means that Malay-Muslim leaders in Sarawak are able to distribute resources that would not have been available to them were they in the same situation as the Muslims in NTT. Nonetheless, Muslim leaders also need to avoid offending the religious sensibility of the non-Muslim majority. Therefore, the religious controversies that happen with such regularity in the peninsula are not replicated in Sarawak, a testament to the state's more culturally fluid and diverse society. Until now, Malay-Muslim leaders in Sarawak have thus been able to have their cake and eat it too, but it remains to be seen how long will they be able to maintain this delicate balance, as Sarawak is slowly being sucked into the divisive religious discourse that has predominated the peninsula.

136 The head of NTT chapter of MUI claims that census figure is being politicized by the provincial government to keep the Muslims weak. He gives the example of Kupang, where the official figure for Muslims is about 8 per cent of the population but he says that that number should be at least 30 per cent. It means that Muslim community in Kupang deserves a much bigger piece of the political pie than what it currently gets. Interview with Abdulkadir Makarim, Kupang, 10 April 2014.

5 Fusing the sacred and the profane

Integrated Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia

One growing trend in the field of Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia over the past three decades has been the increasing popularity of integrated Islamic schools, especially among Muslim middle- and upper-middle-class professionals. The driving force behind this trend is the pursuit of educational excellence by religiously devout Muslims, who seek the best of both general and Islamic educations for their children through combining the two types of education. This trend also has socio-political roots, however. Integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia and Malaysia trace their origins to campus-based *dakwah* (Islamic propagation) student groups, galvanized by the wave of Islamization that started in the late 1970s. Groups such as *Jemaah Tarbiyah* (JT) in Indonesia and Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement (*Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia*, ABIM) and Pertubuhan IKRAM Malaysia (IKRAM) in Malaysia see education as an integral part of their socio-political movement, the overarching goal of which is to uphold and instil Islamic values in the society. For these groups, therefore, creating an ideal Islamic education is not simply about producing students who excel in both professional and religious spheres; education also serves as a means to mould and enlist young students into a movement to Islamize society, be it in the public or private sector. In short, they see integrated Islamic schools as an ideological training ground for future cadres of their movement. But ideological indoctrination alone is not enough since for Islamization of the society to be successful, the movement's cadres have to be well placed in the society and hold important and strategic positions in the public and private sectors; hence, these schools typically focus on creating all-around academic excellence that pays equal attention to both general and religious education.

As we have seen in this book so far, the state in Malaysia has been more successful than the state in Indonesia in centralizing its control over Islamic education in the country. This chapter, in contrast, strives to illustrate that there are three factors that have allowed integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia and Malaysia to circumvent control of the state and engage in ideological indoctrination of their students: the complicity of state institutions that oversee Islamic education; state Islamic orthodoxies that permit such practices to take place; and the financial autonomy enjoyed by integrated Islamic schools.

In Indonesia, even though Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) vets their curriculum, the supervision of integrated Islamic schools falls under the jurisdiction

of Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC). In Malaysia, integrated Islamic schools fall under the jurisdiction of the Private Education Department of Ministry of Education (MOE), which like MORA in Indonesia, believes that integrated Islamic schools can only be a good addition to the overall development of Islamic education in the country.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Indonesia and Malaysia practise starkly different state Islamic orthodoxies but, despite their differences, they both allow integrated Islamic schools to flourish. The pluralist approach of the state Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia provides the space for deeply conservative values propagated by integrated Islamic schools to co-exist with the more moderate ones promoted by MORA. In Malaysia, in contrast, it is precisely the conservative values of the state Islamic orthodoxy that permit the theologically conservative integrated Islamic schools to operate with relative freedom.

Finally, the financial autonomy enjoyed by integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia and Malaysia allows them to implement their own educational systems, imbued with their particular ideological values, without fearing negative repercussions from the state since the schools do not depend on state funding for viability. The presence of such schools, in other words, points to the heterogeneity of the country's Islamic education system.

The chapter is organized into four sections. The first section discusses the general concept of integrated Islamic education and explains why, according to some Muslim thinkers, there should not be any separation between general and religious knowledge in Islam. The second section explains the historical factors that gave birth to campus *dakwah* movements, which later established integrated Islamic schools as part of their ideological indoctrination efforts. The third section delves into the specific ways integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia and Malaysia engage in ideological indoctrination through their curricula and extracurricular activities. Finally, the fourth section looks at the schools' ideological indoctrination practice in relation to state Islamic orthodoxy and the political dynamics in the country. The chapter concludes by showing that despite the differences in the way the states in Indonesia and Malaysia manage their Islamic education system, integrated Islamic schools keep growing in popularity and are able to continue their ideological indoctrination unimpeded by the state.

Integrated Islamic education in general

According to many Muslim thinkers, Islam, in a normative sense, is a complete way of life (*ad-deen*), where there is no separation between the sacred and the profane, and where all aspects of life can and should be predicated on the teachings of Quran and hadiths (traditions of Prophet Muhammad).[1] In the realm of knowledge, this means that there should not be any divide between secular

1 One of these thinkers is Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, a prominent Egyptian theologian. See Yusuf Qardhawi, Kerangka Idiologi Islam (Bandung: Penerbit Risalah, 1985), p. 33.

knowledge and divine knowledge. In other words, for every scientific explanation that accounts for natural occurrences in the universe Muslims can find in the Quran evidentiary support for it. Objective inquiry is solely an "external" pursuit that is lacking a centre or an essence, which therefore renders it incomplete and superficial. Divine revelation constitutes the essence of human knowledge, out of which objective inquiry emanates.[2] The influential ideologue of Muslim Brotherhood, Syed Qutb, warns that: "It is an error and what an error! – to think that Islam can evolve in the form of an abstract theory limited to intellectual learning and cultural knowledge. Beware of this danger, beware!"[3] In other words, Islamic knowledge, in its perfection, pre-empts all these so-called "modern" discoveries. At least that is the view of leading Muslim thinkers such as Ismail Al-Faruqi, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and Osman Bakar on the subject of Islamization of knowledge.

At the inaugural 1977 World Conference on Muslim Education in Mecca, one of the major points discussed and agreed upon by participating Muslim countries was that there should be an Islamization of knowledge.[4] The focus stemmed from the delegates' concern that secular education was divorced from religious values, and that religious education was devoid of any scientific knowledge. They also shared the deep worry that Muslim countries were lagging behind Western countries in the production and acquisition of modern knowledge. The 1977 conference exhorted Muslim countries not to blindly follow the "secular" way of the west, and instead to carve their own path in keeping up with the advancements of the modern era. The conference delegates pushed for the "Islamic way" of learning by harking back to the golden age of Islam to show how Muslims were able to develop the forgotten scientific knowledge left by the Greeks in a way that was congruent with the teachings embodied in the Quran. The idea for an integrated Islamic education germinated from this desire to combine religious and modern learning.

The notion that Muslim countries had to revamp their Islamic education systems in order to remain relevant in the modern era, in fact, long predated the 1977 World Conference on Muslim Education in Mecca. At the turn of the twentieth century, Muslim thinkers such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida were the main proponents of Islamic educational reforms to allow Muslims to better face the challenges posed by Western colonialism. In the 1920s, a group of young and educated professionals in Egypt called the "new *effendiyya*", influenced by the previously mentioned thinkers, advocated resistance to the encroaching Western culture while at the same time condemning the backwardness of the traditional Islamic education system, which in

2 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Islam and the Plight of Modern Man (Cambridge, UK: The Islamic Texts Society: Cambridge, 2002), p. 13.

3 Syed Qutb, Ma'alim fi al-tareeq [Signposts on the Road] (New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2006), p. 23.

4 Syed Muhammad al-Naquib al-Attas, ed., Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education (Jeddah: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), pp. 37–42.

their opinion was the main reason that the Egyptians were not able to compete with westerners. Some of these new *effendiyya* went on to establish the Muslim Brotherhood (Arabic: *Ikhwanul Muslimin*) in 1928.[5] The same revitalizing dynamic also took place in Indonesia and Malaysia during the same period. The modernist Muslim organization Muhammadiyah, founded in 1912 in Yogyakarta, was motivated to reform the traditional Islamic education in the Netherlands East Indies, which Muhammadiyah members perceived as static (*jumud)* and steeped in practices and beliefs that were inimical to progress. Muslim reformists in British Malaya, such as Syed Sheikh Al-Hadi and Sheikh Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin, undertook similar efforts and established some of the earliest madrasah (modern Islamic schools) that are still in use today. The lasting impact of these and similar reformist Islamic movements in Indonesia and Malaysia is such that the curriculum in most of the Islamic schools in these two countries now is comprised of varying mixes of general and religious subjects. Furthermore, in the past four decades, *dakwah* activists have adopted the Muslim Brotherhood's model of education (*tarbiyah*) in an attempt to shape the character of the young generation through the integration of general education with Quranic precepts.

The problem of duality in Islamic education

The goal of revamping Islamic education is, of course, never monolithic. Different Muslim groups always disagree on the percentage of general subjects to be included in a curriculum, what religious subjects need to be excluded in order to make room for the general subjects, what should be the new focus of the religious education, and whether there should be an integration of teaching of general and religious subjects, among other issues. In the first five decades or so following the advent of the reformist movement, Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia remained bifurcated, meaning that there was a clear demarcation between general and religious subjects in the curriculum. General education was (and is still) seen as necessary for social mobility, while religious education was seen as a means to inculcate the Islamic values that make for a better God-fearing Muslim. The two sides were generally seen as being mutually exclusive, and some Muslims perceived the focus on general subjects, for example, as being at the expense of religious subjects, and vice versa.

It was not until the late 1970s, at the onset of the Islamization movement that swept across most of the Muslim world, that outspoken Muslim activists who were frustrated with the perceived failure of the secular governments of the day, and was motivated by the belief that only Islam could provide the solution to all the ills that were plaguing the society, started to seriously question the philosophy

5 Ehud Rosen, "The Muslim Brotherhood's Concept of Education", Current Trends in Islamist Ideology 7 (November 2008), pp. 116–117.

and practice of duality in modern Islamic education.[6] They thought the separation between the sacred and the profane worlds to be ludicrous as Islam in itself was a complete way of life that did not differentiate between the two. The same logic also applied to addressing the problem of duality in Islamic education. These Islamist activists believed all knowledge must be firmly couched in the concept of *tawhid* (oneness of God) as it is revealed in the Quran. They considered general knowledge not anchored in religious values to be morally deficient and a display of human arrogance against the all-knowing God.

The proposed integration of general and religious knowledge, in other words, the Islamization of knowledge, was an extension of the long historical struggle to reconcile the irrevocable importance of spiritual nourishment and the unrelenting demands of the modern world. Islam, in its pursuit of knowledge and progress, has to carve out its own epistemology of intellectual tradition that turns away from the dominant model of Western scientific inquiry. According to the proponents of Islamization of knowledge, rationalism and objective observation of the natural environment as a means of knowledge production and acquisition has to be situated within the framework of a priori knowledge that is divinely revealed in the Quran. Ismail Al-Faruqi, a former professor of religion at Temple University in Philadelphia, states that there must not be any conflict between scientific inquiry and revealed knowledge since that would either mean that the scientific finding was wrong and needed to be revisited or that the human understanding of the revealed knowledge was unclear and incomplete.[7] Osman Bakar, a former professor of Islamic philosophy at the Universiti Malaya in Malaysia and a student of Al-Faruqi, adds that empirical knowledge provided by Western scientific inquiry is in fact highly valued in the Islamic intellectual tradition but it comes with limitations that only religious consciousness is able to transcend. Physical reality, according to Osman Bakar, is only an aspect of a whole reality, of which it constitutes the lowest level of reality with the highest being God.[8] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a professor of Islamic studies at George Washington University in Washington DC, also discusses at length the notion of God as a reality, who contends that God in His infinitude contains all possibilities, including ones that are unfathomable through empiricism and rationalism, which then can only be unlocked and understood through *al-hikmah* (religious

6 These Islamists were namely driven by the political ideas of Sayyid Qutb of the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwanul Muslimin) in Egypt and Abul A'la Maududi of the Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan. Charles Adams, "Maududi and the Islamic State", in John Esposito, ed., Voices of Resurgent Islam (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Yvonne Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival", in John Esposito, ed., Voices of Resurgent Islam (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, Maududi and the Making Islamic Revivalism (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Olivier Roy, The Failure of Political Islam, trans. Carol Volk (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

7 Ismail Al-Faruqi and Lois Lamya Al-Faruqi, Kumpulan Kertas Kerja Al-Faruqi: Pemikiran Islam Al-Faruqi (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1988), p. 70.

8 Osman Bakar, The History and Philosophy of Islamic Science (Cambridge, UK: Islamic Texts Society, 1999), p. 7.

wisdom).[9] In short, without grounding general knowledge in the immutability of divine revelation one can never achieve the Truth and will always be at the risk of committing immoral acts as one's lust for material progress is not tempered by the deep spirituality that sees everything in the material world as the embodiment of God's virtues.[10] Such tenets form the theoretical foundation of integrated Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Genesis of integrated Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia

Two socio-economic factors explain the rapid growth of campus-based *dakwah* groups in the 1970s that later established the network of integrated Islamic schools we see in Indonesia and Malaysia today. Booming economies and the onset of Islamic resurgence in both societies in the 1970s marked the critical juncture that gave birth to *dakwah* movements on campuses. These two factors contributed to the growing size and affluence of Muslim middle classes in Indonesia and Malaysia and their desire for a more holistic and academically rigorous Islamic education than what the state or the pre-existing private Islamic schools could offer.

Rising affluence of Muslim middle-class

The economies of Indonesia and Malaysia have gone through tremendous changes since the 1970s, with many young educated professionals expanding the ranks of the middle classes. In Indonesia, 60 per cent of the population was categorized as poor in 1970; however, by 2013 the percentage was significantly reduced to 11.47 per cent.[11] On the higher education front, only 18.19 per cent of the population possessed a high school education and beyond in 1994, but the number shot up to 31.41 per cent by 2013.[12] The growth of affluence is also evident in Indonesia's rapid rise in Gross National Income (GNI) per capita from US$510 in 1980 to US$3,580 in 2013, the 1997–1998 monetary crisis notwithstanding.[13]

Malaysia also went through phenomenal economic transformation during the same period. GNI per capita in Malaysia rose from US$1,820 in 1980 to

9 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, The Need for a Sacred Science (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 7–13.

10 Nasr, Islam and the Plight of Modern Man, p. 4.

11 Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia): www.bps.go.id/eng/tab_sub/view.php?kat=1&tabel=1&daftar=1&id_subyek=23&notab=7 (accessed on 7 January 2015).

12 The official data on the website only goes back to 1994 but it is safe to assume that the number was lower in the 1970s and 1980s. Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia): www.bps.go.id/eng/tab_sub/view.php?kat=1&tabel=1&daftar=1&id_subyek=28&notab=1 (accessed on 7 January 2015).

13 The World Bank: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD (accessed on 7 January 2015).

US$10,430 in 2013.[14] There was a sizeable reduction in the poverty rate from 49.3 per cent in 1970 to 3.8 per cent in 2009.[15] Also contributing to the creation of a large Malay-Muslim middle class in Malaysia was the government's affirmative action program, the New Economic Policy (NEP), which was first implemented in 1971. Many Malay-Muslims benefitted from NEP's preferential treatment, especially in the field of education, allowing them to significantly improve their socio-economic status they inherited from their parents. The number of registered professionals broken down by ethnicity is a telling illustration of the educational impact of NEP in establishing a vigorous Malay-Muslim middle class: in 1970, only 3.7 per cent of doctors and 7.3 per cent of engineers were Malays. By 2008, Malays made up 53 per cent of doctors and 53 per cent of engineers. Similar trends occurred in other white-collar professions such as accountancy, law, and architecture.[16]

Islamization of society and its political impact

Another important dimension that explains growing support for integrated Islamic education among Muslim middle-class is the relentless Islamization of society from the late 1970s in Malaysia, and from the late 1980s in Indonesia.[17] Fervent *dakwah* activists on campus, with the exhortation to make Islam the solution to all social problems, created a heightened religious consciousness among university students, many of whom later became parents who currently support the development of integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Since the early 1990s, non-Islamic and prestigious higher institutions of learning such as the Universitas Indonesia (UI), Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) and Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) have provided fertile ground for campus-based *dakwah* groups to plant the seeds for a conservative Muslim middle-class. The *dakwah* groups saw students of these elite institutions as having the potential for career success and to occupy strategic positions within society to implement Islamic reforms. Their prospective usefulness made them *dakwah* targets. On the other hand, *dakwah* activists perceived campuses of Islamic higher institutions such as the State Institute for Islamic Studies (*Institut Agama Islam Negeri*, IAIN) to be the bastion of liberal Islam and heavily influenced by the progressive ideas of

14 Ibid.

15 Jomo Kwame Sundaram and Wee Chong Hui, Malaysia @ 50: Economic Development, Distribution, Disparities (Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2014), p. 69.

16 Ibid., p. 87.

17 There are generally four phases of Islamic revivalism in Malaysia: first phase is 'the reawakening' period (1969–1974); second phase is the "forward movement" period (1974–1979); third phase is "the mainstream period" (1979–1990); and fourth phase is "the dakwah and industrialized Malaysia" period (1991 onward). Shamsul A.B., "Inventing Certainties: The dakwah persona in Malaysia" in Wendy James, ed., The Pursuit of Certainty: Religious and Cultural Formulations (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

Harun Nasution and Nurcholish Madjid.[18] This made these campuses unwelcoming toward the conservative brand of *dakwah* propagated by the Muslim Brotherhood-influenced activists.[19]

University campuses in Malaysia also went through fervent *dakwah* activism in the 1970s. Major Muslim student groups such as Islamic Youth Movement of Malaysia (*Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia*, ABIM) and *Republik Islam*, both heavily influenced by the *tarbiyah* (education) methods of the Muslim Brotherhood, contested for *dakwah* supremacy among the bright-eyed Muslim university students. The departure of Anwar Ibrahim in 1982 to join the ruling party UMNO – he was the co-founder and President of ABIM at the time – took the wind out of ABIM's sails. This blow allowed *Republik Islam*, the more conservative of the two groups, to gain the upper-hand in *dakwah* activities and in gaining control of Muslim students' associations on campus. As a result, the campus climate gradually became more puritanical.[20] Meanwhile, the government established the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) in 1983, with an overarching philosophy to Islamize knowledge and promote the training of Muslim professionals to become well versed in both earthly and divine matters.[21] In contrast to Indonesia, there was a clear and strong symbiotic link between the state and the society in Malaysia, evident in the *dakwah* activists' efforts to influence the political system and the state's attempts to co-opt the leaders and the ideas of the *dakwah* movement for political survival. In sum, *dakwah* movements thrived on university campuses in both Indonesia and Malaysia, with lesser support from the state in Indonesia, and gave rise to the pious Muslim middle-class that would later popularize the idea of integrated Islamic education.[22]

18 Harun Nasution, a prominent intellectual and the founder of the IAIN system, was well known for promoting the ideas of Mu'tazilah, a rationalist school of thought within Islam, which advocated the use of 'aql (reason) for understanding the deeper spirits of Islam. Fatah Abd Syukur, "Harun Nasution: The Reform of Higher Islamic Education" in Rosnani Hashim, ed., Reclaiming the Conversation: Islamic Intellectual Tradition in the Malay Archipelago (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2010). Nurcholish Madjid, a renowned modernist Muslim intellectual and the first rector of Universitas Paramadina, was famous for opposing the idea of forming an Islamic party in 1971, an anathema to conservative Muslim activists. "40 Tahun 'Islam Yes Partai Islam No' Diperingati", Republika, 8 January 2010.

19 Yon Machmudi, Islamising Indonesia: The Rise of Jemaah Tarbiyah and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). Ph.D diss., The Australian National University, 2008, p. 112. See also M.C. Ricklefs, Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java: c.1930 to the Present (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2012), p. 443.

20 Zainah Anwar, Kebangkitan Islam di Kalangan Pelajar (Petaling Jaya: IBS Buku Sdn. Bhd., 1990), pp. 74–81. See also Shamsul A.B., Inventing Certainties, pp. 112–133.

21 IIUM's Philosophy: www.iium.edu.my/about-iium/philosophy (accessed on 13 January 2015).

22 Robert Hefner attributed the receptiveness of Muslim university students to Islamic dakwah at this time to cultural displacement due to their educational journey from the countryside to the cities. Islamic ideals not only provided these students a high degree of moral certitude against the perceivably decadent urban lifestyle but also a "neo-santri" anti-hegemonic egalitarian subculture that quietly tried to subvert the highly hierarchical elite culture and traditions. Hefner, Islam, State, and Civil Society, pp. 12–16.

The newfound student piety that permeated university campuses in Malaysia in the late 1970s and Indonesia in the late 1980s, also found a receptive environment within the society that was also becoming more Islamized as a result of state policies at this time. The wider expression of religiosity outside the halls of the ivory towers, however, was not unconstrained as the government only encouraged cultural expression of Islam, and severely circumscribed or even repressed attempts to politicize religion. States in both Indonesia and Malaysia found political utility in controlling the Islamic public discourse as they actively co-opted some Islamic social forces while crushing others in order to remain legitimate. Though both states instrumentalized Islam to prop up their legitimacy, unlike the UMNO-led regime in Malaysia, the New Order regime in Indonesia did not depend on "Islamic credibility" for its survival. The New Order state co-opted Islamic social forces as a countervailing support against the opposing nationalist faction led by General Benny Murdani. In Malaysia the ruling regime employed Islamic discourse to protect itself against the challenge from the opposition Islamic party PAS. The discursive competition between the Mahathir's regime and PAS resulted in a highly Islamized society that proved to be conducive to the expansion of the *dakwah* movement beyond university campuses, one way of which was establishing integrated Islamic schools to promote its ideology to the society at large.

Indonesia

Background of integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia

The impetus for integrated Islamic schools (*Sekolah Islam Terpadu*, SIT) in Indonesia came from the active *dakwah* scene on secular university campuses in the late 1980s.[23] The main campus *dakwah* group, *Jemaah Tarbiyah* (Tarbiyah Group), attracted a sizeable number of followers precisely because it was seen as "non-political" and capable of bridging the ideological differences between traditionalist, modernist, and Salafist Islamic organizations.[24] This positioning was ironically a "political" act in itself, given that other major Muslim student organizations such as the Muslim Students' Association (*Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam*, HMI) and Indonesian Muslim Students' Movement (*Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia*, PMII) were perceived as being co-opted by the New Order regime.[25] Furthermore, the regime's introduction of Normalization of Campus Life/Coordinating Body for Student Life (*Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus/Badan Koordinasi Kemahasiswaan*, NKK/BKK) policy in 1979, which tightly

23 Robert Hefner, "Islamic Schools, Social Movements, and Democracy in Indonesia" in Robert Hefner, ed., Making Modern Muslims: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), pp. 70–83.

24 Machmudi, Islamising Indonesia, pp. 61–66.

25 Ibid., p. 112.

monitored students' political activities on campus, had managed to gradually steer many Muslim students into *dakwah* group such as *Jemaah Tarbiyah*, which was considered non-political and therefore non-threatening.[26]

The split within the Indonesian military (ABRI) in the late 1980s shook Suharto's iron grip on power and forced him to seek new sources of political support, which included Islamic social organizations and prominent Muslim figures.[27] The pattern of engagement between the new educated Muslim middle-class and the regime at this time was no longer based on antagonism and mutual suspicion.[28] Instead of agitating for political change, the avenue for which had been shut by the regime, the educated Muslim middle-class, also known as "*kelas menengah neo-santri*", promoted a revised means to achieve its religious aspirations called "*Islam kultural*" or cultural Islam. *Islam kultural* allowed religious struggle to be waged outside of the realm of power politics, specifically through *dakwah*, educational, cultural, and socio-economic arenas. Many from this educated Muslim middle-class joined the civil service and assiduously implemented *Islam kultural* from within the regime. Kuntowijoyo, a prominent Muslim reformist intellectual, lists three main characteristics of *Islam kultural*: (1) intellectualism, which focuses on the Islamization of knowledge; (2) ethics, which stresses the importance of instilling Islamic moral values in the regime's development policies; and (3) aesthetics, which creates a symbolic environment that is conducive to the everyday practice of Islam such as having a *musollah* (a small prayer room) in an office building.[29] In contrast, political Islam in the late 1980s was left with its sole and largely toothless regime-managed vehicle: The United Development Party (*Partai Pembangunan Persatuan*, PPP).

Despite the barren democratic landscape, the political aspiration of Muslim activists to capture the state was never completely vanquished. *Islam kultural* kept the hopes of political advance alive, which arrived with the fall of Suharto in May 1998. In the first democratic legislative election in 1999, fourteen out of forty-eight parties that contested the seats in parliament were Islamic in orientation, a testament to the persistence of political Islam in Indonesia.[30] The democratic opening also saw the growth of integrated Islamic schools (SIT), mainly established by the former Muslim campus activists associated with the student

26 Ashadi Siregar, "Budaya Mahasiswa Pasca NKK" in Fauzie Ridjal and M. Rusli Karim, eds., Dinamika Budaya dan Politik Pembangunan (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana Yogya, 1991), pp. 213–219.

27 Marcus Mietzner, Military Politics, Islam, and the State in Indonesia: From Turbulent Transition to Democratic Consolidation (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), p. 60.

28 For a detailed study of the relationship between Islamic social forces and the New Order regime in Indonesia see: Bahtiar Effendy, Islam and the State in Indonesia (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004).

29 M. Syafi'i Anwar, Pemikiran dan Aksi Islam Indonesia: Sebuah Kajian Politik Tentang Cendekiawan Muslim Orde Baru (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995), pp. 127–137. See also Hefner, Islam, State, and Civil Society, pp. 8–12.

30 Martin van Bruinessen, "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia", South East Asia Research 10.2 (July 2002), p. 141.

organization Indonesian Muslim Students Action Union (*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia*, KAMMI), who were also involved in the establishment of a new modernist Islamic party, *Partai Keadilan* (now *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*, PKS).[31]

As the name implies, the *dakwah* movement's main focus is education. Its leaders interpret *dakwah* to mean the shaping of the character of an individual Muslim in accordance with the *dakwah* movement's ideals. The main method of education is through a small study circle called *halaqa*, in which the members are guided by a mentor (*murabbi*). The content of *halaqa* is typically structured, spiritual and inward-oriented, and the knowledge transmission only travels in one direction from the *murabbi* to the mentees (*mutarabbi*).[32] The inculcation of values first starts by transforming the individual person, then moves on to solidify the *halaqa* camaraderie and ultimately ends by connecting the participants to the movement at large. Group identity strengthens as the individual slowly subsumes his or her self-interests and independent thought within the sacrosanct ideals of the movement.[33]

Initially Jemaah Tarbiyah was a "non-political" movement that later ended up forming the political Muslim student group KAMMI in 1998, which took part in the large wave of protest that toppled Suharto's New Order regime. KAMMI student leaders subsequently founded the conservative modernist Islamic party, *Partai Keadilan* (now PKS). The decision of Jemaah Tarbiyah activists to form a political party was part of the group's four "orbits" of *dakwah*. The first phase (*orbit tanzimi*) consists of strengthening individual character and caderization. The second phase (*orbit sya'bi*) requires members to channel their *dakwah* energy toward social services (*layanan masyarakat*) as a way to interact with the public at large; establishing SIT is part of this second phase. The third phase (*orbit muasasi*) involves members entering politics and the bureaucracy as a way of putting their expertise to serve the greater public good and influencing the policymaking process. Finally, the fourth phase (*orbit daulah*) entails a complete control of the state, which PKS has yet to realize.[34] In short, there is a direct connection between Jemaah Tarbiyah, SIT, and PKS.

31 According to Yon Machmudi, "PKS presents an alternative political vehicle for Muslim activists who have not been accommodated by their parents' political parties, such as PKB, PAN, PPP and PBB. They are, in the main, educated outside the traditional education system and have taken different paths to learn about Islam. They now claim to struggle for the interests of an Islam undivided by the traditionalist and modernist dichotomy". Machmudi, Islamising Indonesia, p. 3. Since its inception in 1998, PKS has made tremendous stride in national legislative elections, from merely capturing 1.4 per cent of the votes in 1999 to 7.3 per cent in 2004, 7.9 per cent in 2009, and 6.8 per cent in 2014. Komisi Pemilihan Umum Republik Indonesia: www.kpu.go.id/ (accessed on 11 May 2016).

32 Aay Muhamad Furkon, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera: Ideologi dan Praksis Politik Kaum Muda Muslim Indonesia Kontemporer (Jakarta: Teraju, 2004), pp. 136–140.

33 Machmudi, Islamising Indonesia, pp. 134–135.

34 Memperjuangkan Masyarakat Madani: Falsafah Dasar Perjuangan dan Platform Kebijakan Pembangunan PK Sejahtera (Jakarta: Majelis Pertimbangan Pusat Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, 2008), pp. 50–56.

Table 5.1 Some current examples of connection between PKS and SIT[35]

Name	*School position*	*PKS affiliation*
Mahfudz Abdurrahman	Founder, Yayasan Iqro', SIT Iqro', Bekasi	National legislative (DPR) member and General Treasurer
Musoli	Founder of JSIT and Program Director, Strategic Human Resource Development, Yayasan Nurul Fikri	National legislative (DPR) candidate
Bali Pranowo	Founder, Yayasan Husnayain, Bekasi	Head of Provincial Advisory Council, Kota Bekasi
Mahfudz Siddiq	Founder, Yayasan Iqro', SIT Iqro', Bekasi	National legislative (DPR) member
Fahmy Alaydroes	Founder of JSIT	National legislative (DPR) candidate and Head of Social Welfare Section, Central Leadership Council
Suharna Surapranata	Founder, Integrated Institute of Technology Nurul Fikri	Former Minister of Research and Technology and Head of Central Advisory Council

In 1993 Jemaah Tarbiyah activists established five SIT primary schools called *Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu* (SDIT). All the schools were situated in the greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek). These pioneering schools were SDIT Nurul Fikri in Depok, SDIT Al-Hikmah in South Jakarta, SDIT Iqro in Bekasi, SDIT Ummul Quro in Bogor, and SDIT Al-Khayrot in East Jakarta. By 2014, there were 1,926 SIT across Indonesia, including 879 kindergartens, 723 primary schools (SDIT), 256 junior high schools (SMPIT), and sixty-eight senior high schools (SMAIT).[36] All these schools are registered under the Integrated Islamic Schools Network (*Jaringan Sekolah Islam Terpadu*, JSIT), which provides the streamlined educational standard. Not all of these schools are linked with PKS and Jemaah Tarbiyah activists but all of them share a philosophical belief in integrated Islamic education as the ideal form of education for Muslims.

Like most of the Islamic schools in Indonesia, SIT are categorized as private schools, and therefore their funding comes from the school fees, donations, irregular grants (*hibah*) from local governments and the foundations that manage the schools. Located mainly in the urban and semi-urban areas, SIT serve the

35 Mahfudz Abdurrahman, Musoli, Bali Pranowo, Fahmy Alaydroes and Suharna Surapranata were also founding members of Partai Keadilan (predecessor to PKS) in 1998. Ibid., p. 228; Sekilas Partai Keadilan (Jakarta: Sekretariat DPP Partai Keadilan, 1998), p. 3. See also http://wikidpr.org/anggota/5403631742b53eac2f8ef6f0; www.pksabadijaya.org/2010/06/drs-h-musoli.html; www.al-husnayain.com/yayasan/profil/pendiri; http://profil.merdeka.com/indonesia/m/mahfudz-siddiq/; www.iqro.or.id/profil/pengurus-yayasan/; http://info-pemilu2014.com/caleg.php?id=3510-00-0000-0301; www.pks.or.id/content/kepengurusan (accessed on 9 May 2016).

36 "10 Tahun JSIT Indonesia Bangun Lewat SIT", Republika Online, 31 January 2014.

needs of middle- and upper-middle-class Muslim families who typically can afford the higher-than-average school fees.[37] Their curriculum is a blend of national curriculum from the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the special standard (*standar khusus*) curriculum developed by JSIT. The provincial office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (*Kanwil Agama*), where a SIT is located, needs to approve the amalgamated curriculum before it can be implemented in the classrooms. SIT's educational philosophy is summed up in the JSIT's guidebook as:

> [a] school that instils the organisational approach that combines general education and religious education into one interconnected curriculum. With this approach, all subjects and all school activities will not be excluded from the frame of Islamic teachings and message of values. There is no dichotomy, no separation, no "secularization" where education and discourse are free from Islamic values and teachings, or "sacralisation," where Islamic studies is deemed to be non-useful in the context of present-day and the future.[38]

While there is no blatantly political content in the SIT's curriculum, this chapter argues that these schools engage in subtle indoctrination, often outside of the classroom.[39] Some of the methods used by Jemaah Tarbiyah in its *dakwah* campaign on campus can actually be found in the pedagogical system of SIT, which lends credence to the assertion that SIT is an ideological training ground for future cadres of the *dakwah* movement.[40]

37 One SIT in Depok, SMAIT Nurul Fikri, charges Rp20,260,000 (US$1,563) for entrance free and Rp970,000 (US$75) for monthly tuition. The school is located in Griya Tugu Asri, an affluent gated community in Depok, where the residents include PKS politicians such as Tifatul Sembiring (former Minister of Communications), Suharna Surapranata (former Minister of Research and Technology), and Nur Mahmudi Ismail (former Minister of Forestry and current Mayor of Depok). Interview with Joko Prayitno, Principal of SMAIT Nurul Fikri, 10 January 2014.

38 Standar Mutu Kekhasan Sekolah Islam Terpadu, p. 5.

39 Legally, private schools that adopt the national curriculum are not allowed to engage in any political indoctrination in the classrooms. Article 16(4) of Government Regulation 32/1958 regarding Support for National Private Schools (Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 32 Tahun 1958 tentang Pemberian Sokongan kepada Sekolah Nasional Partikelir) states that "teachers are not allowed to give lessons that can disrupt peace and public order, and are not allowed to give lessons based on party ideology" (para pengajar dilarang memberi pelajaran yang dapat mengganggu keamanan dan ketertiban umum, dan dilarang pula memberi pelajaran berdasarkan kepartaian).

40 The approach to cultivate school-age students into members of the dakwah movement, whose members later found PKS, is not uniquely Jemaah Tarbiyah since the early leader of the dakwah movement, Imaduddin Abdurrahim and his Latihan Mujahid Dakwah (LMD) program, along with Indonesian Muslim Students Association (Persatuan Pelajar Islam Indonesia, PII), had long included teenagers in their tarbiyah efforts. Some current PKS leaders such as Aus Hidayat Nur and Tifatul Sembiring trace their ideological awakening in the teenage years to the activities ran by LMD and PII. Furkon, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, p. 131; Usamah Hisyam, Sepanjang Jalan Dakwah: Tifatul Sembiring (Jakarta: Dharmapena Citra Media, 2012), p. 35.

SIT students as future cadres of the Islamic political movement

While there is an indoctrination channel that connects SIT students with *dakwah* movement, namely through the *tarbiyah* activities, there is simply no way to know how many of them end up supporting PKS, much less becoming full-fledged party cadres. However, in the past, the methods of the Jemaah Tarbiyah have certainly helped to create and sustain PKS to the present day.[41] It is not so far-fetched then to expect the *dakwah* movement to expand its methods of indoctrination to primary and secondary schools, replete with impressionable young minds waiting to be moulded and highly supportive parents who themselves are the products of the *dakwah* environment on university campuses since the late 1980s. Indeed, establishing an uninterrupted channel for Islamic education that starts from the primary school level and goes all the way to university is a key component of SIT's modus operandi.

According to Sukro Muhab, primary schools (SDIT) have to be built first, then followed by junior high schools (SMPIT) and senior high schools (SMAIT). This structure, in effect, creates a seamless upward flow of students who have already internalized the values and spirit of the *dakwah* movement by the time they get to university and who are then ready to put their beliefs into action.[42] The director of JSIT, Sukro Muhab, however, disagreed with the alleged link between SIT and PKS:

> We are not PKS schools! Let me ask you which one was established first: SIT or PKS? Yes, SIT was established in 1993 and PKS only came into existence in 1998, so how can we be the school for PKS? It just doesn't make sense.[43]

On the other hand, Sukro Muhab also confirmed that many PKS cadres established SIT in their communities and sent their children to SIT. He only disagreed with the claim that PKS "officially" owns SIT.[44] In short, to him there is a clear difference between what PKS does as a party and the actions of its cadres. While it is true that PKS as a political party does not establish its own network of schools, it is the PKS-related private foundations (*yayasan*) that establish most of SIT. As shown in the preceding table, it is the members of PKS that established many of these *yayasan* that oversee SIT.[45]

41 Caderization efforts form an integral part of the PKS's organizational agenda, namely to cultivate highly disciplined and loyal members. Farish Noor, "The Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) in the landscape of Indonesian Islamist Politics: Cadre-training as Mode of Preventive Radicalism?" RSIS Working Paper No. 231 (30 November 2011), pp. 1–37.

42 Interview with Sukro Muhab, Director of JSIT, 20 January 2014.

43 Ibid.

44 "Sukro Muhab MSI: Membangun Generasi Berkarakter", Republika, 20 February 2011.

45 For example, the leadership of Yayasan Husnul Khotimah, which oversees Pondok Pesantren Husnul Khotimah in Kuningan, West Java, is mostly comprised of PKS leaders such as Hidayat Nurwahid, Achmad Satori Ismail, Surahman Hidayat, Yusuf Supendi and Achidin Noor. Muslihudin, "Model Pesantren Kader: Relasi Ideologi PP Husnul Khotimah dengan PKS, serta Artikulasinya dalam Kegiatan Kepesantrenan", Holistik 14:1 (2013), pp. 16–18.

Methods of ideological indoctrination in SIT

Since ideological indoctrination through the education system is integral to the establishment of SIT, what then are the methods used by SIT to instil values of the *dakwah* movement in and shape the character of their students? As a method of indoctrination, classroom learning assumes a less important role compared to extracurricular activities as SIT must conform to the standards set by the national curriculum and the students need to do well in the national exams.[46] Therefore, extracurricular activities such as study circles, outdoors trips, camping, scouting, educational trips and other overnight activities form the core of the indoctrination process.[47] While extracurricular activities like scouting (*pramuka*) also exist in other schools in Indonesia, those practised in SIT are tailor-made to its vision and values.[48] One striking feature of these activities is the centrality of group dynamic in reinforcing the values the schools disseminate to the students. Group dynamic is integral in the inculcation of shared values and the sublimation of one's own self-interests to the nobler ideals of the group:

> Character education, values and discipline in the framework of Islamic values (*syaksiyyah Islamiyah*), becomes the essence in the standard to cultivate the students. One of the dominant ways to achieve the aim of *syaksiyyah Islamiyah* is to have group dynamic in the inculcation process.[49]

More specifically, SIT share common group-based methods with Jemaah Tarbiyah when it comes to indoctrinate their students with the values of the *dakwah* movement. These methods are *liqo'/halaqa/usrah* (study circle), *rihlah/daurah* (group retreat), *mukhayyam* (camping), and *qiayamul lail* (overnight religious activities).

Integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia implement *liqo'* or *usrah* as part of their extracurricular activity. *Liqo'*, which is typically interchangeable with *halaqa* and *usrah*, is a small study circle led by a *murabbi* or *naqib* (facilitator, who is usually a senior student) and consists of 5–10 members (*mutarabbi*) who meet once a week. In SIT, the term *liqo'* is not used in the JSIT's standard guidebook but there is a similar process. Mentoring activity in SIT is done in small groups (the guidebook does not specify how many members) that meet once a month, facilitated by one mentor and in collaboration with the school's *dakwah* agency (*Lembaga Dakwah Sekolah*) that, in turn, appoints the mentors. The

46 For examples of supposedly PKS-influenced curricular content in an SIT, see Ibid., pp. 27–29.

47 Ali Said Damanik, Fenomena Partai Keadilan: Transformasi 20 Tahun Gerakan Tarbiyah di Indonesia (Jakarta: Teraju, 2002), pp. 122–138.

48 Standar Mutu Sekolah Islam Terpadu (Jakarta: Jaringan Sekolah Islam Terpadu, 2010), p. 619. See also Noorhaidi Hasan, "Education, Young Islamists and Integrated Islamic Schools in Indonesia", Studia Islamika 19.1 (2012), p. 97.

49 Standar Mutu Sekolah Islam Terpadu, p. 599. The habit to obey and be loyal to group norms (patuh dan taat terhadap norma kelompok) is instilled as early as the kindergarten level. Standar Mutu Kekhasan Sekolah Islam Terpadu (Jakarta: Jaringan Sekolah Islam Terpadu, 2014), p. 306.

activity starts in primary school (fourth grade at the latest) with the objective of building the foundations of a responsible Muslim, then continues to junior high school, where the students are expected to be Muslim role models in their social environment, and finally to senior high school, where the students fulfil the criteria of becoming a *dai* (Islamic preacher).[50]

Meanwhile, *rihlah* means journey, with a focus on outdoor physical group activities such as scouting, treasure hunting, and orienteering.[51] It is typically combined with *daurah*, a group retreat to learn and discuss specific Islamic themes or issues. The main objective for *rihlah* and *daurah* is to instil the spirit of teamwork, strengthen the bond between the members of the group, and deepen their knowledge of Islam. It also provides the opportunity for members to know each other in a less formal way and thus builds stronger trust among them.[52] In SIT, *rihlah* is part of the scouting movement, which also includes activities such as *qiyamul lail* (overnight religious activities) and *mukhayyam* (camping). Scouts in SIT are called *Gerakan Pramuka SIT* or GP-SIT. GP-SIT is a compulsory extracurricular activity for all students, another example of the importance of group activities in the *dakwah* movement. Since there are many SIT across Indonesia, GP-SIT also organizes its own jamboree, starting from the local level (*Perkemahan Daerah*, KEMDA Ukhuwah, which is every two years) to the regional level (*Perkemahan Wilayah*, KEMWIL Ukhuwah, which is every three years) to the national level (*Perkemahan Nasional*, KEMNAS Ukhuwah, which is every four years).[53] Every student needs to attend these jamborees in order to satisfy the scouting requirement for extracurricular activities. More importantly, the scouting activity, with its constant group interaction, helps to cement the sense of brother/sisterhood (*ukhuwah*), not just within the school itself but also with GP-SIT groups in other schools all over the country. GP-SIT jamborees serve as a way to show the students that they are an active part of a larger nationwide *dakwah* movement propelled by the virtuous goal of reforming society.

The practice of *qiyamul lail* is another activity that campus-based *dakwah* groups and integrated Islamic schools have in common. *Qiyamul lail* is part of *Mabit* (*Ma*lam *B*ina *I*man dan *T*aqwa), a night filled with religious devotional activities.[54] *Qiyamul lail* entails waking up past midnight, typically around two–three hours before the *subuh* (dawn) prayer, to perform *tahajjud* and *tasbih* prayers in a group. The religious devotional acts (*ibadah*) are then followed by *taushiah* (an advice in the shape of a sermon) given by an imam. As such, this activity requires an overnight stay, typically at the mosque. Junior and senior high school students of SIT are expected to perform *qiyamul lail* at least once a

50 Standar Mutu Sekolah Islam Terpadu, pp. 620–621.
51 Manan, Gelombang Kebangkitan Dakwah Kampus, pp. 166–167.
52 Damanik, Fenomena Partai Keadilan, pp. 132–133.
53 Standar Mutu Sekolah Islam Terpadu, pp. 609–619.
54 Damanik, Fenomena Partai Keadilan, pp. 133–136.

week, which is part of their competency indicator (*indikator kompetensi*).[55] Here, group activity again plays a pivotal part in instilling and solidifying the movement's values in the students as together they reflect on their own deficiencies as Muslims, the ills that plague Muslim societies around the world, and what can they do about such problems. The utter stillness and serenity that accompanies the night provides a perfect atmosphere for introspective and repentant acts such that some of the participants are known to sob uncontrollably through the night.[56] The shared experience of intense emotional and devotional acts among the group members during *qiyamul lail* contributes to the solidification of their belief in the nobility and sincerity of the *dakwah* movement.

In sum, extracurricular activities play a more crucial role in SIT's ideological indoctrination efforts, compared to classroom learning, chiefly for two reasons: the need to teach students to successfully pass the national examinations, which leaves little opportunity for SIT to promote their values that might not be part of the national curriculum; and the importance of close-knit group-based activities in inculcating the students with the schools' values.

The instrumental role of the teaching corps in SIT

Teachers are the most crucial element in guiding and shaping the thoughts and behaviour of students in integrated Islamic schools. Their position is analogous to that of the aforementioned mentors (*murabbi*) in campus-based *dakwah* groups, insofar that it does not just consist of teaching but also serves as a role model of the *dakwah* movement for the students to emulate.[57] Therefore, it is imperative for the teachers to share wholeheartedly the ideals of the *dakwah* movement.

The schools' foundation (*yayasan*) recruit teachers, including headmasters, through trusted networks and on the basis of recommendations to ensure that their teachers' views accord with the values and objectives of the school.[58] SIT typically prefer to hire fresh graduates and students of non-religious universities as their teachers, as opposed to graduates of Islamic institutions of higher learning such as State Islamic Universities (*Universitas Islam Negeri*, UIN) and State Islamic Institute (*Institut Agama Islam Islam Negeri*, IAIN). The preference is mainly because, as explained above, the Jemaah Tarbiyah is much more active in non-Islamic institutions of higher learning, and because Islamic institutions of higher learning have the reputation of being religiously progressive. SIT also explicitly require prospective teachers to view the teaching profession as an

55 Standar Mutu Kekhasan Sekolah Islam Terpadu, p. 294.

56 Damanik, Fenomena Partai Keadilan, p. 135.

57 Integrated Islamic schools' teachers also spend more time in the school (7 am to 3 or 4 pm) than their counterparts in other types of schools. This intensive and prolonged interaction with students plays an important role in the indoctrination process. Hasan, Education, Young Islamists and Integrated Islamic Schools, pp. 100–101.

58 Standar Mutu Kekhasan Sekolah Islam Terpadu, p. 10.

education-based *dakwah* mission, which leads us to believe that the teachers are recruited solely from the *dakwah* group on campus, namely Jemaah Tarbiyah.[59]

In addition to recruiting university students as teachers, JSIT has also recently established its own teachers' training colleges called *Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Islam Terpadu* (PGSIT) in Jakarta and Yogyakarta that it hopes will be able to produce more qualified and dedicated SIT teachers.[60] One aspect that perfectly illustrates the value placed on shared ideology in the teaching corps is the lower-than-average pay SIT teachers receive from the school. The schools see the low pay as a sacrifice that teachers make in the name of the movement's higher ideals. They say that willing acceptance of the lower pay is a good indicator of a teacher's unwavering commitment to the movement's goals.[61] Suffice it to say that without a teaching corps that is highly dedicated to and firmly believe in the mission and values of Jemaah Tarbiyah and SIT the indoctrination process would be nowhere near effective.[62]

State supervision of SIT in Indonesia

Since the law (*PP Nomor 32 Tahun 1958 tentang Pemberian Sokongan kepada Sekolah Nasional Partikelir*) does not allow national private schools to promote the ideology of a political party, so the questions are then how does the state view and monitor the integrated Islamic education movement, and if there is a conflict between the versions of Islam promoted by SIT and the state orthodoxy? While political parties like the Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan*, PDI-P) and NasDem have their own "schools" that specialize in developing future cadres for the parties, party caderization through the national school system is a novel idea in Indonesia.[63] As stated earlier, the promotion of party ideology in schools that adopt the national curriculum is banned by the law but it is yet an open secret that SIT are closely affiliated with PKS, and are sometimes even derisively referred to as *Sekolah PKS* (PKS Schools). This contradiction naturally raises the question of how the

59 Ibid., p. 16.

60 So far, the bachelor's degree program is only offered part-time (every Saturday for eight semesters). Hasan, Education, Young Islamists and Integrated Islamic Schools, p. 99. Also see PGSIT's page on Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Pendidikan-Guru-Sekolah-Islam-Terpadu/144560102251924?sk=info&tab=page_info (accessed on 26 January 2015).

61 The principal instead phrased it as a commitment to the school's ideals, which can also be seen as interchangeable with the ideals of the Jemaah Tarbiyah. Interview with Joko Prayitno, Principal of SMAIT Nurul Fikri, 10 January 2014. See also "Sukro Muhab MSI: Membangun Generasi Berkarakter", Republika, 20 February 2011.

62 Kurniasih Mufidayati, Analisis Hubungan Iklim Organisasi dan Motivasi dengan Kepuasan Kerja Tenaga Kependidikan Pada Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu (SDIT) Nurul Fikri. MA thesis, Universitas Indonesia, 1998, p. 97.

63 "PDIP Bangun Sekolah Partai di Jl Diponegoro", Detik News, 16 May 2014; "Cari Calon Pemimpin Militan, DPW NasDem Jatim Buka Sekolah Kader", Tribun News, 12 January 2015.

state actually perceives and reacts to the notion that SIT is a training ground for future cadres of PKS.

The supervision of SIT falls under the jurisdictions of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). MOEC is in charge of monitoring the schools' pedagogical system, teacher effectiveness, school infrastructure, and financial management while MORA deals with the implementation of the Islamic Studies subject (*Pengetahuan Agama Islam*, PAI) and the Islamic dimension of the overall school curriculum. According to a principal of one SIT, his school has never had any problems with the ministry officials in their supervisory visits to the school as long as the school complies with basic standards of the national curriculum.[64] This fact is echoed by the director of JSIT, who added that ministry officials actually admire SIT since they view the school as a successful experiment in the integration of religious values and general education. He also said that if SIT is really a PKS school as some people are led to believe then its curriculum would not have been approved by the state, much less complimented on.[65] His assertion turns out to be supported by the Deputy Minister of Education and Culture, Musliar Kasim, who extolled the virtues of SIT as a model for the 2013 curriculum.[66] While not referring directly to SIT, the former Minister of Religion, Suryadharma Ali, also called the 2013 curriculum a catalyst for the integration of general and religious knowledge, which coincidentally is the core educational principle of SIT.[67] Nonetheless, despite a shared focus between the integrated Islamic curriculum and the 2013 curriculum in shaping the character of students, there is no concrete evidence indicating that the former has influenced the formulation of the latter. What is clear though is that both curricula share the common belief in the crucial role of religion in developing the students' character.[68]

Despite SIT's strong association with the *dakwah* movement and PKS, the connection has not aroused suspicions of any relevant educational authority or prompted any investigation for a violation of the 1958 law. One official at the

64 Interview with Joko Prayitno, Principal of SMAIT Nurul Fikri, 10 January 2014.

65 Interview with Sukro Muhab, Director of JSIT, 20 January 2014.

66 The speech was made during the tenth anniversary celebration of JSIT in Jakarta on 1 February 2014. "Wamendik: Kurikulum 2013 Refleksikan Model Pembelajaran di Sekolah Islam Terpadu", Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2 March 2014: http://kemdikbud.go.id/kemdikbud/berita/2087 (accessed on 19 January 2015).

67 "Kurikulum 2013 Momentum Integrasi Ilmu Umum-Agama", Republika, 30 December 2013.

68 The MOEC stated that the 2013 national curriculum was chiefly designed to improve students' moral character, keep Indonesian education abreast with current global developments, and allow local educational actors more flexibility and autonomy to adapt the curriculum to local needs There were thirteen principles that informed the formulation of the 2013 national curriculum, among which are "Strengthening Faith, Devotion, and Virtuous Behavior" (Peningkatan Iman, Takwa, dan Akhlak Mulia) and "Tolerance and Harmonious Religious Communities" (Toleransi dan Kerukunan Umat Beragama). Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia Nomor 81A Tahun 2013 tentang Implementasi Kurikulum (Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2013), pp. 7–10.

provincial office of MORA (*Kanwil Agama*) in Bandung, West Java, said that while he agreed that the culture and orientation of SIT leaned heavily toward PKS, its integrated curriculum was to be commended and, in fact, should be adopted by the national school system one day since it represented an ideal model for Islamic education in that it posited no separation between general and religious knowledge.[69]

What accounts for this positive relationship between the state and the SIT? It is apparent that both the state and SIT have something to gain from each other. SIT can gain official acceptance of its educational system, which can perhaps increase its presence and popularity beyond the narrow confines of educated urban Muslim middle-class demographic. The arena of Islamic education in Indonesia is highly competitive as Muslim parents get to choose from a plethora of Islamic schools of all ideological stripes; it is a buyer's market. Official recognition of SIT success might provide it with a competitive edge over more entrenched and numerically superior rivals like *pesantren* and madrasah. According to Sukro Muhab, the strategy is all part of *bisnis sekolah* (school business), that is to gain market share of Islamic education at the expense of other Islamic schools. He also added that the ultimate goal was to establish a consortium of all Islamic schools in Indonesia, effectively an oligopoly, and set a single standard for Islamic education in the country (presumably dominated by SIT's views).[70]

State officials, on the other hand, see the type of Islamic education implemented by SIT – one that heavily focuses on students' character building – as a desirable means to combat increasing disciplinary problems among students.[71] As a result, the 2013 curriculum for primary schools increased the weekly instruction time for the subjects *Pendidikan Agama* and *Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan* from two to four hours in an attempt to bolster the students' moral character.[72] While there are *dakwah* activists working from within the state to implement their ideals on society, it is not clear how much influence their support for integrated Islamic education has on the formulation of the 2013 curriculum.[73] The *dakwah* movement encourages educated Muslim middle-class professionals to populate the ranks of the civil service, thus placing them in a position to effect changes from inside the state. In the words of two KAMMI activists:

> Since an early age, KAMMI cadres are trained to become candidates for leadership through three processes of learning. The three processes are the

69 Interview with Ahmad Sadudin, Kepala Bidang Pendidikan Agama Islam, Kanwil Agama Jawa Barat, Bandung, 4 March 2014.

70 Interview with Sukro Muhab, Director of JSIT, 20 January 2014.

71 "Nuh: Tawuran, Persoalan Sosial Berat", Kompas, 27 September 2012.

72 "Pendidikan Agama Ditambah untuk Perkuat Karakter Siswa", Kompas, 5 December 2012; "Jam Pelajaran PPKn Ditambah di Kurikulum 2013", Suara Merdeka, 12 June 2013.

73 Joel Migdal, State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform Each Other and Constitute One Another (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

> process of awakening one's identity as a Muslim and a university student, the process of understanding one's functions and duties as an agent of change, and not to forget the process of participation as a way to contribute to the society while simultaneously a learning process for the future.[74]

In short, while there is no real evidence to show if SIT's curriculum directly influences the formulation and implementation of the 2013 national curriculum, it is nonetheless clear that both curricula share the common focus in shaping the moral character of students. In the case of the 2013 curriculum, the focus on students' character through emphasis on moral, religious and civic subjects was seen as a panacea to the social ills among the school-age children that are currently troubling the country. As for SIT, the state's appropriation of their educational ideals only serves to boost their reputation among the competitive field of Islamic education in Indonesia.

Influence of state Islamic orthodoxy in integrated Islamic education in Indonesia

Despite its equal attention to modern progress and the emphasis on professional careers for the students, SIT teaches the version of Islam that tends to be more conservative than the one espoused by MORA. For instance, my observation of the Islamic Studies (PAI) class at SMAIT Nurul Fikri reveals SIT's highly conservative view on marriage, in contrast to MORA's more moderate view as illustrated in Chapter 1. The lesson of the day was about *munakahad* (marriage) and the *ustadz* (male religious teacher) stressed the importance of marriage in Islam as a way to prevent humans from marrying animals such as horses and dogs like in Western countries. He also went on to say that it is *makruh* (allowable but not encouraged in Islam) for a man to marry a woman who earns more than him since it can cause strife in the marriage later on. Therefore, it is best for the wife not to work and simply manage the household full-time. This lesson took place in an all-female *SMA Kelas 2* (Class 2 of the senior high school) classroom of thirty-two students.[75]

Other examples of conservative values permeate SIT's curriculum. Faithful to the educational philosophy that there should not be any separation between general and religious knowledge, every major scientific principle has to be supported by verses from the Quran, excerpts of hadiths, and other religious sources. To wit, according to SIT's guidebook, the observation of Newtonian principles in nature can also be found in the Quran (*Surah* Ar-Rahman, verse

74 Muhammad Hasanudin and Kartika Nurrahman, "KAMMI: Membentuk Lapis Inteligensia Muslim-Negarawan" in Claudia Nef Saluz, ed., Dynamics of Islamic Student Movements: Iklim Intelektual Islam di Kalangan Aktivis Kampus (Yogyakarta: Resist Book, 2009), p. 178.

75 Author's classroom observation, SMAIT Nurul Fikri, Depok, West Java, 13 January 2014.

60).[76] In order to illustrate the religious context of the mathematical concept that determines the pattern of lines for simple numbers (*pola barisan bilangan sederhana*), the curriculum instructs SIT teachers to use the lyrics from the *nasyid* (Islamic song) *Barisan Jihad* (Line of Jihad), of which one stanza graphically proclaims: "Let God's earth be soaked with the blood of martyrs; let it be red with drenching blood; Never retreat even for a single step; never retreat even for a single step".[77] Theologically speaking, the state perceives SIT to be non-threatening, i.e. not violating the 1965 Blasphemy Law, for example. The Ministry of Education and Culture shares SIT's focus on developing the character of the students through religious education, which explains its acceptance of SIT's curriculum. As a result, the state officials feel they have no reason to monitor too closely SIT's educational activities. An official at *Kanwil Agama* in West Java said that his office generally tolerates differences in opinions and interpretations (*perbedaan furuqiah*) in Islamic schools and that there is nothing sacrilegious or seditious about SIT's curriculum.[78] Overall, it is the laissez faire and multifaceted nature of the state Islamic orthodoxy that allows SIT to implement a religiously conservative curriculum, especially in the increasingly conservative socio-political climate of present-day Indonesia.[79]

High institutional complexity is also crucial in explaining why SIT is able to implement a curriculum replete with Islamic values that are far more conservative than those promoted by MORA and MOEC. High institutional complexity means that there is no coherent institutional ideology within MORA and MOEC to allow a diversity of views to co-exist, even the conservative ones espoused by SIT. The previous examples of some officials of MORA and MOEC being wholeheartedly supportive of SIT's educational values are a clear indication of the pluralist ideals of the state Islamic orthodoxy as well as high institutional complexity within the institutions that oversee Islamic education in

76 The verse states: "tidak ada balasan kebaikan selain dari kebaikan pula" [there is no other reward for goodness except with goodness]. It is an apparent reference to the Newton's Third Law of Motion: for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Standar Mutu Kekhasan Sekolah Islam Terpadu, p. 94.

77 Original excerpt: "Biar basah di bumi Allah dengan darah para syuhada; biar merah berlumuran darah; Pantang mundur walau selangkah; pantang mundur walau selangkah". Standar Mutu Sekolah Islam Terpadu, pp. 316–317.

78 Interview with Ahmad Sadudin, Kepala Bidang Pendidikan Agama Islam, Kanwil Agama Jawa Barat, Bandung, 4 March 2014. But then the post-1998 Indonesian state does have a high tolerance for conservative Islamic schools such as Pesantren Al-Mukmin in Ngruki, Central Java, which produced four alumni who were involved in the Bali bombing in 2002. "Is Indonesia Ngruki Islamic School Teaching Terrorism?" BBC News, 4 November 2012.

79 Martin van Bruinessen, Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the Conservative Turn (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013).

Indonesia.[80] In short, SIT benefits from the ideological incoherency found within MORA and MOEC, which allows it the space and latitude to formulate and implement its conservative values in its curriculum as part of its overall effort to indoctrinate and enlist young minds into the *dakwah* movement.

Malaysia

Background of integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia

Integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia share many characteristics with SIT in Indonesia such as an origin in the *dakwah* movement, influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, support among Muslim middle-class professionals, and a focus on character development of the students. Presently, there are two major *dakwah* groups that contribute to most of the schools in the integrated Islamic education network in Malaysia: ABIM and IKRAM. In its early formative years (during the first half of the 1970s), ABIM looked to Indonesian Islamic student movements such as HMI and Imadudin Abdurrahim's *Latihan Mujahid Dakwah* (the ideological predecessor to Jemaah Tarbiyah) for inspiration and guidance.[81] It is therefore no coincidence that ABIM and Jemaah Tarbiyah firmly believe in the power of *tarbiyah* (education) to Islamize society and ultimately turn both Malaysia and Indonesia into an Islamic state. IKRAM came into existence in 1990, much later than ABIM, but shares similar *dakwah* aims and methods.[82]

Despite the overall politically repressive atmosphere in Malaysia, there was still space, albeit narrow, for Muslim activists to express their political aspirations, especially after the onset of Islamic revivalism in the late 1970s. The sheer pervasiveness of the Islamic presence in every sphere of life was matched by the growing ferocity of Islamic public discourse as UMNO, the Malay-Muslim party, competed with PAS, the Islamic opposition party, to be the sole arbiter of Islam in Malaysia. Mahathir Mohamad, upon taking up the prime ministership in 1981, made it his first priority to lure Anwar Ibrahim, the then president of

80 The 2015 controversy of materi radikal (radical material) found in Pendidikan Agama Islam (Islamic education) textbook for senior high schools in East Java is a perfect illustration of heterodox values found in national curriculum. The "radical material" revolves around a section on Reformist movements in Islam that states, among others, it is allowable in Wahhabism to kill non-believers. The textbook used the statement on the violence of Wahhabism against non-believers as an example of many different strains found in Islam that run the whole ideological gamut. "Buku Memuat Materi Radikalisme Ditemukan", Suara Merdeka, 27 March 2015.

81 ABIM later broke with Imadudin as it saw his views being too rigid and not compatible with Malaysia's multicultural society. Damanik, Fenomena Partai Keadilan, p. 105; Anwar, Kebangkitan Islam, pp. 44–45.

82 Article 4(1) of IKRAM's constitution states that its goal is "to spread Islamic teaching through dakwah and to defend it from falsehood (batil) and doubt (syubahat)". Its Article 9(2.5) states that "IKRAM strives to advise and propose for Islamic views to be made as a foundation in all social aspects including education, learning, law, judiciary, politics, economy, health and governance". Undang-undang Pertubuhan IKRAM Malaysia.

ABIM and a vociferous critic of the government, into UMNO in a move aimed to weaken the growing Islamic opposition in the country. Another former leader of ABIM, Fadzil Noor, had decided to join PAS a few years earlier and rose to become the party's president in 1989.[83] The heavily Islamized political climate in Malaysia since the late 1970s has allowed many Muslim campus activists to engage actively in party politics on both sides of the political divide. ABIM, as the main *dakwah* organization and a self-professed non-political entity, did allow many of its members to join the two Malay-Muslim political parties as long as they did not exploit ABIM's reputation for their own political ends.[84]

ABIM and IKRAM (formerly known as *Jamaah Islah Malaysia*, JIM) derive the bulk of their membership from the educated Malay-Muslim middle-class; they both place a huge importance on their *dakwah* mission and the ultimate goal of Islamizing society in preparation for a true Islamic state in Malaysia.[85] Education is an integral part of the *dakwah* mission of both organizations (hewing closely to the Muslim Brotherhood's playbook), and they run the majority of integrated Islamic schools, which have been around since the early 1980s. In Malaysia, integrated Islamic education has arisen not in spite of politics, but it has been encouraged by it.[86] In short, the highly favourable socio-political climate for these Muslim activists in Malaysia was not simply the result of increasing religiosity in the society, but also strongly encouraged by the ruling regime's vigorous participation in the Islamization process.

The *dakwah* movement in Malaysia embarked on its school-building project almost from the outset, evidence of the utmost importance of education and character development in the movement's agenda. As with the Indonesian case, the establishment of schools starts from the most basic level to the university level, forming a seamless upward channel for students to be educated in this particular

83 Judith Nagata, The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam: Modern Religious Radicals and Their Roots (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), p. 88; Chandra Muzaffar, Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti, 1987), pp. 51–52; Mohammad Nor Monutty, Perception of Social Change in Contemporary Malaysia: A Critical Analysis of ABIM's Role and Its Impact Among Muslim Youth. Ph.D diss., Temple University, 1990, pp. 96–107.

84 Mohd. Anuar Tahir, Pendirian Politik ABIM (Petaling Jaya: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, 1993), pp. 16–17.

85 JIM was established in 1990 – much later than ABIM – but in general shares similar ideology with ABIM. Saari Sungib, JIM 1991–1993: Membentuk Arah dan Haluan Perjuangan (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 1993).

86 ABIM is somewhat walking on a semantic tightrope when on the one hand it is a non-political organization (not explicitly siding with any political parties) but on the other it is also not apolitical as evidenced by this statement: "Da'wah yang terpisah dari politik adalah da'wah yang sudah dicemari oleh proses sekularisasi – gerakan yang menjurus ke arah deislamisasi seluruh kehidupan umat". [Da'wah that is divorced from politics is a da'wah that is contaminated by the process of secularization – a movement that is heading toward the de-Islamization of the life of the Muslim community.] RISALAH Juru Bicara Umat, Kumpulan Rencana Pengarang RISALAH Sempena 10 Tahun Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), 1971–1981 (Kuala Lumpur: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, 1981), p. 44.

ideological stream. The ABIM chapter in Kedah opened the first Islamic kindergarten, *Taman Asuhan Kanak-kanak Islam* (Taski), in 1975. ABIM chapters in other Malaysian states followed suit, and by 1983 there were sixty-nine Taski ABIM across the country.[87] For some time, ABIM's educational focus was on the kindergarten programs; it was not until January 1989 that ABIM finally opened its first primary school, *Sekolah Rendah Islam* (SRI), in Kajang, a predominantly Malay suburb on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. Public reception of ABIM schools was encouraging and it did not take ABIM very long to open its first secondary school. In December 1989, ABIM established the *Maahad Al Ummah* in the northern state of Perak, which was quickly followed by new schools in other states. ABIM also opened its own teachers' training institute called *Institut Latihan Perguruan ABIM* (ILPA) and a tertiary-level educational institution called *Kolej Dar al-Hikmah* (formerly known as *Institut Pengajian Ilmu-ilmu Islam*), both in Kajang (on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur), in 1989. By the end of the 1980s, ABIM had managed to develop a complete educational infrastructure that allows for its students to be educated in the same ideological stream from kindergarten up to the university level.[88] By 2014, ABIM's network of schools consists of fourteen primary schools and five secondary schools.

IKRAM, on the other hand, was officially established as an organization in 1990, but its school came earlier in 1986, with the opening of Sekolah Rendah Islam Al-Amin in Kuala Lumpur.[89] In the early 1990s, soon after its establishment, IKRAM started to intensify its educational effort by opening schools across peninsular Malaysia. There is no major difference between the schools of IKRAM and ABIM. Like ABIM, IKRAM also implements an integrated Islamic curriculum that combines the national curriculum from the Ministry of Education and its own Islamic (*diniyah*) curriculum into an amalgam called "behaviour/faith-transcending-curriculum" (*akhlak/aqidah merentasi kurikulum*). Both sets of schools focus on the shaping of a student's character into a Muslim person who is equally successful in this life and the hereafter.[90] Unlike ABIM, however, IKRAM solely focuses on primary and secondary schools and does not have its own kindergartens, teachers' training institute or tertiary institutions. Currently, IKRAM's network of schools consists of twenty-six primary schools and twelve high schools scattered across peninsular Malaysia but mainly located in urban areas.[91]

87 Mahyuddin Ashaari, "Sejarah Pendidikan ABIM", Jurnal Pendidikan Islam 10.4 (February 2004), p. 11.

88 Ibid., pp. 12, 16–23.

89 Pengenalan SRIAAKL: www.al-amin.edu.my/sriaakl/index.php/2014-01-20-07-40-08/pengenalan-sriaakl (accessed on 29 January 2015).

90 IKRAM only switched to fully integrated curriculum in 2002. A Change of Paradigm in the Curriculum: www.al-amin.edu.my/sriaakl/index.php/component/content/article/97-kategori-berita/pendidikan/219-a-change-of-paradigm-in-the-curriculum (accessed on 31 January 2015).

91 Pendidikan Musleh IKRAM: www.musleh.edu.my/index.php/profail/pengenalan (accessed on 29 January 2015).

Integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia are under the jurisdiction of both Private Education Department (*Bahagian Pendidikan Swasta*) in the Ministry of Education, and the state Islamic agency (*Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri*, JAIN). Article 7 of the 1996 Education Act (*Akta Pendidikan 1996*) regulates the establishment and operation of all private schools (non-tertiary level) in Malaysia. Meanwhile, the officials of JAIN are responsible for the vetting and supervision of integrated Islamic schools in their respective states. The integrated Islamic curriculum has to comply with the national standard set by the ministry and the religious standards established by JAIN; both authorities are responsible for approving the integrated Islamic curriculum. The ministry presently registers seventy-five private Islamic schools, which is a drop in the proverbial bucket, which is filled with other types of Islamic schools in Malaysia such as *Sekolah Agama Rakyat*, *Sekolah Agama Negeri*, *Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan*, and *Sekolah Menengah Agama Kebangsaan*.[92] Data for other Islamic schools can also be found in JAKIM's booklet, which puts the total number of private Islamic schools in Malaysia at 312, presumably including part-time and non-formal schools. Integrated Islamic schools straddle the awkward area where the states' authority to manage their own Islamic affairs, including Islamic education, intersects with the federal government's control over the national curriculum. *Sekolah Agama Rakyat* (SAR) and *Sekolah Agama Negeri* (SAN) also occupy a similar position, as discussed in the previous two chapters. The main factor that sets integrated Islamic schools apart from SAR and SAN is the former schools' financial solvency, which allows integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia to maintain a high degree of autonomy from the state.

Maintaining autonomy from the state

As we have observed in the previous two chapters, financial solvency plays an important role in determining the type of relationship that Islamic schools in Malaysia have with the federal government and the state Islamic agency (*Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri*). The federal government has taken over many SAR and SAN across Malaysia and turned them into Government-Assisted Religious Schools (*Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan*, SABK). The federalization of these formerly autonomous Islamic schools is caused by their bad financial health, which means they cannot operate even at the bare minimum level. These schools have, for the most part, reluctantly agreed to cede some of their autonomy in exchange for resources from the federal government. As of 2015, they are still able to use their old curriculum, established by the state Islamic agency,

92 Senarai Sekolah Islam Swasta sehingga 31 Oktober 2014, Bahagian Pendidikan Swasta, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia: www.moe.gov.my/cms/upload_files/files/Senarai%20Sekolah%20Menengah%20Agama%20Swasta%20Sehingga%2031%20Oktober%202014.pdf (accessed on 22 January 2015). See also Data KAFA, Sekolah Agama dan Masjid (Putrajaya: Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia, 2013), pp. 25–30.

but have lost control over their management of infrastructure and human resources.[93] The federal government occasionally uses school funding as a political tool to keep opposition-friendly Islamic schools in line.[94] Integrated Islamic schools, in contrast, do not have to deal with this issue since they are on a more solid financial ground. Integrated Islamic schools typically charge much higher monthly fees than other Islamic schools and the teachers earn lower salaries than their counterparts in the federally-managed schools.[95] Most integrated Islamic schools are located in areas where Malay-Muslim middle- and upper-middle-class professionals live; these people have no difficulties paying the high fees required by the schools. In short, financial solvency allows integrated Islamic schools to operate with a wide degree of latitude from both the state Islamic agency and the federal government.

Their apolitical stance also helps integrated Islamic schools to avoid scrutiny from the federal government and the state Islamic agency. Unlike SAR, which have a long history of resisting the federal government and the federally-backed state Islamic agency (see Chapter 3 for more details), integrated Islamic schools do not profess and practise any explicitly political ideology that can be construed as either pro- or anti-government. Such an apolitical stance might seem strange for a *dakwah* movement that fervently advocates that there should no separation between the divine and the profane. But by this instance, *dakwah* activists mean that a good Muslim should not shy away from politics and must imbue it with his/her Islamic values.[96] It is immaterial whether one's Islamic values lead a person to support the government, become a member of the opposition, or neither. ABIM is a perfect case in point. ABIM collaborated with PAS in its early years due to its perception that UMNO at the time was a secular western-oriented party.[97] When Anwar Ibrahim joined UMNO in 1982, and was later

93 The federal government via JAKIM is currently in the process of finalizing the implementation of a single curriculum for all SAR, SAN, and SABK. Interview with Azizan Muhammad, Ketua Penolong Pengarah Kanan Bahagian Kemajuan Islam (LEPAI), JAKIM, 21 March 2014.

94 "Bantuan kepada sekolah agama rakyat dihentikan", Utusan Malaysia, 26 October 2002.

95 One integrated Islamic school, Sekolah Menengah Islam (SMI) Al-Amin in Bangi, a conservative Malay-Muslim middle- and upper-middle class enclave on the outskirt of Kuala Lumpur, charges RM385 (US$99) per month for school fee. The principal justifies the high fee by saying it is needed since the school operates longer than others (8 am to 4 pm) and has to provide lunch for the students. Interview with Rohida Jamaludin, former principal of SMI Al-Amin Bangi, 12 June 2013.

96 Personal communication with Megat Mohamed Amin, Director of MUSLEH schools network, 30 January 2015.

97 As ABIM became more politically engaged in the second half of 1970s, it saw the UMNO-led government as being unresponsive to its Islamic agenda, which led to a co-operation with PAS. In reciprocity, PAS, rivened by internal party conflicts and was at its weakest point, was also looking for political partners among Islamic NGOs to help bolster its electoral strength. The ABIM-PAS political alliance, however, did not last long, mainly due to cultural divide of the predominantly urban ABIM and predominantly rural PAS. Farish Noor, The Malaysian Islamic Party PAS 1951–2013: Islamism in a Mottled Nation (Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2014), p. 94; Abdullah, The Politics of Islam, pp. 154, 164.

followed by other ABIM leaders, ABIM shed its ties with PAS.[98] The "defection" of its leaders to UMNO allowed ABIM to declare publicly its apolitical stance and announce that its members were free to join any political party since they all shared the same goal of fighting for the interests of Islam.[99] IKRAM promotes a similar apolitical stance. For IKRAM, politics is an inextricable part of Islam and it is simply unthinkable to stay out of it. IKRAM's schools cultivate their students as future Muslim leaders and expect they will someday lead at all levels, from the family unit to the country.[100] Therefore, the autonomy of integrated Islamic schools actually hinges on a balancing act. They tactfully express their political aspirations, but through a generalized Islamic discourse, and so avoid incurring the wrath of the federal government or the state Islamic agencies.

The political dimension of the dakwah movement in Malaysia

The present political activism of the *dakwah* movement in Malaysia can be characterized as largely non-partisan, though IKRAM and ABIM do support many issues that the government deems to be subversive such as the BERSIH demands for clean and fair election system, abolition of repressive laws such as the Internal Security Act and the Sedition Act, among others, which we return to later.[101] In the first decade of its existence, ABIM was unabashedly political, especially during the leadership of Anwar Ibrahim. ABIM at this time was at the forefront of major mass protests against repressive and unjust government policies such as the now abolished Internal Security Act, the University and College Act, the Societies Act, and a host of development programs that disadvantaged the poor.[102] ABIM also formed an alliance with PAS in the second half of the 1970s to such an extent that it mobilized its members to campaign for PAS in Kelantan in the 1978 election. Some of its leaders, such as Nakhaie Ahmad, Fadzil Noor and Syed Ibrahim, were elected to leadership positions within

98 Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "Patterns of State Interaction with Islamic Movements in Malaysia During the Formative Years of Islamic Resurgence", Southeast Asian Studies 44.4 (March 2007), pp. 447–457.

99 Mohd Anuar Tahir, Pendirian Politik ABIM (Petaling Jaya: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, 1993), pp. 14–20.

100 IKRAM develops students as leaders based on the principles of Quran and hadith, not from the political process per se. They then can get involved in politics as agents of change guided by the Islamic values they have internalized regardless of political persuasion. Personal communication with Megat Mohamed Amin, Director of MUSLEH schools network, 30 January 2015.

101 BERSIH is a broad-based coalition of civil society organizations pushing for thorough reforms of Malaysian electoral system, endorsed by IKRAM and ABIM. www.bersih.org/ (accessed on 24 March 2016).

102 Monutty, Perception of Social Change, pp. 291–303.

PAS.[103] Overt partisanship cost ABIM dearly as the federal government began to crack down on its activities, limiting freedom of assembly on campus and transferring ABIM's members within the federal bureaucracy to unwanted posts in far-flung parts of the country.[104] The "defection" of Anwar Ibrahim to UMNO effectively broke ABIM's partisanship and forced the organization to rethink its political direction and objectives.[105]

Meanwhile, IKRAM, which was known at the time as *Jamaah Islah Malaysia* (JIM), came onto the *dakwah* scene in 1990 when the Islamic resurgence was already in full swing. The activists of Islamic Representative Council (IRC), a *dakwah* organization started by Malaysian students studying in the UK in the 1970s, founded JIM after a brief unhappy flirtation with PAS and ABIM in the 1980s. IRC activists' joined forces with recent graduates of Middle Eastern and American universities to establish a new *dakwah* vehicle, which also shared the belief in the ideals and methods of the Muslim Brotherhood.[106] JIM's raison d'être was *islah* (reform), with the ultimate goal of making Malaysia an Islamic state by the year 2010 (later revised to 2020). JIM carried out its Islamizing objective through an approach its founder called "homeostasis", a scientific term that refers to nature's attempt at finding equilibrium. For JIM, the term implies finding an equilibrium between its rigid ideology and the complexity of Malaysian multicultural society.[107] At the end of 2012, the majority of JIM's members voted to dissolve the organization and reconstitute it as IKRAM, mainly for streamlining its resources, with no discernible changes to the movement's ideals or objectives.[108]

Both ABIM and JIM label themselves as apolitical. For them, being apolitical is not the same as being non-political, which in the Islamic *dakwah* context means completely staying out of worldly political affairs, and instead solely focusing on the spiritual development that can lead to a successful life in the hereafter. Such a non-political course is exemplified by groups such as Jemaah Tabligh and the now banned Al-Arqam. ABIM and IKRAM are both apolitical in the sense that they actively engage in public discourse, especially on issues

103 Nakhaie Ahmad later left PAS and joined UMNO. Jomo Kwame Sundaram and Ahmad Shabery Cheek, "The Politics of Malaysia's Islamic Resurgence", Third World Quarterly 10.2 (April 1988): pp. 850–851. See also Abdullah, The Politics of Islam, p. 154.

104 Ibid., pp. 854–855.

105 There were other issues as well that contributed to the severing of ties between ABIM and PAS. ABIM felt at the time that PAS was benefitting more from the alliance due to ABIM's organizational prowess and highly disciplined cadres. ABIM's non-political programs also suffered harassment from the federal government, which was disruptive to its overall operation. Ibid., p. 856.

106 Maszlee Malik and Hamidah Mat, "Pious Approach to Development: Social Capital and Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM)", World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization 4.3 (2014), p. 109.

107 Saari Sungib, Menggerak Gagasan, 1995–2000 (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 1995).

108 "JIM dibubar setelah 22 tahun terlibat dakwah", Harakah, 2 January 2013.

that directly relate to Islam, but at the same time they try to avoid appearing to be partisan. This approach requires both organizations to be politically adroit in order to safely navigate the highly polarized arena of Malaysian politics. The former Secretary General of ABIM, Mohd. Anuar Tahir, stated that:

> We do not talk about party politics, and they [the villagers] know that we do not visit them in order to collect votes. Due to the political struggle between UMNO and PAS, whole villages are divided in party-political questions and street brawls are in some places unexceptional happenings. Our neutrality makes them favour us and accept our support.[109]

Both ABIM and IKRAM have not been shy in their criticisms of certain government policies, such as the introduction of a Goods and Services Tax (GST), increases of highway toll rates, electoral reforms and a host of other issues. Despite such criticisms, ABIM and IKRAM find that their networks of integrated Islamic schools remain largely unaffected by the iron fist of the federal government, a point that will be analysed in detail below.

The delicate dance of the Malaysian dakwah movement's apolitical approach

The sacking and wrongful imprisonment of the former Deputy Prime Minister and president of ABIM, Anwar Ibrahim, in 1999 jolted ABIM and IKRAM into becoming more proactive on national political matters. The tumultuous period in Malaysian politics affected IKRAM deeply, which led the organization to become an active member of the *Reformasi* movement that tried to force a change in government through democratic means. The organization's focus shifted almost overnight from "primordial issues relating to Islam to the political discourse of freedom, human rights, rule of law, accountability, good governance and civil society".[110] Several top leaders of IKRAM such as its president, Saari Sungib, and the head of its women's wing, Fuziah Salleh, contested in the 1999 general election as *Parti Keadilan* (now *Parti Keadilan Rakyat*, PKR) candidates. IKRAM's vice president, Syed Ibrahim Syed Noh, was also the long-time leader of *Gerakan Mansuhkan ISA* (Movement to Abolish ISA), a civil society group that seeks to end the draconian 1960 Internal Security Act (ISA). IKRAM is also involved with the nationwide BERSIH campaign, a coalition of

109 Anne Sofie Roald, Tarbiya: Education and Politics in Islamic Movements in Jordan and Malaysia (Lund: Lund Studies in History of Religions, Volume 3, 1994), p. 298.

110 Saari Sungib was arrested in 1998 and 2001 under the Internal Security Act for his involvement in the Reformasi movement. He is currently a PAS state assemblyperson for the Hulu Klang area near Kuala Lumpur. Fuziah Salleh is now a PKR Member of Parliament for Kuantan in the state of Pahang. Malik and Mat, Pious Approach to Development, p. 110; Saari Sungib, Sengsara Kem Kamunting: Kisah Hidup Dalam Penjara ISA (Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2011).

civil society groups and political parties that pushes for serious reforms in the Malaysian electoral system. In short, IKRAM sees its *dakwah* role as extending beyond the narrow confines of the theological and the spiritual, and applies to a much broader socio-political context.

When it comes to controversial religious issues such as the use of the term Allah in Malay-language bibles and the implementation of *hudud* (Islamic criminal law), IKRAM has also taken a more conciliatory stance that appeals to moderate Muslims and non-Muslims in general. IKRAM's official stand is that the government should not ban non-Muslims from using the term but instead expend more effort in strengthening the faith of Muslims.[111] Similarly, IKRAM counsel's patience and more deliberation before any serious attempt is taken to implement *hudud*.[112] The approach of IKRAM thus consists of direct pressure on the government on political issues via broad coalitions, and a middle-of-the-road stance on sensitive religious issues. This stance shows that IKRAM tries hard not to associate itself with either the government or with PAS.

ABIM is similar to IKRAM in its proactive participation in public discourse on major national issues. Since the late 1990s when the wave of *Reformasi* hit Malaysia, ABIM has been reprising its former role as a political gadfly and has come out with statements that criticize many government policies, such as economic and taxation policies, academic freedom and freedom of assembly, and a host of other non-religious issues. ABIM also endorses the BERSIH campaign to reform Malaysia's electoral system.[113] As for major religious issues, such as the use of Allah in Malay-language bibles and the implementation of *hudud*, ABIM has a more conservative approach than IKRAM. ABIM supports both the government ban on non-Muslims using the term Allah and the attempt of the state government in Kelantan to implement *hudud*.[114]

There are some issues where IKRAM and ABIM are of the same opinion. They both agree, for instance, that Shiism is a deviancy and should be banned by the government.[115] IKRAM and ABIM also spend much of their advocacy efforts on issues that affect the global Muslim *ummah* such as the plight of the Palestinians and the Syrian conflict. ABIM and IKRAM have shown that it is possible to proactively engage in the national political discourse and take stands opposing

111 Pendirian IKRAM Berkenaan Isu Kalimah Allah: www.ikram.org.my/v2/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=795%3Apendirian-ikram-berkenaan-isu-kalimah-allah&Itemid=13 (accessed on 1 February 2015).

112 "Hudud: Ikram syor beri masa kepada JK Teknikal", Harakah, 12 May 2014.

113 One can find ABIM's official statements on various issues of the day under the Siaran Media ABIM sub-section of its website: www.abim.org.my/siaran-sentral/siaran-media-abim.html (accessed on 1 February 2015).

114 "Abim mahu hudud dijadikan agenda bersama umat Islam", Sinar Harian, 8 July 2012; "Abim: Don't flout ban on use of 'Allah' ", Malaysiakini, 14 March 2011.

115 Pendirian IKRAM Dalam Fahaman Isu Syiah: www.ikram.org.my/v2/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=911:pendirian-ikram-dalam-isu-fahaman-syiah&catid=1:berita-pusat&Itemid=9 (accessed on 1 February 2015); "Abim alu-alukan tindakan KDN", Sinar Harian, 14 December 2013.

the government on some issues; in other words, being political without the political label of being associated with the Islamic opposition party, PAS. The question is what are the conditions that allow both organizations to operate in such manner and not suffer the wrath of the federal government, in particular, on their network of integrated Islamic schools?

Socio-political conditions for the apolitical approach of ABIM and IKRAM

The wave of Islamization since the late 1970s has permeated every nook and cranny of Malaysian society and has created an environment that is thick and heavy with religiosity, where Islam as an ideology forms the discursive basis for every issue discussed and debated in the public arena, at least among the Malay-Muslim community. The federal government responded to the Islamic resurgence with its own Islamization efforts, such as establishing the International Islamic University in 1983, creating an Islamic insurance scheme (*Takaful*) in 1984, implementing the 1985 Inculcation of Islamic Values in the Administration Policy (*Dasar Penerapan Nilai-Nilai Islam Dalam Pentadbiran*), making "Islamic Civilization" courses compulsory for Muslim university students, and introducing a raft of other Islamic-oriented programs (see Chapter 1 for more discussion on this topic).[116] The parliament, controlled by the UMNO-led National Front (*Barisan Nasional*, BN) coalition, passed Article 121(1A) to amend the federal constitution in 1988 and effectively elevate the status of *syariah* courts to be on par with the civil courts. The government has tried to co-opt the Islamic discourse in this way because it sees its legitimacy and survival as precariously hinging on the perception that it is Islamic enough. The resultant heavily Islamized political climate allows *dakwah* groups like ABIM and IKRAM to employ Islam rhetoric in order to engage in peaceful oppositional politics without suffering serious repercussions from the federal government.[117] The status of ABIM and IKRAM as civil society groups also allows them to tailor their disagreements with the government to focus on specific issues, rather than offering a blanket opposition in the style of a political party.

Both organizations have so far managed to avoid close scrutiny or control from the federal government, mostly due to their schools' financial solvency. As we saw in Chapter 3, save for a few exceptional cases, the federal government typically chooses to negotiate with the politically troublesome People's Islamic Schools (*Sekolah Agama Rakyat*, SAR), known to be strongholds of PAS. The federal government realizes that cracking down too hard on SAR would risk it being seen as un-Islamic. Even so, the federal government can exert its control over SAR because of the sorry financial state of these schools.

116 Chandra, Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia, pp. 79–80; Ahmad Fauzi, Patterns of State Interaction, pp. 457–461.

117 Ahmad Fauzi, Patterns of State Interaction, p. 446.

Integrated Islamic schools, on the other hand, are in financially better shape than SAR, and can thus maintain autonomy from the centralizing grip of the federal government. Financial solvency means that schools run by ABIM and IKRAM do not have to surrender part of their independence to the government in exchange for financial assistance. It also allows ABIM and IKRAM to criticize the government without having to fear the withdrawal of financial support from the government. The federal government, of course, is able to crack down on the schools operated by ABIM and IKRAM if it chose to do so, but has so far opted for an accommodative approach.[118] IKRAM and ABIM are also well aware that their criticisms risk inviting the wrath of the state upon their schools and know they have to tread carefully as they keep testing the limits of tolerated dissent.[119]

Another reason that explains why there is no direct correlation between organizational caderization in schools run by ABIM and IKRAM with party caderization for the Islamic party PAS is the difference in the constituencies and geographic areas served by the schools. PAS has traditionally drawn its support from SAR and *pondok* in the rural, predominantly agricultural parts of Malaysia, namely in the north and the east coast (see Chapter 3 for details). Integrated Islamic schools, however, are mostly located in the urban and semi-urban areas and serve a constituency of middle- and upper-middle-class Malay-Muslims. This distinction is especially important since it allows ABIM's and IKRAM's networks of schools to evade the perception that they are hotbeds of Islamic opposition against the government, the image that plagues SAR and *pondok*. It also helps that so far none of the alumni of integrated Islamic schools have been involved in armed attempts to overthrow the government, unlike some graduates of SAR, which has provided pretexts for severe crackdowns on the latter schools.[120] This is not to say that there is no tangible connection between integrated Islamic schools and PAS. PAS does draw support from the middle- and upper-middle Malay-Muslim enclaves where most of the integrated Islamic school are located. The legislative representatives for some of these well-to-do enclaves such as Bangi and Shah Alam are from PAS, which illustrates the

118 One delegate of UMNO during the party's recent Annual General Meeting (AGM) urged the government to revise the need for private schools (read: vernacular Chinese schools) and Islamic schools, which she claimed to be at odds with the National Educational Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan) and function as incubators for racial and religious extremists. "Kaji sekolah persendirian, pondok dan agama", Malaysiakini, 29 November 2014.

119 Perancangan Strategik MUSLEH 2000–2004.

120 The executed leader of the militant group Al-Ma'unah, Mohamed Amin Mohamed Razali, who led a failed raid on a government armoury in 2000 was a graduate of SAR. In addition, nineteen out of twenty-five members of the Malaysian Mujahidin Group (Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia, KMM) detained by the police for militant activities in 2001 were also graduates of SAR. "Jalan terbaik bagi SAR", Utusan Malaysia, 18 March 2003.

strong appeal of Islam as a form of political expression among the educated Malay-Muslim constituencies.[121]

Unlike in Indonesia, where there is a continuous and apparent ideological thread between Jemaah Tarbiyah, SIT and PKS, as shown above, the same link cannot be made for *dakwah* organizations in Malaysia such as ABIM and IKRAM, their network of integrated Islamic schools, and PAS. The overlap between these organizations and PAS is mainly by default, since for most of Malaysia's post-independence history there has been only one formally Islamic party contending in the formal political system.[122] Since the 1970s, members of ABIM and IKRAM who have wanted to express their ideological beliefs through the formal political channel have tended to find PAS as the most amenable political vehicle, despite UMNO's best attempts to buttress its Islamic credibility. On the other hand, Muslim political activists in the post-1998 Indonesia are spoiled for choice when it comes to expressing their political aspirations through party politics. Islamic choices run the ideological gamut from middle-of-the-road parties such as PKB and PAN to the more conservative PKS and PPP. Party caderization, therefore, assumes a more instrumental role among Muslim activists in Indonesia. In particular, PKS activists see education as a way to ensure party loyalty and sustain its membership in the midst of the competitive milieu that is Islamic politics in the country. PAS and PAN, by contrast, are simply the unintended beneficiaries of intensive caderization efforts carried out by ABIM and IKRAM to inculcate their members with religious values that happen to coincide with the parties' own political values.[123] Therefore, integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia do not act as an

121 Bangi's member of state assembly is Mohd. Shafie Ngah from PAS, who defeated his UMNO counterpart in the 2013 election by an overwhelming margin of 11,838 votes. Meanwhile, the Member of Parliament for Shah Alam, Khalid Samad, is a prominent leader of PAN (a break-away party from PAS). He also won his seat in the 2013 election in a landslide margin of 10,931 votes against a well-known UMNO candidate. Keputusan PRU 13/Selangor: www.myundi.com.my/pru13/selangor.aspx (accessed on 18 February 2015).

122 The PAS annual congress (muktamar) in 2015 saw most of the leaders representing the professional faction wiped out from the party's leadership. The defeated PAS leaders, along with other like-minded party members, subsequently left PAS and formed a new Islamic party called National Trust Party (Parti Amanah Negara, PAN). PAN ended up replacing PAS as a member of the opposition coalition, Pakatan Harapan. Therefore, ABIM and IKRAM members now have the option of supporting either PAS or PAN as choices for Islamic political parties. For the history of the PAS-PAN split, see Sejarah Parti Amanah Rakyat: http://amanah.org.my/berkenaan-amanah/sejarah/ (accessed on 24 March 2016).

123 IKRAM members must renounce their membership when they join a political party, in order to ensure the organization remains politically neutral. Such was the case with its founder Saari Sungib and former leader Fuziah Salleh when both joined PAS and PKR, respectively. According to the director of IKRAM-Musleh schools, this policy further insulates the schools from possible government crackdown due to the political activities of IKRAM. Interview with Megat Mohamed Amin, Director of MUSLEH schools network, 14 April 2016. Members of ABIM, on the other hand, can join any political parties under the condition that they do not hold any leadership posts in the organization. Roald, Tarbiya, p. 287.

incubator of future cadres of PAS and PAN, unlike their counterparts in Indonesia, which mainly act as a supply line for the PKS.

Ideological indoctrination in integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia

There is not much difference between integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia and Malaysia when it comes to the methods used to inculcate their particular values in their students. In fact, the principal of an SIT in Indonesia mentioned that he once took part in a study trip to visit several integrated Islamic schools around the Kuala Lumpur area; cooperation between integrated Islamic schools in the two countries is also common.[124] Campus-based *dakwah* groups such as Jemaah Tarbiyah in Indonesia and ABIM and IKRAM in Malaysia have been using similar activities to instil the group's values in their members. Common methods of ideological inculcation come as no surprise considering that *dakwah* movements in both countries draw their inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwanul Muslimin*) in Egypt and *Jama'at-i-Islami* in Pakistan. The transnational linkage has been going on since the mid-1970s when the Bandung-based Imadudin Abdurrahim and his *Latihan Mujahid Dakwah* program conducted various seminars in Malaysia sponsored by ABIM. Integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia and Malaysia pay special attention to character development of their students and their capacity as young messengers of the faith (*shabab du'at*).[125] ABIM has its own special cadre-training program called *tamrin al-kadir* with the singular purpose of ensuring the continuity of its Islamic struggle into the foreseeable future.[126] Therefore, methods for ideological indoctrination found in integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia are similar to the ones already discussed in the section on SIT in Indonesia, which are *liqo'/halaqa/usrah* (study circle), *rihlah/daurah* (group retreat), *mukhayyam* (camping), and *qiayamul lail* (overnight religious activities).

Integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia introduce *usrah* activity in primary school as part of their *tarbiyah* (education) program; the study circle continues until senior high school level. The schools consider *usrah* to be an integral part of their efforts to shape and cultivate the students' character, leadership skills, and awareness of problems plaguing society and the Muslim *ummah*.[127] Similar to SIT in Indonesia, integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia also use *usrah* as a

124 Interview with Joko Prayitno, Principal of SMAIT Nurul Fikri, 10 January 2014. Integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia also organize trips to visit their counterparts in Indonesia. Musleh Berhad: Pusat Pendidikan SRI-SMI Berhad, Memperkasakan Pendidikan Islam, pp. 13–14.

125 A Change of Paradigm in the Curriculum, Sekolah Rendah Islam Al-Amin Kuala Lumpur: www.al-amin.edu.my/sriaakl/index.php/component/content/article/97-kategori-berita/pendidikan/219-a-change-of-paradigm-in-the-curriculum (accessed on 31 January 2015).

126 Monutty, Perception of Social Change, pp. 245–247.

127 Program Pendidikan PPAA: www.al-amin.edu.my/index.php/2014-01-20-07-41-06/program-pendidikan-ppaa (accessed on 19 March 2015).

means to inculcate and deepen Islamic values of their students, and to foster an abiding sense of esprit de corps among them.

For *rihlah* (outdoor physical activities), integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia also follow a similar scouting model as SIT, even regularly joining GP-SIT jamborees in Indonesia.[128] IKRAM-run integrated Islamic schools organize jamborees and camping trips such as *Perkhemahan Nasional Kadet Remaja Sekolah Musleh* and *Mukhayyam Latihan Kader Du'at* (LKD).[129] These schools also organize another type of *rihlah* called *Kembara Dakwah* (Dakwah Tour), where their students spend between one to two weeks living among isolated Muslim communities in Sabah, Sarawak, and *Orang Asli* (indigenous people) villages in peninsular Malaysia to help strengthen the Islamic practices of these communities.[130] IKRAM and ABIM schools in Malaysia organize *rihlah* and *daurah* on a regular basis as a key component of their ideological indoctrination process and to cultivate a new generation of Muslim leaders through their programs for Islamic leadership training (*latihan kepimpinan Islam*).[131]

Integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia also organize *qiyamul lail* activity as a mandatory component of its extracurricular program.[132] Similar to SIT's students in Indonesia, integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia also make *qiyamul lail* attendance mandatory and part of students' grade on extracurricular activities. Schools typically combine *qiyamul lail* activities with *mukhayyam* (camping) and the aforementioned *rihlah* since *qiyamul lail* entails an overnight stay away from home.[133] Like other group-based extracurricular activities organized by integrated Islamic schools, the main purpose of *qiyamul lail* is to instil into students the values of the *dakwah* movement in a less formal setting, which as I have mentioned previously is a more effective method of ideological indoctrination than classroom instructions.

The instrumental role of the teaching corps in integrated Islamic schools

Similar to SIT in Indonesia, integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia also select teachers primarily for their commitment to the *dakwah* movement and the expectation that they fulfil their responsibility as *murabbi* (mentors or known

128 GP-SIT also join their counterparts' jamborees in Malaysia. Musleh Berhad, Memperkasakan Pendidikan Islam, pp. 14, 18.

129 Ibid., pp. 18–19, 24.

130 Ibid., pp. 18, 20. See also "Kembara Dakwah Musleh", Utusan Malaysia, 28 March 2012.

131 Anwar, Kebangkitan Islam, pp. 95–100.

132 Program Pendidikan PPAA: www.al-amin.edu.my/index.php/2014-01-20-07-41-06/program-pendidikan-ppaa (accessed on 19 March 2015).

133 Qiyamul lail constitutes 10 per cent of students' grade for the mandatory Musleh Schools' Young Cadet (Tunas Kadet Remaja Sekolah Musleh, TKRSM) program, a mandatory extracurricular activity. Pusat Pendidikan Hidayah Johor Bahru: www.hidayah.edu.my/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=708:gerak-kerja-kokurikulum-gerko-qiyamullail-a-mukhayyam-2014&catid=43:menu- (accessed on 11 May 2016).

as *naqib* within the ABIM's circle). All teachers and the administrative personnel have to follow IKRAM's *Program Tarbiyah Musleh* (Reformist Education Program), which consists of five modules that gradually strengthen their religious knowledge, skills, and character. IKRAM expects at least 30 per cent of participants to reach the third module by 2005 (current data is not available).[134] Teachers in integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia also receive a lower pay than what they would have earned working in government schools, a testament to their commitment to the ideals of the *dakwah* movement.[135] In short, highly dedicated teachers who are willing to sacrifice their self-interests for the collective good of the *dakwah* movement are indispensable in ensuring the success of the ideological indoctrination efforts by integrated Islamic schools.

State supervision and implementation of Islamic orthodoxy

As in Indonesia, the Ministry of Education and the state Islamic agency (JAIN), which oversee all integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia, look at these schools in a favourable light. The officials see the growth of integrated Islamic schools as providing more educational choices for discerning Malay-Muslim parents. One official at the Selangor state educational office relates that:

> This [the popularity of integrated Islamic schools] is a very encouraging trend. It shows that nowadays more and more Muslim parents are conscious (*sedar*) of the importance of inculcating Islamic values in their children's lives from such a young age and of preparing them to be good Muslims. This trend therefore can only be a good thing.[136]

The absence of an anti-establishment history in integrated Islamic schools also helps them to remain in the good graces of the ministry and state religious officials, in contrast to the aforementioned SAR. The integrated Islamic schools generally try to avoid overt political activities in the classrooms in order not to provoke unwanted visits from the authorities. In the case of MUSLEH schools, the network of schools run by IKRAM, the schools try their best to distance their educational program from the political program of their parent organization IKRAM, which is a vocal member of civil society groups that are critical of the

134 Perancangan Strategik MUSLEH 2000–2004: www.musleh.edu.my/index.php/profail/rancang (accessed on 14 January 2015).

135 Interview with Rohida Jamaludin, former principal of SMI Al-Amin Bangi, 12 June 2013. Similarly, ABIM teachers receive one-third to one-half pay of teachers employed by government and other types of private schools. Anwar, Kebangkitan Islam, p. 43.

136 Interview with Shopuan Anuar Ahmad, Sektor Pendidikan Islam, Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Selangor, 5 August 2013.

government.[137] The networks of integrated schools run by ABIM and IKRAM have not been targeted in any government crackdown.

When it comes to Islamic education, ABIM has had a long history of working relationship with the state, especially since the early 1980s when the then Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, and his deputy, Anwar Ibrahim, embarked on the state Islamization project. ABIM has been a long-time proponent of revamping the "secular" characteristic of the national education system, and was instrumental in pressuring the government to formulate a new National Educational Philosophy (*Falsafah Pendidikan Negara*) in 1988 and infuse it with religious values, partially quoted below:

> Education in Malaysia is a continuous effort toward the further development of individual potential in a holistic and integrative way in order to create a person who is balanced and harmonious with respect to intellect, spirit, emotion and physique, *grounded in the belief in and obedience to God*. This effort aims to produce Malaysians who are knowledgeable, responsible and capable of attaining inner peace while contributing to the harmony and prosperity of the society and country [emphasis mine][138]

The adoption of the National Educational Philosophy in 1988 marked the demise of "secularism" in the national education system. From this point, the official view was that religious values were central to the country's educational needs. Led by the former head of its Education Bureau, Osman Bakar, ABIM had been lobbying the government to change its educational philosophy since 1974. In the words of Osman Bakar, with the changes introduced in 1988, the National Educational Philosophy was "no longer secular since it now comprises principles that satisfy the aims and desire of Islamic educational philosophy".[139] Seen in this context, since 1988 ABIM and the ministry have shared a similar educational philosophy. This in turn means that ABIM's network of integrated Islamic schools are less likely to run afoul of the authorities – at least with regard to its curriculum. The same goes for schools run by IKRAM, which also share a common educational philosophy with ABIM.

Integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia also implement a conservative curriculum that is in line with the ideas promoted by the state orthodoxy.[140] With

137 Teachers and administrative staff of MUSLEH schools would be asked to leave if they became active members of any political parties, lest they invite crackdown from the government. Interviews with Rohida Jamaludin, former principal of SMI Al-Amin Bangi, 12 June 2013 and Megat Mohamed Amin, Director of MUSLEH schools network, 14 April 2016.

138 Mohd. Nur Manuty, "Falsafah Pendidikan Negara: Dilihat Dari Perspektif Pendidikan Islam" in Mohd. Idris Jauzi, ed., Reformasi Pendidikan di Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur: Nurin Enterprise, 1991), p. 112.

139 Quoted in Ashaari, Sejarah Pendidikan ABIM, pp. 6–7.

140 The former principal of SMI Al-Amin says that the school's curriculum does not contravene in any way the religious values and standard set by the authorities since the authorities themselves officially approve the curriculum. Interview with Rohida Jamaludin, 12 June 2013.

respect to non-religious subjects such as science and mathematics, the curriculum pairs every scientific observation and theory with verses from the Quran, hadiths, and other religious sources, akin to the SIT curriculum. This educational approach is the very essence of the Islamization of knowledge, which forms the core philosophy of integrated Islamic education. Nonetheless, one factor that sets integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia apart from SIT in Indonesia is the imposition of national exams for all subjects by the Ministry of Education. Mandatory national exams for religious subjects are one way to force the implementation of orthodox ideas into school curricula and teacher lesson plans. Teachers tend to prepare students for the exams and focus more on test-taking techniques, instead of encouraging classroom discussions and alternative points of views.[141] One teacher I interviewed explains that discussions of various perspectives not covered in the curriculum would only confuse the students when it comes to exam time. It is more important to prepare students, so they will do well in the national exams and get into a good university when they graduate.[142] Classroom discussions are also devoid of controversial topics such as politics and race, in order to avoid potential trouble with the ministry.[143] In other words, the teachers engage in self-censorship, in order to meet national exam requirements and preempt crackdowns. The caution is understandable since integrated Islamic schools promote themselves as the paragon of excellence in modern Islamic education; thus, it is imperative for the schools to produce students who score well in the national exams and to avoid negative attention that could ruin their reputation.

Meanwhile, the state religious authority (*Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri*) and educational office (*Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri*) are more concerned with the spread of Shiite ideology and Christianization efforts in schools than in monitoring the curriculum of integrated Islamic schools.[144] One officer explained that "deviant" Islamic teaching was almost non-existent among the schools in his state and that he was more worried about Shia-influenced teachers in the classroom and (unnamed) Christian groups that were trying to spread Christianity in the national schools.[145] In light of these top two concerns, integrated Islamic schools have nothing to fear from the authorities. As shown previously, teachers of Islamic integrated schools are specially chosen for their ideological commitment, and they go through *tarbiyah* (education) modules that further strengthen their religious resolve. In addition, since the staff and student body of integrated Islamic schools are 100 per cent Muslims, there is no concern about Christianization creeping into the schools. The ideology of integrated Islamic schools, based on the ideas and practices of the Muslim Brotherhood and *Jama'at-i-Islami*, puts them firmly in the *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah* camp, the strand of

141 Author's classroom observation, SMI Al-Amin Bangi, 21 June 2013.
142 Interview with Masyitah Abdul Latif, SMI Al-Amin Bangi, 21 June 2013.
143 Ibid.
144 "JAIS tarik balik buku teks SRA", Kosmo!, 12 April 2014.
145 Interview with Shopuan Anuar Ahmad, Sektor Pendidikan Islam, Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Selangor, 5 August 2013.

Sunni Islam that is also shared by the government. In short, theologically speaking, integrated Islamic schools in Malaysia face no danger of any government crackdown, unless they allow interpretations of their curriculum that support oppositional politics.

Conclusion

In the context of the main argument of this book, both the factors that have enabled the state in Malaysia to be more successful in centralizing its control over Islamic education, and the state in Indonesia to be less successful, have contributed to the rising popularity of integrated Islamic schools since the early 1990s in Indonesia and the early 1980s in Malaysia – but in very different ways. The pluralist nature of the state Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia means that the state tolerates diversity of religious ideologies in Islamic schools, including the conservative ideology found in SIT. In Malaysia, by contrast, the conservative curriculum of integrated Islamic schools matches the values propagated by the state Islamic orthodoxy, which allows these schools to elude close government scrutiny. Financial viability is another factor that permits integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia and Malaysia more autonomy to operate than other types of Islamic schools since they do not depend on funding from the state for survival. Financial independence is especially pertinent in the Malaysian case, where the state has been employing its vast resources to take over the control of many financially struggling Islamic schools since the late 1970s. In short, the same factors that have allowed the state in Malaysia to increase its control over Islamic education also contribute to the growth of integrated Islamic education. The relative laxness of the state in the same field has provided similar schools with the space to grow in Indonesia.

Integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia and Malaysia are the product of the wave of Islamic revivalism that swept through the countries in the late 1970s and late 1980s, respectively. *Dakwah* movements such as Jemaah Tarbiyah in Indonesia and ABIM and IKRAM in Malaysia, heavily influenced by the ideology and organizing strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and *Jama'at-i-Islami* in Pakistan, stressed the importance of the role of education (*tarbiyah*) in establishing a true Islamic society. Integrated Islamic education serves, primarily, as a means to shape the character of young students as model Muslims who practise Islam as a complete way of life, and who excel both in this world and in the hereafter. The schools hope that these young students will become productive and influential members of society, a society which they will gradually transform into a truly Islamic one. The ultimate objective of the *dakwah* movement is to capture the state and subsequently wield the immense power and resources of the state to mould society in its own ideological image. The integrated Islamic schools serve a preliminary purpose: that of preparing the Muslim cadres and citizens who will be able to pioneer these great transformations.

The nature of the political system in both countries, however, has shaped the nature of these educational efforts and how they interact with the world of formal

politics. The Indonesian political system has opened up tremendously since the fall of Suharto's New Order regime in 1998, which has seen the proliferation of Islamic political parties contending for seats on all levels of governance. The dynamism of post-authoritarian politics creates a competitive environment for Muslim activists wanting to pursue their agenda in the formal political arena; there is a marketplace of Islamic parties imbued with a variety of ideologies. Party caderization thus becomes one of the main strategies for the *dakwah* activists linked to PKS, who hope to ensure the continuation of their political struggle, maintain party loyalty, and better compete with other Islamic political parties.

Meanwhile in Malaysia, the illiberal-democratic political system, which to date has produced only two Islamic political parties (PAS and PAN), leaves *dakwah* activists with few options for pursuing their social transformative agenda through formal political channels. Hence, party caderization takes a backseat to active participation in civil society groups and joining the government. The heavily Islamized social climate dominated by the orthodox views of the state, which are also shared by *dakwah* activists, provides them with more avenues to propagate their ideals. Being "apolitical", is a form of non-confrontational political participation. The rejuvenation of the civil society as a political force in Malaysia since 1999 has also pre-empted efforts by ABIM and IKRAM to produce cadres for PAS and PAN. The growth of a civil society movement amidst the miasmic political climate of Malaysia allows for issue-based political participation by the *dakwah* activists.[146] They can form temporary alliances with any interested stakeholders, including the government and its ruling coalition, to advocate certain issues that are part of the *dakwah* movement's agenda. The ad hoc and supple nature of political participation of the *dakwah* activists is a deft move to avoid political labelling, but one that is enabled by the heavily Islamized public discursive sphere.

The rise of integrated Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia is an indicator of the growth of the Muslim middle- and upper-middle classes that have benefitted from rapid economic development and increased access to higher education since the 1970s in both countries. This type of education is a natural outgrowth of the high expectations such people have for their children to achieve equal success in this world and the hereafter (*akhirat*). The promoters of integrated Islamic education are financially and politically savvy enough to ensure that their schools escape unwelcome attention of the government, to the extent that they even successfully inspired the adoption of the core of their educational philosophy by the national curriculum. The governments in Indonesia and Malaysia see only the positive side of integrated Islamic education and have no intention of exerting more control over this type of school. Coupled with the ever-prospering Muslim middle- and upper-middle classes in both countries, integrated Islamic education as a trend will only continue to grow into the foreseeable future.

146 Meredith Weiss, Protest and Possibilities: Civil Society and Coalitions for Political Change in Malaysia (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2005).

6 Conclusion

The book has proceeded on the premise that every state seeks to inculcate the society with its ideological values through mass education. In the case of Muslim-majority states, this effort encompasses shaping religious discourse by controlling Islamic education. However, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the state's "regime of truth" is not simply a one-way linear process where the state imposes its ideological will on the society with impunity and the society absorbs the state's values unquestioningly. The values propagated by the state are a product of dialectical interactions between various components of the state and society, some of which can be at odds with each other. Joel Migdal posited that the state and the society are mutually constitutive. By accepting the premise that the state and the society are mutually transforming, the book has sought to tease out the factors that allow the state to project its ideological hegemony more effectively by way of centralizing control over the Islamic education system. The factors so identified are the ideological make-up of the state institutions; the patterns of Islamization in the society that necessitate different reactions from the state; and the control of resources by the central government that influences the interaction between the centre and its periphery. By focusing on the interplay of these three factors within the framework of a Migdalian conception of "state-in-society" and an approach drawing on comparative historical institutionalism, the book has provided an analytical explanation of why Islamic education in Indonesia is more decentralized and discursively diverse, while in Malaysia it is more centralized and discursively restricted.

Based on the three aforementioned factors, I have argued that the state in Malaysia has been more successful in centralizing its control over the Islamic education system, compared to the state in Indonesia. In Malaysia, the state institutions that oversee and manage Islamic education are more ideologically coherent; the Islamization of society is more comprehensive and intense, so much so that Islam has become a basis for state legitimacy. In addition, the overwhelming concentration of resources in the hands of the federal government provides it with leverage over financially struggling Islamic schools in the regions. In Indonesia, the state institutions that oversee and manage Islamic education are ideologically fragmented. The Islamization of society, while underway, does not figure prominently in the maintenance of state legitimacy. Legal complexities

and scarce resources limit the ability of the central government to exert more control over financially struggling Islamic schools. An obvious result of the centralization of Islamic education in Malaysia is the narrowing of space for diverse expressions of religious discourse as evidenced by the sheer domination of conservative values propagated by the state Islamic orthodoxy. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the decentralized nature of Islamic education allows for a more open and diverse religious discourse, exemplified by the diversity of values found in the state Islamic orthodoxy (within the context of Islamic education curriculum).

The book has presented three case studies from each country to demonstrate the applicability of the three aforementioned factors and to shed light on the differences of Islamic education systems between them. The case studies were paired to allow for controlled comparison of Islamic education in similar social contexts. The first pair of case studies was Aceh in Indonesia and Kelantan in Malaysia (Chapter 3). Both were chosen for their deep tradition of Islamic learning. The book shows that while Islamic education in both locations is generally prosperous and growing, the federal government has slowly been taking control of Islamic education in Kelantan, especially since the late 1970s. This stands in contrast with Aceh, where there is a high degree of local control over Islamic education, especially since 2005. The second pair of case studies was Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) in Indonesia and Sarawak in Malaysia (Chapter 4). These two case studies were chosen because they are both Christian-majority areas and I wish to explore the fate of Islamic education in such contexts of potential weakness. Despite this similarity, the book has argued that Islamic education in NTT is much worse off than that in Sarawak, due to the differing power relations between the Muslim minority and the Christian majority population. The political strength of Muslims in Sarawak is disproportionate to the size of its community, the result of which is the prosperity of Islamic schools in Sarawak. In NTT, by contrast, the weak political position of Muslims has resulted in a sad state of Islamic education in the province. The final pair of case studies concerns the relatively new phenomenon of integrated Islamic schools in middle- and upper-middle-class Muslim enclaves in Indonesia and Malaysia (Chapter 5). Integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia and Malaysia share many qualities since they are one of the products of the *dakwah* movement that emerged from the wave of Islamization in the late 1970s. This book posits that integrated Islamic schools in both countries engage in ideological indoctrination of their students as an effort to enlist them in the *dakwah* movement, and the three previously mentioned factors permit this caderization process to take place without interference from the state. However, one critical difference is that many integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia are established as the ideological indoctrination place for the Islamic political party, PKS, while in Malaysia, integrated Islamic schools are not affiliated with any political parties.

Ideological makeup of the state institutions

Throughout the book, I have endeavoured to show that the major difference between the state institutions overseeing Islamic education in Indonesia and

Malaysia is their ideological orientation. The ideological orientation of any institution in the field of Islamic education is essential in determining its identity, and thus, its choice of policies and patterns of interactions with other institutions. Institutional ideology can either lead to organizational coherency between the various state institutions of all levels of governance, or to conflict between them.

The book has also treated organizational coherence, by which I mean the ability of institutions that make up the components of the state to act as one cohesive unit toward shared goals, as a function of institutional complexity. High institutional complexity – which is constituted by differences in institutional ideologies and objectives – leads to contentious inter- and intra-institutional relations between components of the state, which typically results in haphazard policy implementation by the leading ministry and greater control of Islamic education by local educational offices and schools. Conversely, low institutional complexity allows for seamless policy implementation and enforcement from the ministry to the educational offices and schools since there is much less conflict between and within state institutions that oversee Islamic education.

The book has shown that the ideological orientation of the state institutions in Malaysia in the field of Islamic education has been much more consistent than that in Indonesia, especially after the start of the wave of Islamization in the late 1970s. The state in Malaysia has made conscious efforts over the past four decades to instil conservative Islamic values in its institutions, demonstrated above all by the 1985 Policy on the Inculcation of Islamic Values in Administration (*Dasar Penerapan Nilai-Nilai Islam Dalam Pentadbiran*). The federal government has since tasked JAKIM with the responsibility to carry out the Islamization of state institutions. JAKIM has effectively held a monopolistic sway over the establishment of acceptable Islamic values and norms, not just within the state bureaucracy, but also in the society at large. The competition between the ruling Malay party, UMNO, and the Islamic opposition party, PAS, to "out-Islamize" each other in trying to prove which party has the sole right to speak for Islam in Malaysia has resulted in Islamic values and norms that are deeply conservative and pervasively homogenous. These values and norms have come to permeate every nook and cranny of the state bureaucracy as well as the general public in Malaysia.

Meanwhile in Indonesia, the state has not carried out comparable efforts to Islamize its institutions despite experiencing a similar wave of Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s. Islam has never been a real source of state legitimacy in Indonesia and, therefore, there is no pressing need for the state to instrumentalize Islam for its own political ends. In the field of Islamic education, the two overseeing state institutions – the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religious Affairs – are regularly at odds with each other, having different views on the overall nature and direction of Islamic education in Indonesia. For instance, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) sees the full incorporation of Islamic schools under its ambit (single-roof education system or *sistem pendidikan satu atap*) as the only way to improve the quality of Islamic education, which, of course, is vehemently opposed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), which fears such a policy will lead to secularization. Within

these institutions, it is also possible to find a diversity of views on the nature of Islamic education and its place in the national education system. The decentralization laws of 1999 further accentuated the gulf between these two institutions by devolving control over educational matters to the local level, while retaining the management of religious matters, including Islamic education, at the national level. Consequently, state institutions in Indonesia are much more fragmented and ideologically incoherent when it comes to devising and implementing a vision for Islamic education than their counterparts in Malaysia.

Despite the influence of local culture and traditions, the degree of ideological coherence of state institutions at the national level also seeps down to state institutions at the local level, as exemplified in the Malaysian case. This ideological coherency allows the state in Malaysia to effectively centralize its control over Islamic education in the country. Nevertheless, this is not to say that the values and norms from the national level completely displace pre-existing local values and norms. Local values and norms can still influence how national ideology is implemented, even if they are not strong enough to resist or meaningfully influence it. The book has described the institutional identity found at the local level in Malaysia as a "federalized" identity, which essentially means that actors in local state institutions believe in the uniqueness of their local Islamic learning traditions but at the same time also look to the federal government for assistance and guidance. The case studies in Kelantan (Chapter 3) and Sarawak (Chapter 4) demonstrate this federalized institutional mindset. In both places, local state institutional actors combine pride in their unique traditions with the desire to carry out directives from the ministry.

In contrast, the fragmented institutional identity at the national level in Indonesia results in a great deal of institutional and policy autonomy at the local level in that country. Even at the peak of centralization during the New Order era, local state institutions in the field of Islamic education still managed to prevent their unique local characteristics from being diluted and transformed by ministries in Jakarta. This is best exemplified by the case study of Aceh (Chapter 3), where the province managed to maintain and develop its strong tradition of Islamic learning in the face of both colonial rule and the subsequent experiences of a centralizing post-colonial state. Institutional fragmentation at the national level in Indonesia has also reduced the capacity of the state to exert greater control at the local level, leaving local traditions of Islamic learning intact by default. The experience of Nusa Tenggara Timur (Chapter 4) showed that lack of institutional coherence at the national level not only led to the overall worsening of the condition of the local Islamic schools but also allowed local Islamic educational actors to find their own locally inspired solutions in dealing with their problems such as hiring non-Muslim teachers to teach in madrasah.

Patterns of Islamization in the society

The wave of Islamic resurgence that took place in the late 1970s in Malaysia and late 1980s in Indonesia affected these countries in markedly different ways.

Unlike Islam in Indonesia, Islam in Malaysia came to play a much more critical role as a means for regime maintenance. This major difference largely flows from the unique political contexts of the two countries at the time: the Islamic resurgence hit Malaysia when it was governed by a semi-democratic system in which electoral competition figured centrally, while Indonesia was governed by an authoritarian system that would pay less heed to political opposition and public opinion.

The growing religiosity in Indonesian Muslim society from the late 1980s did not give rise to an Islamic political movement that could pose a threat to the New Order regime. The regime did not need to control Islamic discourse to maintain legitimacy. Even when President Suharto increasingly engaged with Islamic affairs in the late 1980s, he mostly did so to countervail the threat presented by the nationalist faction within the military. Therefore, despite its highly centralizing tendency, the New Order regime did not believe there was an urgent need to consolidating its control over the Islamic education system as a means to shape Islamic discourse in its favour. Its legitimacy did not rest upon being seen as Islamic by the Muslim community.

In Malaysia, in contrast, the wave of Islamization that swept society in the late 1970s also gave birth to a strident Islamic political movement that challenged the legitimacy of the hitherto secular state. In the context of the more competitive electoral politics of Malaysia, and the electoral threat posed to UMNO by PAS, the then Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, decided to meet the Islamic political challenge by coopting the activists' Islamic agenda and trying to shape religious discourse in a way that was favourable to the state's interests. As a result, in the past four decades Malaysia has seen an active effort by the federal government to disseminate and enforce its orthodox values on society, primarily through JAKIM, which has at its disposal the full coercive power of the state to stamp out any rival Islamic interpretations. One of the ways in which the government has tried to instil these values in society has been by centralizing control over Islamic education.

The different ways in which Islamic resurgence has transformed society has also led to differences in the values embodied by state Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia and Malaysia. In Indonesia, the increasing religiosity within the Muslim community since the late 1980s has not resulted in conservative values developing a monopolistic hold over religious discourse. Many Islamic organizations, ranging from the conservative MUI, to the moderate Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, play an equal role in shaping Islamic discourse in the country. In turn, this diversity has produced a state Islamic orthodoxy that is infused with a diverse array of values, as found in the curriculum of Islamic Studies (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*) established by MORA. In Malaysia, in contrast, the wave of Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s permeated the public sphere with conservative religious values. Facing a political challenge from Islamist activists, the federal government opted to adopt conservative values similar to those of its challengers, hoping to shape the religious discourse to maintain its political legitimacy. Consequently, the federal government and its

Islamist challengers engaged in a bid to "out-Islamize" each other and become the sole arbiter of Islamic values in the country. This contest ultimately resulted in the state acquiring a monopoly over conservative values, enforced through a state Islamic orthodoxy that was propagated and enforced by JAKIM and state Islamic councils. The conservative state Islamic orthodoxy in Malaysia has thus led to a centralized control of the Islamic education system by the federal government. In contrast, the pluralist character of the state Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia has allowed for a more decentralized and ideologically diverse Islamic education system.

The case studies presented in this book have illustrated how varying patterns of Islamization have affected the degree of control the state has over Islamic education in various sites. Chapter 3 shows that while both Aceh in Indonesia and Kelantan in Malaysia are known for their strong Islamic identities, heavily shaped by their contentious relationship with the central government, Aceh has been able to maintain autonomous control over Islamic education in the province, while the federal government has been slowly taking control of Islamic education in Kelantan since the late 1970s. Chapter 4 shows that Nusa Tenggara Timur in Indonesia and Sarawak in Malaysia have not experienced Islamization as in other parts of their countries. The Islamic education systems found in these areas are less developed than places that have stronger and longer Islamic traditions such as Java, Sumatra, and peninsular Malaysia. In Nusa Tenggara Timur, the weak tradition of Islamic learning is compounded by lack of support from the central government in Jakarta, compelling local advocates of Islamic education to improvise. In contrast, in Sarawak, efforts to strengthen Islamic learning have received significant help from the federal government in Putrajaya. Chapter 5 argues that the nature of state Islamic orthodoxy has allowed integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia and Malaysia to indoctrinate their students with conservative values as a means to recruit them into the *dakwah* movement, with the difference that integrated Islamic schools (SIT) in Indonesia are closely linked to the Islamic political party, PKS. In Indonesia, they have been able to do so by taking advantage of the ideological openness of the pluralist nature of the state Islamic orthodoxy, which not only allow for moderate values in MORA-sanctioned curriculum, but also conservative values found in the curriculum of SIT. In Malaysia, on the other hand, the high level of congruency between the conservative values of integrated Islamic schools and the state Islamic orthodoxy means that there is no interference from the federal government, especially since the schools do not construe their values in the context of political opposition. In short, these case studies have shown how various patterns of Islamization found in different parts of Indonesia and Malaysia affect the degree to which the state is able exert control over Islamic education in these areas. In Malaysia, the heavily Islamized society since the late 1970s has resulted in the state's monopoly over religious discourse, which in turn has allowed it to effectively centralize its control over Islamic education.

Resource control and distribution in the context of centre-periphery relations

Differences in the ability of the two states to provide adequate financial assistance to Islamic schools is the third reason why the state in Malaysia has been more effective in centralizing its control over Islamic education than the state in Indonesia. The Malaysian Ministry of Education is simply in a better financial situation than its Indonesian counterpart, despite the much larger population of Indonesia. Straining the educational budget of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Indonesia is the large number of Islamic schools, even after taking into account the size of the Muslim population (one school for every 4,387 Muslims), compared to Malaysia (one school for every 9,616 Muslims). Moreover, the 1999 decentralization laws in Indonesia made it harder for the state to financially support Islamic schools by devolving the control of education to the local level and creating legal barriers that made it very difficult for MOEC to provide funding for Islamic schools, which still remained under the ambit of MORA. In short, the financial power of the state in Malaysia provides it with the means to help financially struggling Islamic schools, which in turn effectively erodes the autonomy of these schools and centralizes the state's control over the Islamic education system. In Indonesia, the funding quandary faced by the state prevents it from exerting more control over the predominantly private and autonomous Islamic schools.

The case study chapters clearly demonstrate the strong correlation between the control of resources by the central government and the centralization of Islamic education. One of the reasons that Islamic education in Aceh can be both prosperous and autonomous, as shown in Chapter 3, is the financial independence enjoyed by the provincial government especially after 2005. In contrast, the federal government has been slowly absorbing Islamic schools in Kelantan since the late 1970s, precisely due to the weak financial status of these schools. Chapter 4 explains how the financial weakness of MORA and the dearth of support from the local government contributed to the lamentable condition of Islamic education in NTT. Meanwhile in Sarawak, significant financial assistance from the federal government, given because of the role that Sarawak plays as a vote bank that ensures the political dominance of the ruling *Barisan Nasional* government, provides Islamic schools there with enough support to develop and prosper. The book has also observed how in Kelantan and Sarawak, the financial might of the federal government produces a conflicting behaviour among the officials of the state educational department (*Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri*), who are proud of their region's unique local identity but at the same time feel that federal assistance is crucial for developing Islamic education in their states. The book terms the resulting institutional psyche as a "federalized institutional mindset". Chapter 5 explains how the ability of the states in Indonesia and Malaysia to exert control over integrated Islamic schools through distribution of resources is limited by the schools' healthy financial status, which means that they are not dependent on support from the central government. In

sum, the vast resources of the state in Malaysia have allowed it to centralize control over Islamic education in the country as part of its effort to manage Islamic discourse in its favour. In contrast, the overstretched budget of MORA, along with legal barriers thrown up by the decentralization laws, is one of the factors why the Islamic education system in Indonesia is highly decentralized.

Final remarks

This book has aimed to fill in a knowledge gap in the study of Islamic education in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia. Most of the literature on this topic has been country-based with little substantive comparison of Islamic education systems in different Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia. Islamic education is integral to the national education systems in Indonesia and Malaysia, but it has taken divergent paths in these respective countries. In Malaysia, the state has gradually centralized its control over Islamic education since the late 1970s; in Indonesia, the Islamic education system remains decentralized despite experiencing similar Islamic resurgence in the late 1980s. It has been the intention of this research to explain such differences. My hope is that this book can help to spur more transnational research comparing countries that share similar Islamic education system and find common threads and points of divergence that explain each country's peculiarities. With regard to the wider field of Comparative Politics, this book strives to augment Joel Migdal's notion of "state-in-society", in which the state and the society are mutually constitutive, by illustrating that there are degrees of transformation that take place within this dialectical relationship. Migdal contends that in the course of exerting its ideological hegemony, the state is not immune from social influences. Nonetheless, this book tries to show that there are ways for the state to minimize social influences, in order to maximize its hegemonic reach into the society. Such is the case with the state in Malaysia when it comes to controlling Islamic education. In short, only by closely comparing state–society relations in Indonesia and Malaysia, in this case through the lens of Islamic education, can we tease out the factors that explain the varying transformative degrees that occur within this dialectical relationship.

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Masyitah Abdul Latif, SMI Al-Amin Bangi.
Megat Mohamed Amin, Director of MUSLEH schools network.
Noor Aisyah Ibrahim, Assistant Director of LEPAI, JAKIM.
Rohida Jamaludin, former principal of SMI Al-Amin Bangi.
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Glossary

Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia

Badan Pembangunan Pendidikan Dayah (BPPD) Dayah Education Development Agency

Dayah Islamic boarding schools in Aceh

Dinas Pendidikan Provincial office of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture

Gereja Masihi Injili di Timur (GMIT) Protestant church denomination in East Indonesia

Gabungan Usaha Perbaikan Pendidikan Islam (GUPPI) Joint Efforts to Improve Islamic Education

Harakah Islamiah (HIKMAH) Main non-governmental Islamic organization in Sarawak

Himpunan Ulama Dayah Aceh (HUDA) Association of Traditional Acehnese Ulama

Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri (JAIN) State Islamic Agency

Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) Malaysian Islamic Development Department

Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri (JPN) State Education Department

Jemaah Tarbiyah Tarbiyah Group (campus-based dakwah group in Indonesia)

Kantor Wilayah (Kanwil) Agama Provincial office of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs

Kemahiran Berfikir Secara Kreatif dan Kritis (KBKK) Skills for Thinking Creatively and Critically

Kementerian Agama Ministry of Religious Affairs

Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Ministry of Education and Culture

Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (KAMMI) Indonesian Muslim Students Action Union

Madrasah Aliyah Senior Islamic High School

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Primary Islamic School

Madrasah Tsanawiyah Junior Islamic High School

Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama (MPU) The Deliberating Council of (Acehnese) Ulama
Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Council of Indonesian Ulama
Majlis Agama Islam Negeri (MAIN) State Islamic Council (Malaysia)
Majlis Islam Sarawak (MIS) Sarawak Islamic Council
Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) Prosperous Justice Party
Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) Islamic Party of Malaysia
Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) Malay-Muslim party in Sarawak
Pengetahuan Agama Islam (PAI) Islamic Studies subject in Indonesian national curriculum
Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (PERTI) Association for Islamic Education
Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (PUSA) All-Aceh Association of (Modernist) Ulama
Pertubuhan IKRAM A dakwah organization formerly known as Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM)
Pondok Pesantren Islamic boarding schools
Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan (SABK) Government-Assisted Islamic Schools
Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) People's Islamic Schools
Sekolah Islam Terpadu (SIT) Integrated Islamic Schools
Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama (SMKA) National Secondary Islamic Schools
Sekolah Musleh Integrated Islamic schools under IKRAM
Sektor Pendidikan Islam (SPI) Islamic Education Sector (Malaysia)
Teungku Chik Major Islamic scholar in Aceh
Ulama Islamic scholar
Uleebalang Traditional leader in Aceh
United Malay National Organisation (UMNO) Malay nationalist political party in Malaysia
Yayasan Islam Kelantan (YIK) Kelantan Islamic Foundation
Yayasan Pendidikan Kristen (Yapenkris) Christian Education Foundation

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