Islamic Mobilization
and the Malaysian State

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Abstrak

Tujuan utama makalah ini ialah untuk menunjukkan bahawa
Malaysia merupakan contoh baik negara di mana kumpulan-
kumpulan Islam menggunakan pendekatan dan saluran keamanan
bagi mencapai objektif masing-masing. Kajian ini menunjukkan
bahawa negara memainkan peranan penting dalam mewujudkan
suasana keamanan ini. Menerusi polisi-polisi dan institusi-
institusinya yang berfungsi, pihak pemerintah di Malaysia dilihat
sebagai mempunyai kesediaan dan keupayaan untuk mengalakkan
kumpulan-kumpulan Islam bergerak secara aman dan menjauhkan
diri daripada keganasan. Khususnya, menerusi kajiannya ini, penulis
menghujahkan bahawa negara Malaysia telah berjaya
merangsangkan pengelolaan aktiviti Islam secara aman dengan
cara [1] menyediakan ruang untuk partisipasi politik menerusi
saluran keinstitusian; [2] memelihara undang-undang dan
ketenteraman di wilayah-wilayahnya; dan [3] memastikan banyak
peluang pendidikan dan pembasmian kemiskinan. Dalam makalah
ini, penulis akan membincangkan secara terperinci peranan
pemerintah Malaysia dalam merealisasikan ketiga-tiga cara
tersebut di atas.

Introduction

The Islamic revival engendered a proliferation of Muslim organizations
that advocated an increasing role for Islam in public life and government.
Some organizations supported the creation of Islamic states; some were
grassroots efforts to improve personal piety and Islamic knowledge; others
focused on improving Muslim access to education and social welfare; and
others sought to pressure the government to make incremental religious
reforms to economic, political, legal and social systems. Revivalists used
different strategies depending on the opportunities available in their
respective states. In Malaysia, *dakwah* organizations initially mobilized

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through the education sector and the university system to spread their ideas. In Indonesia, the revival initially spread through underground study circles, given Suharto's hostility towards political Islam. Numerous Muslim states observed the popularity of the revivalist movement and sought to co-opt specific members, policy ideas and goals. In most cases, Muslim resurgent groups worked peacefully to achieve their goals, seeking out political channels provided by state governments and taking advantage of those opportunities. However, in many countries, a minority of "Islamist" groups utilized violence and intimidation as they attempted to affect radical change.

In Malaysia, Islamist groups have overwhelmingly embraced peaceful channels for mobilization and eschewed violence. This study argues that the state plays an important role in explaining this outcome. The Malaysian state has had the capacity to encourage Islamist groups to employ peaceful strategies and eschew violence through its policies, institutions and capacities. Specifically, this research contends that the Malaysian state has promoted peaceful Islamic organization by (1) providing opportunities for political participation through institutionalized channels; (2) maintaining law and order within its territories; and (3) ensuring a measure of education and poverty relief.

When the state permits political participation through institutionalized channels, it promotes peaceful Islamic mobilization by providing political access. A majority of Islamist groups have strategically and have utilized those available channels to work toward their goals. The importance of participation can be seen by looking at cases throughout the Muslim world, not only Malaysia, but also Indonesia, Turkey, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco and Bangladesh. This study contends, however, that participation alone is not sufficient to ensure that peaceful mobilization is the dominant mode of activity. A state cannot only encourage peaceful strategies; it must also discourage violent ones. To do this, the state should maintain effective capacity in the provision of law and order so that there are no lawless "tribal" areas where state authority could not penetrate. Furthermore, the state should provide a measure of education services and poverty relief, so that it has a presence in the lives of the mass public. In so doing, it gains performance legitimacy and deprives radical groups of an important way to make popularity gains at the state's expense.

This study will apply the above argument from my dissertation to the case of Malaysia. While my dissertation examined Malaysia, Indonesia, and Turkey, I have chosen to write about Malaysia in this article because Malaysia is the most positive case, where peaceful mobilization dominates and violence is rare. First, this article will examine how Malaysia provides for political participation. Then, it will analyze Malaysia's effectiveness in the provision of law and order. Finally, it will investigate Malaysia's aptitude in providing social welfare and education.

Definitions

Before proceeding to the case of Malaysia, it is necessary to define the major terms that will be utilized in this study. Since this is a study of the variation in Islamic mobilization, it is necessary to define what is meant by peaceful and violent mobilization. Peaceful Islamic mobilization implies a group dynamic. It may include forming political parties, contesting elections, establishing constructive alliances, state-civil society partnerships or starting civil society organizations. It may consist of working with government agencies to propose and adopt more Islamic policies or writing editorials in newspapers. It often consists of establishing alliances at state and local levels between parties, between Islamic organizations and the state, or between Islamic organizations to pursue common systemic goals.

Like peaceful mobilization, violent mobilization also implies a group dynamic. Violent mobilization may include targeting people, buildings, or businesses that do not subscribe to the violent movement's goals or strategic choices (ie. the choice to mobilize violently). It may include targeting of a population, widespread rioting, open armed revolt, or rebellion. It is not one individual Muslim killing one individual Christian, for such events could occur for a variety of reasons that have little to do with religion.

Next, this study defines effective state capacity. In its simplest form, an effective state possesses sufficient capacity to provide public goods. More specifically, an effective state can ensure law and order within its territory as well as education and social welfare for its citizens. While some may include issues such as clean air or clean water in a definition of public goods, this investigation uses the term to refer to the tangible products that point to the presence or absence of the state. There should be no lawless areas where state authority either cannot penetrate or does not dominate. It is important that the state possesses the capacity to show its presence through providing these services—education, poverty relief, and security.

Scholars use various terms when discussing peaceful and violent activities by Muslim groups. The term Islamism is frequently employed for the ideology of political Islam. Islamism seeks a greater role for Islam in the governments, economies and societies of Muslim states. Practitioners of Islamism are Islamists, and while some seek an Islamic state, others advocate a greater role for Islam in society. The policies Islamists seek to implement are often called Islamization, meaning they seek to make the country more reflective of "Islamic values" and laws. This study uses the term radical Islamist to refer to those groups that use violence and Islamist to denote groups that employ peaceful strategies. *Dakwah* groups do Islamic propagation and may be political or a-political.

Political Participation in Malaysia

Studies of revolution as well as political and religious violence have shown that movements are less likely to employ violent strategies if the regime in their country is open (Hafez and Wiktorowicz 2004; Ghadbian 2000; Huntington 1969; Hafez 2003; Skocpol 1979; Ibrahim 2004; Abuza 2003; Abootalebi 1999). The regime in question need not be wholly democratic. Malaysia is often classified as a semi-democratic regime, for it possesses both authoritarian and democratic characteristics. On the one hand, it has enacted legislation to limit civil liberties, including freedoms of speech, assembly and the press, and it permits arbitrary arrest and detention through the Internal Security Act (ISA). On the other hand, it has long recognized the utility of permitting Islamist groups to participate in the political system[1]. Although Malaysia is a single-party dominant system within a dominant governing coalition, *dakwah* (Islamic propagation) organizations have successfully pressed for the adoption of Islamization policies, laws, and Islamic institution-building either by joining the government or the opposition. Islamic groups in Malaysia have worked to achieve their goals through several main channels. They have joined the governing coalition and the bureaucracy; they have joined the main Islamist opposition party (PAS); and they have worked as civil society groups to lobby for or against proposed legislation; and they have worked through the electoral system, which has led to state-level victories. While opposition parties cannot lead the government, they have a key role in the political system. According Dr. Chandra Muzaffar[2],

> the institutionalized channels for participation are a very important part of why Malaysia has such a tradition of peaceful Islamic mobilization. The very fact that the Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) is around curbs the potential for violence. PAS is a safety valve for religious groups. The religiously inclined can also join the government through institutions such as the Department for the Advancement of Islam (JAKIM); Islamic and Moral Education Department (JAPIN); The Malaysian Institute for Islamic Understanding (IKIM); and the Islamic Dakwah Foundation of Malaysia (YADIM).

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[1] Not only Islamic groups. Various groups with different interests.
[2] Interview, Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, head of JUST, former leader of Keadilan, JUST headquarters, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, February 2006.

Dr. Shamsul Amri Bahruddin concurs noting that "Malaysia has structures for participation. You can get things done by working through the parties and NGOs[3]."

One of the main ways that Malaysian Islamist leaders and groups have worked to achieve their goals is by affiliating themselves with UMNO and the bureaucracy. In 1982, the Malaysian government, under the Prime Ministership of Dr. Mahathir bin Muhammad, convinced Anwar Ibrahim, president of the influential *dakwah* organization, Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement-ABIM) to join the government. Anwar Ibrahim brought many ABIM colleagues with him into the bureaucracy and the ruling coalition, although some members left ABIM and joined the Partai Islam Se Malaysia (Malaysian Islamic Party-PAS) (Camroux 1996; 859). Over the next 16 years, its members participated in the enacting of numerous Islamization policies, including Islamic institution-building programs, the establishment of Islamic banks, pawnshops and insurance companies, improved Islamic education and curbs on gambling.

Most of ABIM's professionals went to work for the government, particularly in the Ministry of Education, the Prime Minister's Department, and the Department for the Advancement of Islam (JAKIM)[4]. Many became leaders of new Islamic institutions (Camroux 1996; 859). After the state established the International Islamic University of Malaysia, many ABIM academics joined it, and Anwar Ibrahim served as its second president from 1988-1999.[5] Moreover, Anwar Ibrahim gained access to positions of influence, including stints as the Minster of Culture, Youth and Sports, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Education, Minister of Finance and in 1993, Deputy Prime Minister. As a result of this cooptation, ABIM gained access to patronage and an influential role in major government projects (Camroux 1996; 859). According to Yusri Mohamad, the current president of ABIM, "it was easy to achieve our goals when Anwar was in power. More channels were open to us".[6]

Islamist groups and Islamists can also register their dissent by joining PAS or by forming NGO coalitions to leverage their influence. PAS is the largest, oldest and most influential Islamic opposition party. According to the PAS' 1993 constitutional amendments, its objectives include, "striving to build a society and a government where Islamic values and Allah's laws are implemented; and protecting the 'honor,' the independence and the

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[3] Interview, Professor Dato' Shamsul Amri Bahruddin, National University of Malaysia (UKM), Bangi, Malaysia, January 2006.
[4] Interview, Shahran Kasim, former Secretary General of ABIM, ABIM Headquarters, February 2006, Gombak, Malaysia
[5] Ibid
[6] Interview, Yusri Mohamad, President of ABIM, ABIM Headquarters, Gombak Malaysia, February 2006.

sovereignty of Islam" (Abdullah 2003; 133). Its base of support lies in the Malay heartland: Kelantan, Terengganu, Perlis and Kedah, especially among Muslims who have not benefited from the government's development policies (Abuza 2003; 54).

PAS has a significant impact on the political agenda. According to one PAS leader, PAS may not be winning elections, but they are advocating an Islamic agenda and an Islamic message[7]. According to PAS leaders in Kuala Lumpur and Kelantan, the Malaysian government adopted Islamization policies in response to the challenge posed by PAS.[8] Thus, they see themselves as having an impact on politics. Dr. Chandra Muzaffar explains further, "PAS affects change, even if they cannot come to power. PAS has influence. They pressure the government and mobilize the government to act on Islamic issues. The government has to take notice because they represent an important constituency".[9]

PAS has undertaken Islamization beyond the government policies in the states which has governed. In Kelantan, it has passed laws to counteract apostasy by requiring those who wish to convert from Islam to obtain permission from the *sharia* courts. Kota Bahru, the capital of Kelantan, has been transformed into an "Islamic city" run according to *sharia* law including enforcement of regulations on prayer, dress, separation of sexes, and entertainment.[10] In recent years, PAS has sought to repackage its message to attract the vote of Muslims who may not support strict *sharia*. PAS has not abandoned its Islamic statist goals; it sees itself as having to educate Malaysians on how *sharia* would benefit them. To that end, they speak about how to implement poverty relief, environmental sustainability, and social justice in an Islamic way.[11] According to Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, "PAS has never rejected democracy. They win at the state level and make gains. If they engage in politics, they make gains.[12]" The sum total of PAS' influence and successes indicates to Islamists that there are significant opportunities to work for their goals incrementally through the national and state government legislative processes.

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[7] Interview, PAS Leader, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, February 2006
[8] Ibid, Interview, PAS party leader, Kelantan, February 2006, Kota Bahru, Malaysia
[9] Interview, Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, Head of JUST, former leader of Keadilan, JUST headquarters, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, February 2006
[10] When I traveled to Kelantan, my hosts insisted that I wear a headscarf and dress in compliance with Islamic law for women, meaning that my arms would be covered to my wrist and my legs to my ankles. This evoked the ire of the women working at my research center in Kuala Lumpur, who were angered that a non-Muslim would be forced to comply with Islamic law.
[11] Interview, PAS leader, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, February 2006
[12] Interview, Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, head of JUST, former leader of Keadilan, JUST headquarters, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, February 2006

In addition to PAS, progressive and conservative Islamic organizations articulate dissent or support for policies through lobbying, submitting petitions and memos to the government, making public statements, holding rallies, holding discussions, and utilizing media outlets. Islamic groups including Jemaah Islah Malaysia (JIM), ABIM and the progressive women's organization, Sisters in Islam (SIS), often employ coalitional strategies in order to maximize the influence of the member organizations, while minimizing the likelihood the state may attempt to proscribe them en masse. For example, JIM has partnered with PAS and 74 NGOs to lobby for the repeal of the Internal Security Act (ISA). This Anti-ISA coalition has utilized a variety of strategies including sending memos to parliament and the human rights commission; lobbying parliament and the UN Human Rights Commission; holding rallies; and submitting petitions to the legislature.[13]

Despite the rigged nature of Malaysian elections, where districts are gerrymandered to favor the dominant party, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), and the governing coalition, the Barisan Nasional (National Front-BN), opposition parties continue to participate in those elections because they can win control of state governments, make inroads into state legislatures and increase their seats in the national parliament. If one examines Table 1, one will see the evolution of BN and PAS electoral gains and losses over time.

Table 1: Parliamentary Election Results: Percentage Vote Share per Party

Political Parties	1974	1978	1982	1986	1990	1995	1999	2004
Barisan Nasional (BN)	60.7 %	57.2 %	60.5 %	57.3 %	53.4 %	65.1 %	56.5%	63.9%
Partai Islam Se Malaysia (PAS)*	——	15.5 %	14.5%	15.5%	6.7%	7.3%	15.0%	15.2%
Semangat 46**	——	——	——	——	15.1%	10.2%	——	——
KeADILan	——	——	——	——	——	——	11.5%	8.9%
Democrat Action Party (DAP)***	18.3%	19.9%	19.6%	21.1%	17.6%	12.1%	13.6	9.9%
Others	21.0%	6.9%	5.4%	6.1%	7.2%	5.3%	3.4%	2.1%

Statistics compiled from Crouch, Harold. 1996. *Government and Politics of Malaysia.* NSW: Talisman p75; Ung-Ho Chin, James. "Malaysia: The Barisan Nasional Supremacy." In *How Asia Votes.* Eds. John Fuh-Sheng Hsieh and David Newman, p226.; Loh, Francis "Understanding the 2004 Election Results: Looking Beyond the Pak Lah Factor." *Aliran Monthly* 2004 Vol 3. * in 1974, PAS was part of the BN coalition. It was expelled in 1977. **Semangat 46 was an UMNO faction that separated and formed its own faction in 1987, contested the 1990 and 1995 elections and rejoined UMNO in 1998.*** DAP is a Chinese party. Whereas the Malaysian Chinese Association joined the BN coalition, the DAP has stayed in the opposition.

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[13] Ibid, Interview, PAS leader, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, February 2006

As one can see, the BN always dominates the elections. However, PAS and other opposition parties can make gains, and these gains vary over time. PAS wins seats nationally and at the state level, maintaining almost continuous control of the Kelantan state since 1959. In the 1978, 1982 and 1986 elections, for example, PAS won more than 50 percent of the seats in Kelantan, between 40-50 percent of the seats in Terengganu, Perlis and Kedah and between 20-33 percent in other peninsular Malay states in despite the extensive gerrymandering of districts that UMNO employed to ensure it maintained its national majority (Abuza 2003; 54).

PAS also frequently enters into electoral alliances with other opposition parties. Since 1974, PAS has entered into three such pacts and have gained each time. These are as follows: from 1974-1978, PAS entered into a unity coalition with the Barisan Nasional; from 1990-1998; PAS entered into coalition with a new party, Semangat '46, a breakaway faction of UMNO; and finally, in the 1999 elections, PAS entered into a multi-religious, multi-ethnic opposition coalition, the Barisan Alternatif (BA), with the Democratic Action Party (DAP), a Chinese opposition party, and Keadilan, the party founded by Dr. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, the wife of Anwar Ibrahim. According to one member of PAS, each time PAS enters into a coalition, it gains 12-14 seats, new supporters and a broader political message that focuses on clean government and social justice issues that appeal to both Muslims and non-Muslims.[14] These alliances are often used to increase the influence of the opposition vis-à-vis the governing coalition.[15]

In sum, Malaysia encourages peaceful Islamic mobilization by permitting Islamist groups to participate in politics through a variety of institutionalized channels. They can be recruited into the governing coalition and work to achieve their goals from inside. Alternatively, they can join PAS to advocate for the implementation of an Islamic state and *sharia*. Although the BN dominates the electoral system, it is possible for opposition parties, most notably the PAS, to make significant gains, especially in the face of rising discontent against UMNO or when they enter into alliances with other parties. Islamist groups can also work in coalition with other like-minded NGOs to lobby for or against specific policies. The government has adopted and implemented numerous policies favored by PAS and Islamic groups including Islamic institution building, empowerment of *sharia* courts, and Islamic education reform. This encourages Islamic groups to engage through these channels. They can accomplish goals. However, there are also curbs on civil liberties and limits on the abilities of opposition parties to make substantive national-level political gains. In Malaysia, Islamist groups must agree to operate under these constraints or opt out of politics altogether.

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[14] Interview, PAS leader, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, February 2006
[15] Ibid

Reach of Authority in Malaysia

Part of encouraging peaceful mobilization also requires the state to limit the obvious channels available for violent mobilization. This reach of authority is important, because radical movements tend to thrive in these lawless tribal areas, where state authority either cannot penetrate or does not dominate. If the state cannot ensure security in these areas, radical groups may seek to supplant the state, gaining legitimacy for their organization and for their ideology that Islam will succeed for them where the state fails. In Indonesia, radical groups, including Laskar Jihad, KOMPAK, Laskar Jundullah and Laskar Mujihideen sent fighters to Maluku and Central Sulawesi, following the outbreak of communal conflict in those provinces, when it became clear that the state security apparatus was unable to act to restore order and ensure the security of Muslims.

By contrast, Malaysia is highly effective in ensuring law and order. In Malaysia, there are no lawless areas where state authority cannot penetrate and the general climate of law and order, even in opposition party governed areas, is strong. Most Malaysians I interviewed refer to six instances of Islamist violence between 1975 and the present day. This is by far the lowest number of instances in this study. We can attribute the ability of Malaysia to keep law and order within its territories to the strength of the Malaysian security services and the tactics they employ.

Under the leadership of Prime Ministers Mahathir Mohammad and Abdullah Badawi, violent repression was the weapon of last resort (Milne and Mauzy 1999; 87). If parties or groups threatened violence, employed violence, began stockpiling weapons, or were believed to have crossed the line between loyal dissent and anti-system deviationism, the government was prepared to crack down and employ force(Ibid). Oftentimes, it was not necessary for the government to resort to violent repression. Instead, they would observe, monitor, proscribe and use the force of the law. Unlike Indonesia, Malaysia has a long history of civilian supremacy over the military. Thus, the police have been the arm of the law most responsible for enforcing these measures on a daily basis and they are viewed as effective in doing so.

Malaysia is quite capable in its provision of law and order as a result of its intelligence agencies, most notably the "Special Branch," which has an effective surveillance apparatus. This "Special Branch" of the police is quite successful in monitoring organizational activity to guard against what the state terms *dakwah songsang* (deviant dakwah). The Special Branch was developed by the British during the late colonial period to respond to the twin threats of Communism and radical Malay nationalism (Barraclough 1985; 800). Malaysian Special Branch forces received training in monitoring and interrogation tactics from British intelligence authorities and ranks among the most effective intelligence services in the region (Ibid). It infiltrates organizations and parties, monitors speeches given by academics, and

observes the activities of activists. Thus, this may deter many radical groups from plotting violent activities; one never knows who is watching or listening.

Rather than use the force of violent repression, the Malaysian government will more frequently choose to ban organizations that are cult-like; anti-systemic; or non-Sunni (Nair 1997; 30). Proscription of Islamic groups began to escalate in the 1980s, for the state claimed that numerous extremist groups had taken root in Malaysia, ranging from doctrinally deviationist organizations to those advocating the overthrow of the government (Hussein 2003; 92). The most famous of these was Darul Arqam, which was banned in 1994, allegedly for training a private army, for plotting a coup against the government, and for increased cultism. According to government sources Ashaari claimed he had visions of Prophet Muhammad and was himself a prophet (Milne and Mauzi 1999; 87). There was also evidence that the organization had infiltrated the political parties and the governing bureaucracy. However, the issue of this proscription is a touchy one. On the one hand, banning a group can send it underground. For example, a faction of Darul Arqam reemerged in 2000 as the militant cult Al Ma'unah (Shome 2002; 193). On the other hand, the threat of banning, when used in tandem with other elements of the Malaysian security apparatus such as the Internal Security Act or the Special Branch, served to discourage many groups from using violence.

Due to the capacity of the security services, violent Islamist mobilization is extremely rare in Malaysia. However, when it does break out, the state is adept at responding to it in a manner that brings the force of law to bear on radicals, while minimizing bloodshed. In the Memali incident, the state departed from this strategy. A radical member of PAS, Ibrahim Mahmud (a.k.a Ibrahim Libya) had gathered followers and began calling for jihad against the government (Abdullah 2003; 197). Police attempted to arrest Mahmud, but they were prevented by 100 of his followers armed with sharpened bamboo sticks (Ibid). When the police attempted to arrest Mahmud again, they used excessive force and 15 civilians and four policemen were killed (Milne and Mauzy 1999; 87). At Memali, a village in Kedah, the police showed that they were willing to use force against radical Islamists and that threats to national stability and security would not be tolerated (Abdullah 2003; 199). However, the government lost credibility from that action. Although the government showed it had the capacity to crack down with force, the actual use of that force was interpreted by Malays as a sign of weakness.[16] Mahmud and his followers were deemed martyrs by area villagers in Kedah (Abdullah 2003; 198). This action cost UMNO support in the Malay heartland. The government learned this lesson,

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[16] Interview, Dr. Nooraini Othman and Dr. Clive Kessler, February 2006, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

however, because in subsequent conflicts with radical Islamist groups the state did not crack down in this way again.[17]

The increased effectiveness and change of strategy by the state can best be seen in the case of Al Ma'unah. In 2000, members Al Ma'unah, an Islamic cult, posed as army officers and stole more than 100 rifles and large amounts of ammunition from two army bases.[18] In the following days, the police realized the error and moved against the group, which took several hostages; one member of the group was killed when he refused to retreat.[19] Investigations showed that Al Ma'unah was a breakaway faction of Darul Arqam (Shome 2002; 193).

The state was effective in dealing with the threat of Al Ma'unah. First, they identified the organization quickly, so as to minimize its ability to conduct any operations with the weapons they had gathered. Second, rather than use excessive force to show that violence would not be tolerated, they used the force of law against the Al Ma'unah members. The members were arrested under the Internal Security Act and received court trials. The three ringleaders received the death penalty, while 16 members received sentences of life in prison for treason and six others were sentenced to ten years in prison for on charges of making preparations for war against the state.[20] Contrary to the state's actions at Memali, this outcome was well received. It also served to send a clear message to radical Islamists that they had to abide by the laws of the state.

In sum, the state in Malaysia is quite effective in maintaining law and order. The Malaysian state has a variety of tools at its disposal, which it utilizes willingly but often judiciously. The proscription of groups espousing *dakwah songsang*, the ISA, and the Special Branch are all mechanisms through which the government seeks to maintain security and stability through the force of law. The state has shown that it will not tolerate violent Islamist mobilization or groups that publicly support the government's overthrow. Conversely, the population has shown it will not accept the government's use of excessive force. As a result, the state will crack down most often by employing the force of law rather than physical coercion and repression that could resort in massacres. The state and the security apparatus in Malaysia are very strong. The key, however, is that the state must remember the line between anti-systemic extremism and loyal dissent and not seek to quash opposition in the name of security.

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[17] Ibid

[18] "Death Penalty for Three Malaysians" *BBC News*. Friday, 28 December 2001. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/1731503.stm

[19] Penny Crisp and Santha Oorjitham, "How Can This Happen? Cults are Nothing New, but Raids on the Army Demand Some Answers." *Asiaweek*. July 21, 2000 Vol. 26. No. 28

[20] "Death Penalty for Three Malaysians" *BBC News*. Friday, 28 December 2001. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/1731503.stm

Social Welfare in Malaysia

The second element of state capacity is the effective provision of a measure of education and welfare. By providing education and poverty relief, the state is considered effective and gains a measure of legitimacy. This does not imply that a state must provide a comprehensive welfare state on par with Sweden; no Muslim nation currently has that capacity. However, by providing education and some measure of social welfare, the state accomplishes two goals: competing with Islamic groups in this sphere of influence and retaining its performance legitimacy.

Malaysia has been a highly effective provider of education and poverty relief, most notably to Malay Muslims. Malaysia has been highly successful in reducing poverty over the past three decades from 74 percent in 1970 to 6 percent in 1994 (Abuza 2003; 50). Islamic groups play a supplemental role, assisting those left behind by the NEP (Nasr 2001; 71). They often obtain small grants from the government on a project basis to run schools, day care centers, and programs for the disabled. The government monitors their activities.

In the aftermath of the 1969 race riots, the Malaysian government sought to address the poverty of the Malay population, which it perceived to be at the root of the outbreak. As a result, the Malaysian government developed the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1971 as a program that would eliminate poverty among Malays, especially the rural poor; improve Malay social and economic standing through quotas for Malays in education, employment and government contracts; enable Malays to have easier access to bank loans and business licenses; and increase Malay ownership of corporate equity (Nasr 2001; 71).

In rural areas, the NEP enabled farmers to adopt modern techniques for double paddy cropping, irrigation and draining and the development of a Malay entrepreneurial class that sold food products and handicrafts (Abdullah 2003; 57, Shamsul 1997; 252). The government also created job opportunities for the Malay university graduates across majors and across sectors. Many graduates were employed as managers in government agencies, banks, insurance companies, financial institutions, real estate companies, consulting firms, or in education and welfare programs that were sponsored by the government (Shamsul 1997; 253). Many of these organizations and institutions were either set up or partially funded by the government through new privatization initiatives (Ibid). The dominant role of the government ensures that it has a significant measure of performance legitimacy. As a result, radical Islamist groups cannot make significant inroads and substantial legitimacy gains at the state's expense. Moreover, their members also benefit from the NEP and government programs. This makes them more likely to work with the state to improve Muslim welfare rather than compete against it.

For example, Islamist groups including ABIM, JIM, and PERKIM, provide supplemental social welfare for Malay Muslims. They tend to target those people left behind and those issues not covered by the NEP. PERKIM runs a rehabilitation center specializing in physical therapy for stroke patients and a day care center for special needs children.[21] PERKIM receives annual funding from JAKIM to conduct its activities and other grants on a project by project basis from the Ministry of Welfare.[22] JIM runs a program from women pregnant out-of-wedlock to assist them in preparing for motherhood or adoptions; they receive a government grants to assist in its administration.[23] ABIM runs community development programs in rural areas including the Community's Involvement and Development Program, which is conducted in 52 villages (Abdullah 2003; 96). It includes examination technique seminars and free tuition for high school students who planned to sit for government examinations (Ibid). They also run courses on Islam during Ramadan and receive funding for this program from the Youth Ministry.[24] While most of ABIM's funding comes from member donations and businesses and schools it runs, it obtains government grants for specific programs on a project-by-project basis.[25]

Education in Malaysia

As a result of the National Education Policy, education in Malaysia is inexpensive. Students pay yearly entrance and exam fees, but this does not amount to a serious amount of money.[26] The state also provides several programs to aid the poor to defray the costs of sending their children to school, including free breakfast and lunch, uniforms, textbooks and hostels for students to live if their family's residence is far from a secondary school.[27] School fees can be waived for very poor families.[28] In addition, the state is in the process of improving public transportation in rural areas to increase attendance in secondary schools. Although 92.75 percent of all students attend primary school, this number drops to 82 percent in early secondary school and 72.45 percent in later secondary schooll[29] Malaysia is currently working to make primary and secondary education compulsory.[30]

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[21] Interview, Saifuddin Mohamed Arif, Secretary General-PERKIM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, January 2006
[22] Ibid. Other funding comes from zakat donations.
[23] Interview, Zaid Kamaruddin, president of Jemaah Islah Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur,Malaysia, February 2006
[24] Interview, Shahran Kasim, former Secretary General of ABIM, ABIM Headquarters, February 2006, Gombak, Malaysia
[25] Ibid
[26] Interview, Jagdeesh Gul, Ministry of Education, Putra Jaya, Malaysia, February 2006
[27] Ibid
[28] Interview, Dr. Rosnani Hashim, Professor at International Islamic University of Malaysia, Gombak Malaysia, February 2006
[29] Ibid
[30] Interview, Jagdeesh Gul, Ministry of Education, Putra Jaya, Malaysia, February 2006

The government has taken a keen interest in developing state religious schools as alternatives to private *madrasas* and to ensure that a pro-state, pro-development Islam is taught. There are five types of primary and secondary religious schools in Malaysia: *Sekolah Agama Persekutan* (federal religious schools-SAP); *Sekolah Agama Negeri* (state religious schools-SAN); schools run by a state's Council of Islamic religion; *Sekolah Agama Rakyat* (community religious schools-SAR) and *Sekolah Agama Swasta* (private religious schools-SAS) (Hamid 2005a; 173). The state has a centralized standard curriculum for all Federal SAP schools, state SAN schools and community SAR schools, although the SARs do not consistently apply it.[31] Private religious schools are eligible for government grants if they agree to register and adhere to national curricular recommendations. The government attempts to monitor private religious schools and community religious schools in order to prevent these institutions from teaching an anti-government Islam (Hamid 2005a; 175). The state has also been responsive to the Muslim desire for improvements in Islamic education. Under pressure from PAS members in the governing coalition and *dakwah* groups, the state increased religious studies in the government curriculum and has offered Arabic as an elective in schools (Hashim 1996; 8). Malaysia also sought to develop an integrated curriculum in the 1980s to instill universal religious values in young people and to teach Muslim youths how to correctly practice Islam and how to pray(Ibid).[32] All university students are required to take one course in Islamic civilizations and all Muslims must take a course in Islamic religious instruction (Wan Daud 1989; 110).

When we examine the state government level, the dominance of the government in the provision of education is also present. If we look at Kelantan, the PAS-led government runs 90 SARS and 68 *sekolah bantuan,* which combine the government curriculum with that of Al Azhar University's curricular recommendations. According to an official in the Ministry of Education for Kelantan, these schools receive approximately half of their funding from the federal government, part of which is used to pay teacher salaries.[33] The cost per family is very inexpensive, ranging between 80 and 100 ringgit per year, which is reduced if parents have two or more children currently in the school system.[34] This study contends that these schools also reinforce the perception of the state as a capable and legitimate actor. After all, funding for these schools comes from the federal and state governments.

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[31] Ibid

[32] Interview, Dr. Rosnani Hashim, Professor at International Islamic University of Malaysia, Gombak Malaysia, February 2006

[33] Interview, PAS official in Ministry of Education, Kelantan, February 2006 The PAS-run state administration allocates 40 million ringgit to cover the remaining expenses.

[34] Ibid

Furthermore, the Kelantan public schools are not anti-systemic. According to Abdul Halim Bin Mohammad Naam, Assistant Director of the Curriculum division of the Department of Islamic and Moral Education (JAPIM), the PAS schools follow the law.[35]

Since the 1970s, when the *dakwah* movement took root in Malaysia, Islamic groups have centered their activities in the education sector, for education is seen as a key way to initiate the Islamization of society from the individual upwards. ABIM and JIM run primary and secondary schools and education programs. ABIM and JIM's schools are registered with the Ministry of Education and state level ministries of religion. They follow the government curriculum to obtain national grants and provide their students with the opportunity to attend Malaysian universities. However, they also extend the school day to make more time for Islamic studies.[36] ABIM also runs diploma courses in Islamic banking, Islamic politics and Arabic, programs to assist dropouts, and tutoring for students who failed national exams but want to retake them (Abdullah 2003; 96).

The state has sought to effectively monitor activities at private and community religious schools (SARs). To gain accreditation, private schools must register with the state's religious department and get licenses to run schools.[37] The state gives an added incentive for registration by allocating grants to private schools.[38] If schools do not adopt the government curriculum, their students cannot sit for the national exams and cannot attend Malaysian universities, which impedes their ability to obtain jobs.[39] While many private schools registered, a majority of SARs did not, despite efforts by the Department of Islamic and Moral Education (JAPIM).[40]

In 2002, the government took a controversial hard line against the SARS to push them to register and to identify those unduly politicized or radicalized. Thus, they temporarily halted federal aid to the SARs (Hashim 1996; 221). This hurt the *rakyat* (community) schools, for they relied heavily on funding from state governments (Ibid).

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[35] Interview, Abdul Halim bin Mohd Naam, Assistant Director, Curriculum Division, Department of Islam and Moral Education, JAPIM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia February 2006

[36] Interview, Shahran Kasim, former Secretary General of ABIM, ABIM Headquarters, February 2006, Gombak, Malaysia. Due to the influence of Anwar Ibrahim, the government responded favorably to these ideas and adopted them into the state's curricular recommendations.

[37] Interview, Dr. Rosnani Hashim, Professor at International Islamic University of Malaysia, Gombak Malaysia, February 2006

[38] Ibid

[39] Interview, Professor Datuk Dr. Osman Bakar, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, January 2006

[40] Interview, Abdul Halim bin Mohd Naam, Assistant Director, Curriculum Division, Department of Islam and Moral Education, JAPIM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia February 2006

Fearing the SARs were indoctrinating their children in radical Islamism, many parents pulled their children out. By February 2003, the beginning of the national school year, 14, 916 out of 24,000 students had withdrawn from the 268 SARs nationwide (Ibid 1996 223).

At the same time, the state pressured SAR teachers to apply for positions in the national education system with promises of better salaries (Ibid).

There is consensus that *rakyat* schools tend to produce youths more likely to support PAS.[41] However, others contend that a minority, perhaps 1-2 percent, of those schools teach radical Islamism.[42] SARs had allegedly become breeding grounds for terrorism as evidenced by the fact that the leadership of Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM) and other terror cells were comprised of SAR graduates (Hamid 2005; 174). Thus far, however, the state identified and closed only one SAR in Johor for teaching radical Islam.[43] This school warranted the government's attention, for it was started by Abu Bakar Basyir and Abdullah Sungkar, two Indonesian exiles and the founders of Jemaah Islamiyah. Since the onset of the SAR crisis, JAPIM has sought to become more effective in monitoring the *rakyat* schools; now, all are compelled to register, to abide by the government curriculum, and to agree to monitoring of students and teachers.[44]

In sum, the Malaysian state dominated the provision of education and welfare with Islamic groups clearly playing a supplemental role. Through the New Economic Policy and New Education Policy, the state increased opportunities for Malay Muslims to rise to the ranks of the middle class. Poverty dropped significantly. The Malaysian government benefits from the perception that they take care of the Malay Muslim population. This has inhibited the ability of Islamist groups, radical or peaceful, to make inroads at the state's expense. *Dakwah* organizations provide a valuable service, however, in providing education and some social welfare services to those left behind by the NEP. Even in Kelantan, which is run by PAS, the state government and the federal government share the responsibilities for providing education and welfare, thus reinforcing the idea of the state as a caretaker. The state's effectiveness in providing education and welfare impacts all Muslims.

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[41] Interview, retired senior government official Putra Jaya, Malaysia, February 2006; Interview, Dr. Rosnani Hashim, Professor at International Islamic University of Malaysia, Gombak Malaysia, February 2006; PAS official in Ministry of Education, Kelantan, February 2006

[42] Interview, Abdul Halim bin Mohd Naam, Assistant Director, Curriculum Division, Department of Islam and Moral Education, JAPIM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia February 2006

[43] Interview, Dr. Rosnani Hashim, Professor at International Islamic University of Malaysia, Gombak, Malaysia, February 2006

[44] Interview, Abdul Halim bin Mohd Naam, Assistant Director, Curriculum Division, Department of Islam and Moral Education, JAPIM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Feb. 2006.

Thus, the state's effectiveness in providing education and welfare is a contributing factor that discourages violent Islamic mobilization. It creates a sentiment, stated in numerous interviews with Muslim government officials, academics, party officials and civil society leaders, "why rock the boat?"

Conclusion

In Malaysia, peaceful mobilization is the dominant mode of activity by Islamist groups and violence is rare. This is due to a concerted strategy on the part of the state. The state provides channels for political participation and Islamist groups have achieved many of their goals by working through these channels. One can join the UMNO party within the governing coalition or the government bureaucracy and work for your goals through the legislature. When ABIM employed this strategy between 1982 and 1998, it paved the way for the enacting of numerous Islamization policies that the group had long favored.

Islamists also work through the PAS party or as members of Islamic civil society groups. PAS presents a very important channel for peaceful mobilization in Malaysia. It may not be able to gain a majority in parliament, but they have won control of state governments or made significant inroads in state legislatures. In areas where PAS has won, they implemented policies focusing on *aurat* (modesty), Islamic banking and financial regulations, improving Islamic education and curbing vice. PAS increases its influence and its vote share when it enters into coalitions. The Barisan Alternatif coalition of 1999 enabled PAS to make its greatest gains since its inception.

However, it is not sufficient to encourage peaceful mobilization; a state must also discourage violence through ensuring security, education and welfare. The Malaysian security apparatus has ensured that no lawless areas emerge. Thus, no Islamist groups have supplanted the state and made legitimacy gains for their group or their ideology at the expense of the state. It has also enforced law and order more generally to ensure that radical Islamist groups to do push the limits of acceptable behavior. If groups will not work for their goals through the "acceptable" institutionalized channels, the state will take measure to ban organizations, to monitor them through the Special Branch, or, when necessary, to have them arrested an imprisoned through the ISA. In cases where the state has to crack down, it learned a lesson from the political backlash after Memali and aims to minimize casualties.

The Malaysian state dominates the provision of education and welfare and has gained performance legitimacy as a result of the New Economic Policy and National Education Policy, which decreased poverty and enabled numerous Malays to rise to the ranks of the middle class. Islamic groups supplement the state, assisting those who did not benefit from the NEP. The federal and state governments provide public and religious education. The

vast majority of Islamic groups also abide by the state's mandated curricular requirements to enable their students to obtain a tertiary education in Malaysian universities. The state is quite adept at monitoring Islamic schools and has grown more capable since 2001. Although its crack down on the SAR schools was excessive, it has enabled the state to ensure that those schools register to facilitate improved monitoring. Given that the federal and state governments fund all Islamic religious schools and will give grants to private schools that are willing to register, this may prove a benefit in the long-term.

Can one speak of a Malaysian model that should be widely applied? Perhaps not; Malaysia is small, ethnically divided, with a history of uninterrupted coalition politics, and a unique historical memory. It is not certain whether the Malaysian model can be replicated in other countries. Perhaps, however, the Malaysian case may provide general lessons for other Muslim nations seeking to encourage peaceful mobilization and discourage violence about the important role of political participation and the necessity of a state's effective capacity.

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