Intellectual Discourse

Volume 29 Number 2 2021

International Islamic University Malaysia
http://journals.iium.edu.my/intdiscourse/index.php/id

Intellectual Discourse

Volume 29 Number 2 2021

Intellectual Discourse is a highly respected, academic refereed journal of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). It is published twice a year by the IIUM Press, IIUM, and contains reflections, articles, research notes and review articles representing the disciplines, methods and viewpoints of the Muslim world.

Intellectual Discourse is abstracted in *SCOPUS, ProQuest, International Political Science Abstracts, Peace Research Abstracts Journal, Muslim World Book Review, Bibliography of Asian Studies, Index Islamicus, Religious and Theological Abstracts, ATLA Religion Database, MyCite, ISC* and *EBSCO*.

ISSN 0128-4878 (Print); ISSN 2289-5639 (Online)

https://journals.iium.edu.my/intdiscourse/index.php/id
Email: intdiscourse@iium.edu.my; intdiscourse@yahoo.com

Published by:
IIUM Press, International Islamic University Malaysia
P.O. Box 10, 50728 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Phone (+603) 6196-5014, Fax: (+603) 6196-6298
Website:http://iiumpress.iium.edu.my/bookshop

Intellectual Discourse
Vol. 29, No. 2, 2021

Contents

Intellectual Discourse, 29:2 (2021) 283–312

ISSN 0128-4878 (Print); ISSN 2289-5639 (Online)

A Framework of Good Governance in Regulating Religious Extremism in Malaysia

Elmira Akhmetova*
Rabi'ah Aminudin**
Nadzrah Binti Ahmad***
Sharifah Syahirah****
Izzuddin M. Jaafar*****

Abstract: This paper presents a framework for regulating religious extremism based on principles of good governance. The first part provides a general study into the definitions of extremism and religious extremism. It asserts that religious sentiment can be utilised by terrorist organisations and radical movements to mobilise the masses. The paper further suggests that religious extremism is becoming a severe concern in Malaysia, which was for decades hailed as an oasis of moderate Islam. The second part of the paper analyses the factors contributing to the rise of religious extremism in Malaysia using a quali-

---

*Senior Fellow at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS), the Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg in Freiburg, and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Fellow, Germany; and Associate Professor at the Institute of Knowledge Integration (IKI), Georgia. Email: eakhmetova@gmail.com

**Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, AHAS Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Email: rabiahamin@iium.edu.my

***Associate Professor, Department of Quran and Sunnah Studies, AHAS Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Email: anadzrah@iium.edu.my

****Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Humanities & Arts, Kolej Universiti Poly-Tech MARA (KUPTM). Email: shsyahirah@kuptm.edu.my

*****PhD candidate, Department of History and Civilization, Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Email: izzujeff04@gmail.com

quantitative method that incorporates survey data gathered in KL in 2019 by the authors, expert interviews, and secondary literature. It identifies two levels of factors, individual and socio-cultural/governance, that contribute to the spread of extremist understanding of religion. It suggests that human behaviour has become more receptive to violence and that the individual and collective understanding of religion has become more radical today due to personal grievances, social environment and global realities. Thus, the process of reducing extremism and radicalism in the Muslim world should encompass the individual, societal and transnational stratum. Extremism and radicalisation of societies are the manifestation of the absence of good governance. Thus, the last part of the paper highlights that adhering to good governance assists authorities in regulating societies' immoderate behaviour by providing wellbeing, safety and happiness to the overwhelming majority of the population. It proposes a framework that can provide a moderate and authentic understanding of Islamic principles and serve as an instrument in creating an amicable and harmonious social and political environment in Malaysia. This framework can improve national security by promoting the basic principles of good governance such as transparency, participation, equality, justice, moderation and accountability, which are ingrained in the spirit of Islam.

Keywords: religious extremism in Malaysia, framework to regulate extremism, correlation between extremism and good governance, Islam and good governance

Abstrak: Kertas ini membincangkan tentang kerangka kerja kawal selia ekstremisme agama berdasarkan prinsip tadbir urus yang baik. Bahagian pertama kertas kerja ini membincangkan definisi ekstremisme dan ekstremisme agama. Kertas ini menegaskan bahawa organisasi pengganas dan gerakan radikal boleh menggunakan sentiment agama untuk menggerakkan pengikut mereka secara besar-besaran. Kertas kerja ini juga mendapati ekstremisme agama di Malaysia adalah membimbangkan terutamanya kerana reputasi Malaysia sebagai negara Islam yang sederhana dan progresif. Bahagian kedua kertas ini menganalisis faktor-faktor yang menyumbang kepada kebangkitan fahaman ekstremis agama menggunakan kaedah campuran iaitu kaji selidik yand dijalankan di Kuala Lumpur pada tahun 2019, temu bual pakar, dan penggunaaan sumber sekunder. Kajian ini mengenal pasti dua faktor utama iaitu faktor individu dan sosio-budaya/pemerintahan menyumbang kepada perkembangan fahaman ektremis agama. Hasil dapatan kertas ini mendapati tingkah laku manusia yang lebih reseptif terhadap keganasan dan kefahaman agama individu dan masyarakat menjadi lebih radikal adalah kerana beberapa faktor seperti ketidakpuasan hati peribadi, keadaan persekitaran sosial, dan realiti global yang tidak menyenangkan. Oleh itu, proses untuk

mengurangkan kadar ekstremisme dan radikalisme dalam masyarakat dunia Islam perlu merangkumi stratum individu, masyarakat setempat, dan transnasional. Kewujudan masyarakat yang ekstrim dan radikal merupakan penanda kegagalan proses tadbir urus yang baik. Bahagian terakhir kertas ini menerangkan tentang kepentingan berpegang teguh kepada prinsip tadbir urus yang baik untuk membantu pihak berwajib dalam mengawal selia tingkah laku melampau dalam hidup bermasyarakat dengan memberi perhatian terhadap aspek kesejahteraan, keselamatan, dan kebahagiaan sebahagian besar anggota masyarakat. Kertas ini mencadangkan kerangka kerja yang memberi kefahaman prinsip-prinsip ajaran Islam yang sederhana dan tulen dan akan menjadi instrumen penting untuk membina suasana politik dan sosial yang baik dan harmoni di Malaysia. Kerangka kerja ini dapat menambah baik keselamatan negara dengan menggalakkan pematuhan proses tadbir urus yang baik melalui prinsip ketelusan, penglibatan yang menyeluruh, kesamaan, keadilan, kesederhanaan, dan kebertanggungjawapan, yang juga merupakan sebahagian dari ajaran Islam.

Kata Kunci: ekstremisme agama di Malaysia, rangka kerja untuk mengawal ekstremisme, korelasi antara ekstremisme dengan tadbir urus yang baik, Islam dan tadbir urus yang baik

Introduction

The post-Cold War world has witnessed a global tendency towards violent change. However, the Muslim world is disturbed with the maladies of extremism, radicalisation and terrorism more than other parts of the world. In present-day media and some scholarly circles, Islam is often equated with brutality and extremism because of terrorist groups and radical organisations that use propaganda to mobilise the masses. No doubt, extremism and terrorism are a complex phenomenon. Therefore, the simplistic clash-of-civilisations narrative to refer to the current escalation in the Muslim world raises several doubts because it declares there is something inherently violent in Islam, namely *jihad*, which inevitably leads to a confrontation with non-Muslims (Sageman, 2006). Modern scholarship has failed to understand the nature of religions and the importance they hold in regulating society. Interestingly, many modern scholars advocate for the increased marginalisation of religions to achieve more well-balanced and stable societies and to promote social order and peace (Samir, 2011).

In the current political climate, Islam is often portrayed negatively and as a monolithic entity that is considered a growing threat to world stability and peace. Since 9/11, Muslims have often been portrayed as violent groups that are incompatible with modern life. The media often portray them as terrorists who live in authoritarian, fascist regimes. This negative portrayal has increased Islamophobia, especially in non-Muslim communities (El-Aswad, 2013). In research conducted by Pew Research Centre, it shows that Europeans and Northern Americans view Islamic extremism as one of the biggest security threats (Poushter, 2017). However, history reveals that moderation and equilibrium are engrained in the very nature of Islamic civilisation. For many centuries, Islam demonstrated itself as a religion of moderation, dedicated to establishing a system of truth and justice. It shuns laxity on one side and extremism on the other.

However, the rise of religious extremist groups in Muslim societies like Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and Daesh has raised the question of how and why the extreme/radical understanding of Islam and its principles came to exist, and why the belief in such principles is increasing in modern Muslim society. By recognising the need to step beyond stereotypes and headlines, this paper focuses on the factors related to the emergence of religious extremism in a specific Muslim nation-state, Malaysia.

Malaysia has historically been an exemplary country of a tolerant, moderate, and plural Muslim society. However, Jaafar (2020) found an increasing inclination towards religious extremism among Malay Muslims. In his study, 75.3 per cent of respondents articulated that they felt more special than moderate Muslims and non-Muslims when adhering excessively to the religion (p. 144). Also, 45.1 per cent of the respondents (35.2 per cent responded 'agree' and 9.9 per cent 'strongly agree') expressed their willingness to be involved in a war against non-Muslims (p.132). The same poll revealed that 67.7 per cent of respondents (41.9 per cent responded 'agree' and 25.8 'strongly agree') believed that non-Muslims should accept Shari'ah rule (p. 137).

Such public opinion in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country signifies the existence of hidden intolerance in the society, which requires urgent attention to maintain long-term national security and public wellbeing. As the presence of religious intolerance may signify

signs of potential religious violence, it should not be ignored. Instead, it should be dealt with at an early stage to prevent severe conflict in society. This paper examines the core factors that have led to the intensification of social intolerance and religious extremism. Also, it proposes a framework of good governance that serves as a guide for creating an amicable and harmonious social and political environment in Malaysia.

Extremism, Religious Extremism and Islam

The primary purpose of this article is not to provide alternative definitions of extremism and religious extremism. Instead, the discussion focuses on mainstream definitions and the approaches which exist in modern scholarship and political discourse. However, since the term religious extremism is often prejudiced and is used as a tool of political or academic exploitation, it is constructive and pertinent to highlight the stance of this paper regarding the definitions of these terms by mentioning the following points.

First, there are divergent views in modern scholarship regarding the meaning and definition of extremism and religious extremism. Archbishop Desmond Tutu suggests that an individual behaves as an extremist "when you do not allow for a different point of view; when you hold your own views as being quite exclusive; when you do not allow for the possibility of difference" (Willis, 2011, p. 14). As Willis (2011) assumes, extremists are the ones who advocate measures beyond the norm; thus the term is often used today "to describe people whose strong religious beliefs lead them to hurtful or violent acts against those who do not share their beliefs" (pp. 14-18). Hashim Kamali (2015) states that the principal indicator of extremism is the fanatic pursuit of one particular view. He mentions "The extremist tends to be self-righteous, power-hungry, willing to inflict harm and hardship on others, and (is) also inclined to conflate the order of values" (p. 148). Extremism is mostly related to radical political views and exclusive religious beliefs. The main focus of this paper is religious extremism, although it is difficult to distinguish between these two types of extremism in contemporary political and social structures.

Religious extremism, as described by Mason and James (2010), is an "anti-social behaviour based on religious beliefs. Sometimes people's extreme religious views make them treat others as inferior or

wrong. Extreme religious beliefs can lead to violence" (p. 4). According to Michelle Roya Rad (2013), "a religious extremist is a self-righteous person gone too far." However, depending on how one defines the phrases 'self-righteous' and 'too far,' the label 'extremist' could be applied to any individual who fulfils his daily religious obligations, especially those stranded in different societies as religious or ethnic minorities. Muslim minorities living in Europe and other Western countries are a perfect example. While conferring the phenomenon of religious extremism, its causes, reality and remedy within a genuine Islamic framework, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi (1991) observes that religious extremism is currently in the dock, and is a target of accusations and criticism by writers, orators and governments (p.13). Hence, the term extremist is highly subjective (Kilp, 2011), and its dimensions depend on viewpoint, opinion, objectives, social context, and the value system of the one who defines it. Thus, its definition varies depending on time and space, and it remains vague without any specific or fixed connotations (Nozick, 1997).

Second, extremism and violence are a universal phenomenon that has existed throughout human history and are not unique to a particular religious or ethnic group. It is not specific to any geographical boundary or religious affiliation. In most cases, extremism is associated with the idea that the existing government is corrupted and needs to be replaced by a perfect nation based on a set of idealistic values, commonly depicted by religious scriptures or political ideologies. Extremists believe in the use of force and aggression as a way of achieving such an ideal state. Extremism disturbs social harmony and human security as it causes bloodshed and enmity within social strata. Extremism, in this sense, contradicts the main principles of Islam, which are moderation, and commitment to the progressive reform of societies. All religious foundations function as a framework for peaceful co-existence and social balance, trust and cooperation. Kamali (2015) suggests that religion has a minimal role in the origination of extremist acts and that most cases of extremism are extraneous to religion (p. 150).

Third, there is a tendency in contemporary scholarship and media to link Islam with extremist attitudes. For instance, Neil Kressel (2011) highlights the dangerous nature of Islamic extremism and claims that the Islamic religious tradition provides the extremist with an abundance of source material (p. 28). He recognises the potential for moderation

as well as extremism in Islam, and states that "Terrorism is an inherent aspect of Islamic extremism" (p. 20). He says, "Yet, it is undeniably in the world of Islam where – these days - manifestations of religious hatred and terror have been (the) most frequent, most pronounced, most apparent, most consequential, most popular, and most supported by mainstream clerics" (p. 22). This conclusion of Kressel is reasonable as extremists frequently relate their motivations to religious slogans such as the concept of *jihad*, obtaining the pleasure of God or protecting Islam against non-Muslims. However, it worth noting that other religions, apart from Islam, could be exploited by extremists to mobilise people into helping them fulfil their ambitions. Thus, extremism is not confined by reference to geographical, religious or cultural margins (Kamali, 2015, p. 161).

As the history of Islamic civilisation confirms, Islam presented itself as a religion of moderation and balance, committed to establishing a system of truth and justice that shuns laxity on one side and extremism on the other (Akhmetova, 2015). In short, extremism is the conceptual opposite of moderation. Kamali (2015) states that extremism violates the limits of moderation, which are represented by authoritative sources and rules such as laws, constitutions, religious scriptures, moral standards, and the general customs of society. Furthermore, whereas moderation is centripetal and is strongly focused toward the centre, extremism is centrifugal, and it pushes away from the centre toward the outer edges and extremes of its subject matter (p. 149). Thus Al-Qaradawi (1991) suggested that "[The banner of Islamic] knowledge will be carried from one generation to the other by the moderates who defend it against the distortions of bigots, the claims of falsifiers, and the misinterpretation of the ignorant" (pp. 14-15).

Fourth, the prevailing value system and dominant norms in society play a vital role in a person's judgement of a particular action as extreme or normal. Thus, an action which is defined as extremist in one culture can be standard in another as their values and customs differ. For example, the British government defines extremism as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs" (Casciani, 2014). This difference means that the actions of British Muslims that contradict or question British values are considered extreme in the British context.

Furthermore, the value system of a particular society plays a vital role in shaping the public attitude as either extreme or moderate. However, moral codes and customs are not rigid, and they continuously transform over time. For years, Malaysia was known for its moderate and enlightened public who rejected extremism in any form. Works published in the late 1970s and 1980s defined Malaysia as a pluralistic country, and as Fred R. Von Der Mehden (1987) stated, "the very pluralism of the system has led to a society in which ethnicity and religion have become intimately entwined and in which social, policies, politics, and economics are heavily influenced by communal considerations" (p.177). However, recent public opinion surveys indicate a rise in the level of extremist tendencies among Muslims in Malaysia. Jaafar (2020) identifies that Malaysian Muslims now incline religious intolerance (*see Table 1 below*).

Table 1: Religious Intolerance

Item	**Percentage**
Willing to participate in a war against non-Muslims	45.1%
Intolerance towards different religious thoughts	43.5%
Forced acceptance of non-Muslims on the Shari'ah law	67.7%

Source: Izzuddin Jaafar, 2020 (p. 147)

Based on the table above, it is clear that Malaysian Muslims feel superior in terms of their position and way of life in comparison to others who do not subscribe to the same faith or school of thought. These feelings may not bode well in a multicultural society and within the international community. The feeling of superiority may act as a defence mechanism for Muslims as they further feel marginalised and alienated on a global level. This paper further analyses the internal and external factors that contribute to religiously intolerant sentiment in Malaysia.

At present, Malaysian society is far from being moderate and inclusive. It is strongly believed that if the entire society becomes more radical in its approach towards other ethnicities and religious

communities, then, the moral codes and customs of dealing with others will change as well. The subsequent pages of the paper evaluate the reasons for the rise of religious extremism in Malaysia.

Factors for the Increase of Extreme Behaviour

Studies of political violence and social movements indicate that the architects of violence usually draw on religion, culture, or identity to give meaning to extreme violence. Pedahzur (2006) suggests that religion, culture, and identity serve as "tool kits" from which organisers of collective action strategically select narratives, traditions, symbols, rituals, or repertoires of action to imbue risky activism with morality. Religious symbols are carefully selected to motivate extreme actions by terrorist organisations. At the same time, not every individual in society behaves radically. Also, not every extremist is receptive to calls for radical/terrorist actions, and instead, most of them remain at the level of passive/non-receptive extremism. Thus, a discussion about the factors that have contributed to the gradual rise of extremism in Malaysia is essential before tangible suggestions can be outlined to eliminate radicalism and religious extremism. The factors that contribute to the rise of extremism and religious extremism are commonly divided into two layers, i.e. internal and external factors.

Internal Factors

When Malaya obtained its independence from the British in 1957, Islam did not play a prominent role in the governance. The ruling coalition UMNO (the United Malays National Organisation) guaranteed that, under Malaya's federal system, Islam remained a state rather than a national responsibility, making it one of the few areas of power left in the hands of the individual states (Funston, 2006). Since then, Islam has peacefully co-existed with the 40 per cent non-Muslim population in Malaysia, and it was regarded as moderate and pluralistic (Mehden, 1987). However, in recent decades, the tension between Muslims and non-Muslims in Malaysia has grown because of several individual, socio-cultural and governance factors.

Individual Motives

Humans are incredibly prosocial creatures, and there has been a noticeable decline in the mental health, happiness and wellbeing of people in recent years. The World Happiness Report 2019, an annual

publication of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, indicates a link between positive social interactions and happiness. Many individuals suffering from personal trauma and grievances are socially isolated or depressed, which makes them anti-social and more susceptive to extremist ideas.

Jessica Stern (2011) describes several social and psychological factors that contribute to the radicalisation of individuals such as a religious ideology, social grievances, group dynamics and economics. Terrorist movements often arise in reaction to real or imagined injustice that they feel must be corrected, but, as Stern observes, "terrorists who claim to be driven by religious ideology are often ignorant about Islam" (pp. 66-68). The main reason why terrorists choose this anti-social path is related to their traumas experienced at a young age. As Stern (2011) found in the case of Saudi Arabia, most terrorist detainees had suffered sexual abuse in madrasahs or while in the hands of the police. Also, 25 per cent of detainees in Saudi Arabia accused of having terrorist affiliations also held a criminal record, and half had been convicted of drug-related offences. Interestingly, only 5 per cent of detainees had received a proper religious education (pp.71-72).

Ahmad El-Muhammady (2019), an expert on political violence and terrorism, asserts that, in Malaysia, only the "vulnerable individuals" are attracted to the calls of the international terrorist organisations. According to him, the main characteristics of "vulnerable individuals" are (1) detachment from parents, society and friends; (2) low self-worth and feeling unappreciated by others; (3) emotionally sensitive as are easily affected by the suffering of others, and susceptible to the words of 'jihad', 'humanitarian mission', and 'shahid'; (4) high level of narcissism and a desire to be a 'hero'; (5) cognitive distortions that often lead to incorrect conclusions; (6) high level of impulse sensation seeking; (7) high aggressiveness as they demonstrate a high level of emotional, verbal, and physical aggression; (8) desire for change; and (9) a distorted understanding of religion.

Thus, having individuals with radical mindsets does not endanger national cohesion and security. However, the real hazard to national security emerges with the rise in the number of unhappy anti-social people, which increases the number of individuals receptive to calls of extremism and terrorism. Thus, if governments do not show concern

about the pains and grievances of their inhabitants, more extremist and anti-social behaviour will occur.

The World Happiness Report (2019) ranked Malaysia as 80th out of 156 countries (score 5.339 out of 10). From 2005-2008 to 2016-2018, there was a negative change in the happiness index for Malaysia of -0.697 points. The report presents several links which contribute to the decline in individual and social contentment such as quality of government, the lack of prosocial behaviour exposure, and changes in information technology. Furthermore, the decline in public happiness is related to lifestyle and the surrounding environment. The report highlights that how adolescents socialise has fundamentally changed and is now more focused on online activities and less on face-to-face social interaction. The increased use of social media and other screen-based activities effects sleeping and eating patterns, and means that people read less. All of these factors are detrimental to people`s health and general wellbeing. Accordingly, research suggests that adolescents who spend more time on electronic devices are not as happy as ones who spend more time engaging in other activities (Helliwell et al., 2020). In terms of mobile usage, social media and screen activities Malaysia is ranked in the top five globally, and the highest in Southeast Asia according to the Digital 2019 report by *Hootsuite, and We Are Social*. It reports that Internet penetration in Malaysia stood at 80 per cent and that users spend a daily average of eight hours and five minutes online (Bernama, 2019).

These characteristics cause human behaviour to transform because of the changes in the social environment, values, and social norms.

Socio-Cultural and Governance Factors

In the last section of the paper it was suggested that an increase in the number of extremism-oriented individuals creates an extreme society, and, vice versa, radical social conditions and norms produce individuals who are prone to extreme behaviour. The radicalisation of social conditions depends on (1) governance, (2) education, and (3) the existing social norms. At present, the social structure and educational system, which create norms and lifestyle are determined by governments. Thus, there is a direct link between the radicalisation of an individual/society and governance.

The first factor that contributed to the radicalisation of the Muslim world in general and in particular, Malaysia, is the consequences of colonialism. Colonialism played a vital role in reshaping the modern Muslim mindset towards a realisation of an urgent request for change and progress. The *Islah* (reform) and *Tajdid* (renewal) movements appeared in most of the colonised Muslim lands with the agenda of liberating the minds and lands of Muslims following colonial rule. However, after independence, local puppet governments became the hindrance of the Islamic revival and attempted regeneration of Muslim lands. These events led to the formation of legitimate opposition parties in the name of Islam like the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (*Parti Islam Se-Malaysia*), PAS, in Malaysia; the Iraqi Islamic Party in Iraq; and the Islamic Action Front in Jordan. Using Islam as their trademark, these parties transformed the role of Islam into a manipulative political tool of opposition. They also created the problem of *takfirism,* which meant that parties in Muslim majority countries were obliged to demonstrate that their affinity to Islam was more significant than other parties so they could gain more votes. In Malaysia, the use of religious sentiment mostly revolves around the Malay-Muslim identity being the majority population in the country. As Tibi (2005) suggests, the politicisation of religion is mostly observable today in Malaysia as being imbued with ethnicity as the main driver. Thus the politicisation of Islam in Malaysia has widened the gap between ethnicities. As Osman Bakar (2011) observes, the extensive politicisation of religion by politicians and religious leaders will not create a tolerant society, but rather, it will only intensify social hatred and intolerance. Joseph C. Liow (2015) suggests that "non-Muslims are marginalised in Malaysia as the dominant parties try to 'out-Islam' each other." The rise in the state`s institutionalisation of Islam in Malaysia has also contributed towards the alienation of minority groups and the rise of supremacist ideals among Malay Muslims. Sharifah Syahirah (2019) observes that in several post GE14 events, such as the anti-ICERD rally led by UMNO-PAS coalition, gained tremendous support by using the race and religion card. The coalition championed protest movements against government initiatives to sign the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

In the long run, colonialism also created personal/communal psychological difficulties in the Malay society, such as an inferiority

complex and the lack of self-confidence. There is a common fear among the Muslims in Malaysia of losing faith when compromising with non-Muslims or when working with them. Such a lack of confidence explains the Malaysian Home Ministry's banning the word 'Allah' in the Herald`s Malay language editions of 2008, justifying that the use of the Arabic word in other religions may offend some Muslims. The inferiority complex of Malaysian Muslims also explains the recent wave of the phenomenon of 'Arabisation.' Syed Farid al-Attas observes that Malays often experience feelings of low self-worth and that they consider Arabs to be more authentic Muslims and accordingly imitate them in every aspect (Zahiid, 2016). As Akhmetova (2019) suggests: "The dilemmas of self-loathing and insecurity are deep-rooted in the hearts of the modern Malays and may constitute one of the reasons they are receptive to ISIS propaganda. Due to religious ignorance, they are prone to blindly follow even the most extreme ideas that originate from the Arabs and respect them as authentic Islamic teaching" (p. 14).

Also, the complete social fabric, traditional ways of political and religious synchronisation, and independent educational systems were eliminated in part by the colonialists, and then later through nation-state policies that influenced the governance of institutions under state control. As highlighted earlier, elections and the cry for votes consequently resulted in the phenomenon of the politicisation of Islam in Malaysia, which is something that has not been observed in the West. Such politically corrupted synthesis of religion and political practice is a consequence of colonialism and the application of Western approaches towards its religion, Christianity, to the unrelated realities of the Muslim world and Islam. Hence, one of the worse consequences of colonialism was utilising the Western models of governance and religion for Muslim lands, which were different from the European context. This tension also created a confusion of traditional norms and values.

The second factor is related to the existing educational system, and Samir asserts that how Islam and the Qur'an are taught in traditional madrasahs leads to extremism and terrorism. Teachers at traditional madrasahs are good in religious studies, but they lack knowledge of modern sciences and are incapable of integrating social and religious themes. Such traditional schools produce indoctrinated youth who feel dissatisfaction with the existing governance, suggests Samir (2011). Based on the Malaysian experience, El-Muhammady (2019) refutes the

idea of blaming traditional religious schools for spreading extremism and radical ideas. He says that "The study conducted by Institute for Youth Research Malaysia (IYRES) in 2017 found that only 3 out of 39 individuals (7.7%) who joined extremist activities received their education at traditional schools, while the rest were from ordinary national schools." The choice of an extreme path is not always caused by the lack of a modern secular education, which is evident in that many Malaysians who joined ISIS were engineers. Instead, the main reason is related to the lack of a moderate understanding of Islam or the failure to integrate secular knowledge with religious teachings.

The third factor for the rise of extremist behaviour is related to the conduct of current governments and their failure to establish justice and quality of life for their citizens. Widespread corruption, social injustices, unemployment, and economic crises can radicalise the masses, especially young people. Argo (2011) observes that suicide bombers are motivated by social rather than religious injustices (p. 84). Nevertheless, they commonly justify their violence with the language of Islam (p. 92). Mia Bloom (2006) suggests that extremist behaviour occurs when the population believes in violence as a means of resolution for existing social and political problems, and when they believe other peaceful strategies have failed. Hence, the absence of good governance creates extremist behaviour and terrorism.

In short, both personal and socio-cultural and governance factors are heavily influenced by the policies and actions of the government (see *Figure 1*). At present extremist behaviour has become acceptable in many Muslim communities because the long-lasting fundamental values of moderation, compassion and public trust have changed throughout the processes of colonisation, decolonisation and globalisation. Public understanding of Islam has also changed, and many concepts have been reinterpreted in the current context of competition, clash and struggle.

External Factors

The Iranian Revolution of 1978-9 and the liberation of Afghanistan from the Soviets was crucial in the emergence of Islam as an agent of social and political change in the 1980s. The use of concepts like military *jihad* and martyrdom intensified, and specific verses from the Qur'an and the hadiths of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) were reinterpreted out of context to mobilise Muslims against the Soviet bloc during the

Cold War and in the Palestinian liberation struggle. As Mohammed Hafez observes, martyrs were honoured, and their 'heroic acts' were publicised. Slowly, violence became a vehicle to uphold one's religious values and prove one's self-worth. As a result, "it transformed cruel terror into sacred missions in the minds of potential militants and their sympathetic observers" (Hafez, 2006, p. 67). Individuals were carefully selected in Muslim societies and professionally trained as a 5th column during the Cold War period by both superpowers.

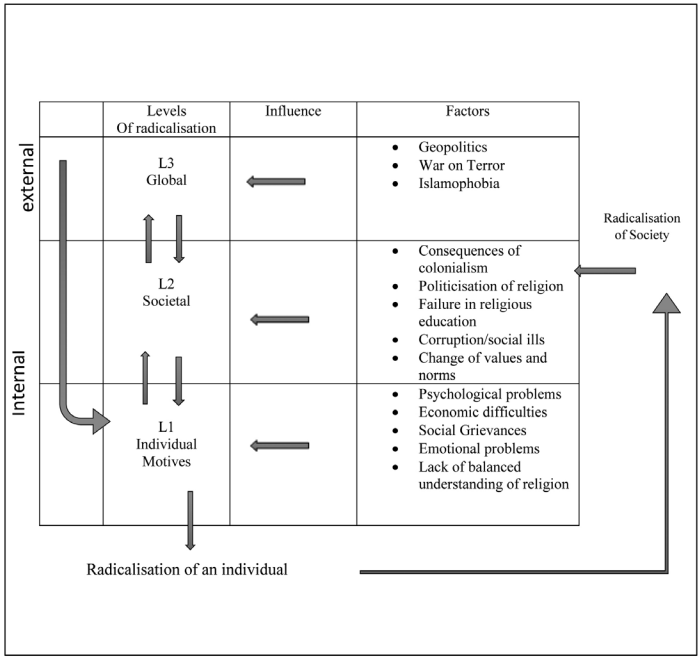
The eruption of the Soviet-Afghan war in 1979 stimulated the expansion of religious extremist ideology in the other parts of the world through the Afghan alumni, who took part in the anti-Soviet struggle under the banner of the Mujahidin. As Shay (2017) suggests, after the return of these Afghan Alumni to their homelands, cases of extremism and terrorism increased sharply in the Muslim world, including in Malaysia. The United States Agency for International Development reported that, between 1985 and 1995, around 300-400 Malaysians and Indonesians were trained in Pakistan and Afghanistan (Jaafar & Akhmetova, 2020). After returning from the war, their primary target was to topple the existing government in their homeland as they regarded it 'un-Islamic', and they demanded the formation of an administrative body fully aligned with their version of Islam.

Another external factor contributing to the escalation of extremism in Malaysia is related to the consequences of the terrorist attack on 11 September 2001. When the USA launched the Global War on Terror in Afghanistan, there were massive protests in Kuala Lumpur in front of the US embassy. Shortly after the start of the war images of children suffering, of dead bodies, and destroyed cities were being shared extensively on social media, aggravating the mood of the Muslims against the West and marionette Muslim countries. Azeem Ibrahim (2011) believes that Muslim terrorists are motivated by moral disgust at Muslim suffering, rather than poverty or the lack of education. He says that there is no link between disadvantage and radicalisation as one does not typically come to believe it is God's will for you to murder innocent strangers because you grew up poor, hungry, uneducated, or generally disadvantaged (pp. 61-62). They are disturbed by the sense of moral disgust from observing the suffering of Muslims in wars started over geopolitical conflicts, and reasons related to energy and petroleum politics. Therefore, Kamali (2015) identifies extremism as a reactionary

response to the injustices happening in the Muslim world connected to the military aggression by superior military powers (p. 149).

The recent escalation of Islamophobia and protective ultra-nationalistic tendencies has also widened the ideological disparity between Islam and the West. Today Islam is synonymous with terrorism. As such, the controversies over caricatures of Muhammad (PBUH) published in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005, and the French satirical magazine *Charlie-Hebdo* in 2015, revealed the potentially prejudiced stance of the Western media under the pretext of freedom of speech. Negative perceptions of Muhammad (PBUH) and Islam are easy to find in the mass media, academia, and in public. Thus, Marc Sageman (2011) blames the mass media bias for creating confusion and negative public opinion concerning Islam, and for not taking into account or mentioning that the overwhelming majority of Muslims condemn terrorism (p. 35). Accordingly, the recent rise of extremism is a multi-factorial phenomenon depending on personal and communal motives, and the interaction of environmental conditions, as shown in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1. Factors for the rise of religious extremism in Malaysia



In sum, the myth of the heroic martyr was born due to realities in the post-colonial Muslim world, and its ghost is still very much alive in Muslim countries in the form of widespread injustices, invasions, and poverty resulting from bad governance. Human behaviour has become more receptive to violence, and individual and communal understanding of religion are more radical today due to individual grievances, social environments, and global realities. Thus, the process of reducing extremism and radicalism in the Muslim world should encompass the individual, societal and transnational stratum.

Framework of Good Governance in Reducing Extremist Behaviour

The study of the factors that have led to the growth of extremism in Malaysia suggests that the institution which can regulate religious extremism is the government. Regulating extremist behaviour could be accomplished in two ways, either through coercion or soft power. Using force may deliver expected results in a relatively short period. These results, however, might be superficial since the root causes of extremism persist, and it may lead to another future wave of radicalisation. Thus, in order to achieve the effective and long-lasting results, the authorities should focus on improving the wellbeing and welfare of citizens rather than focusing merely on regulating the isolated extremist and anti-social behaviours.

Indeed, prevalent extremism and radicalisation of societies are manifestations of the absence of good governance. Adhering to good governance assists the authorities in regulating societies' immoderate behaviour through providing wellbeing, safety and happiness to a vast majority of the population.

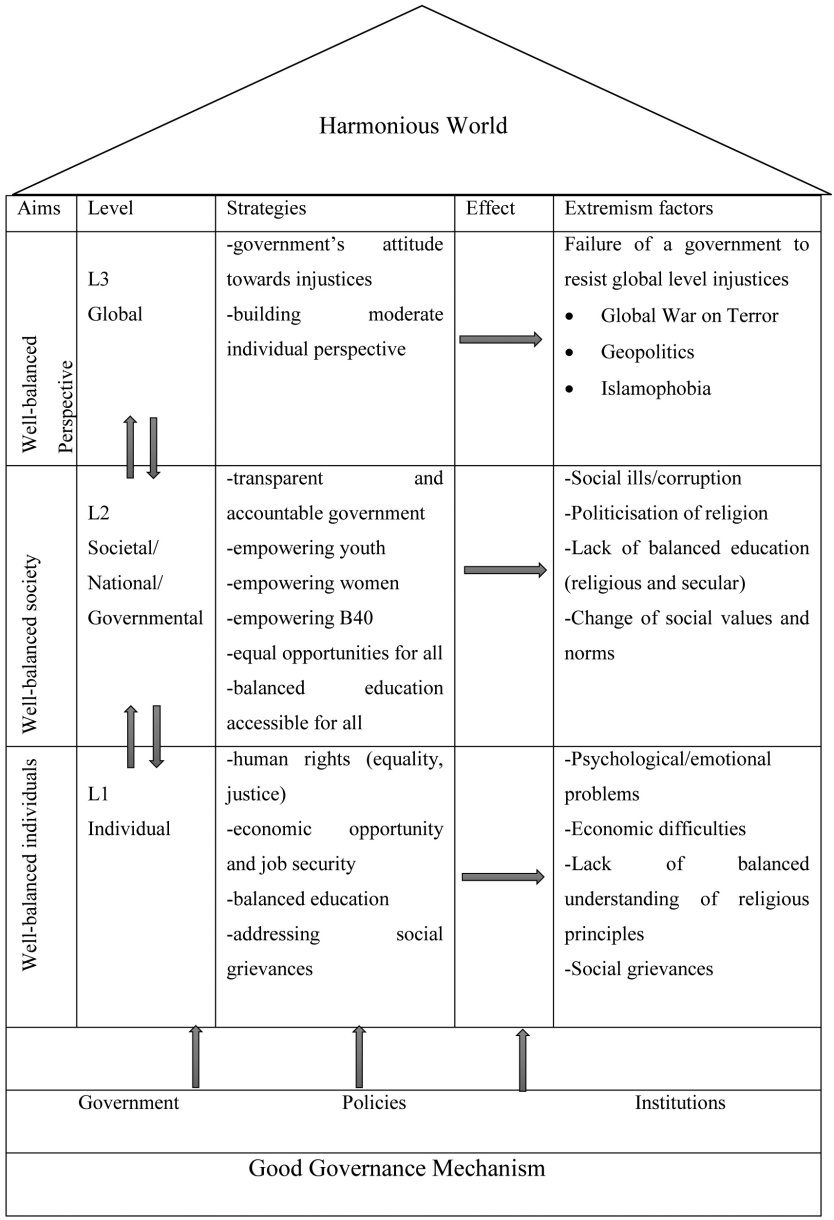
The term good governance originated in 1989 in a World Bank document entitled *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*. Since then, the concept of good governance has been expanded to consist of the following: economic liberalisation and the creation of market-friendly environments; transparency and accountability for economic and political decision-making; political liberalisation, particularly democratic reforms; the rule of law and elimination of corruption; the promotion of civil society; the introduction of fundamental human rights guarantees, especially concerning political rights such as freedom of expression; freedom of assembly and freedom

from arbitrary imprisonment; and the adoption of policies designed to safeguard long-term global interests like education, healthcare, and the environment (UN Programme, 1995). The United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2016) states that promoting good governance by upholding the rule of law, human rights and eliminating corruption creates an enabling environment for civil society and reduces the risk of escalating extremism. Through good governance practices, the government can review legislation, policies, strategies and practices to counter and prevent extremism that is usually caused by state violations against human rights or discrimination.

Hence, good governance mainly concentrates on the responsibility of the government and governing bodies to meet the needs of the public. The establishment of public welfare and concern for the public interest are among the most important functions of good governance. It is worth noting that governance in this context is not limited to the capacity of the government in the traditional sense; instead, it includes institutions and policies within and beyond the governmental structure (Salim & Akhmetova, 2018). The ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2018) highlighted that promoting moderation and tolerance and strengthening good governance helps to prevent radicalisation and extremism.

The mechanism of good governance tends to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of individuals, societies and nations. In the long run, it creates well-balanced individuals in well-balanced societies, therefore reducing the opportunity for extremism and radicalisation in society. The mechanism of moderating religious extremism with the framework of good governance is illustrated below in *Figure 2*.

Figure 2. The framework of good governance in regulating religious extremism



As described in *Figure 2*, good governance mechanisms include the actions and policies of governments, the objectives of social and economic institutions, and social policies. The process of achieving good governance to moderate religious extremism and promote a harmonious world operates on three levels: 1) individual; 2) societal/governmental; and 3) global. As the diagram shows, the relationship between these three levels is interrelated: well-balanced individuals form a well-balanced society and, vice-versa, a well-balanced society produces well-balanced individuals. Then, well-balanced societies form a harmonious world with a well-balanced perspective, and a harmonious world results in well-balanced societies and states. The relation among these factors is based on mutual respect, equality, dignity, and support.

Individual Level

Good governance mechanisms that involve individual-level transformations are aimed at constructing well-balanced and amicable individuals. As mentioned, there is a possible hazard to national security from the rise in anti-social and unhappy individuals who are more susceptive to extremist ideas and influence. Hence, unless the governments address the grievances of the population, more extremist and anti-social behaviour is bound to occur. Therefore, governance, social institutions and policies should tackle the factors that lead individuals to commit extreme acts in the name of religion or an ideology. These factors include psychological and emotional problems stemming from personal trauma and social grievances, economic problems, and a misguided understanding of religious principles.

Consequently, it is recommendable to employ the following mechanisms of good governance, such as guaranteeing the fundamental human rights of each individual. These rights include equality, justice without religious, gender, or ethnic discrimination, equality in education, and the provision of economic opportunities, job security, and financial stability. Government initiatives should social support activities that address the grievances of individuals and social groups so that they can provide a well-balanced and equal society for all.

This study also suggests that policymakers start targeting something beyond GDP to measure citizens' wellbeing and national progress. The Happiness Index 2019 highlights the necessity for governments to focus attention on the 'happiness' or subjective wellbeing (SWB) of citizens

(Helliwell et al., 2019). The quality of government, its institutions and the structure of governmental policies influence the happiness and security of populations, and changes in policies could enable citizens to lead happier lives. Governmental quality is dependent on the quality of policy delivery, the control of corruption, and the capacity to reduce conflict and promote peace (p. 41).

There is a direct correlation between access to decision-making and the level of happiness. As the Happiness Index 2019 states: "Happier people are not only more likely to engage in politics and vote but are also more likely to vote for incumbent parties" (Helliwell et al., 2019, p. 60). Happier citizens not only adhere to peaceful lifestyles and improve national security, but their decisions are decisive in establishing the best and fairest governments. Thus the measures of good governance for achieving happier citizens should focus on the provision of political and human rights, and deal with the individual grievances of citizens. The process of healing from personal trauma and social grievances can be done through social support institutions, which empower 'vulnerable individuals' instead of marginalising them through social isolation. There is a link between positive social interactions and the happiness of individuals. Therefore, governments should encourage prosocial behaviour such as charity work, volunteering, and promoting kindness to animals and less-advantaged groups. Through these methods, young citizens, especially those from broken families, can volunteer through various educational, social, religious, and community engagement projects provided by institutions, schools, and universities.

Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid sees "extremism creeping into the Malay-Muslim subconscious mentality as those who express reservations or alternative viewpoints are branded as traitors to the Malay-Muslim cause" (Abdullah, 2020). Educational reform could change this mentality which is rooted in conflict and the idea of superiority.

The education system could be used to try and produce more ethical and socially responsible citizens by incorporating moral values into their syllabus in line with the secular and religious curriculums. Also, they should teach social and leadership skills, as well as abilities in peacebuilding and reconciliation. At religious institutions, pupils should be exposed to critical thinking tools in Islamic studies rather than following the current mode of memorisation. Fauzi suggested restoring

a moderate worldview and adopting a civil approach to the teaching of comparative religions, especially in the Islamic studies curriculum that produces religious scholars and public figures (Abdullah, 2020). Traditional Islamic critical thinking tools like *qawa'id al-fiqh* (*fiqh* rules), *usul al-fiqh* (methodology of *fiqh*), and *maqasid al-shariah* (objectives of the *Shari'ah*) should be taught at Islamic institutions so young people possess the skills to filter and reject extremist ideas.

Societal/Governmental Level

Societal and governmental level mechanisms of good governance are aimed at establishing a well-balanced society through the empowerment of citizens, especially young people and women, the establishment of transparent and accountable governmental bodies, and equal societal values and norms imparted through an objective educational system. These measures commonly focus on eliminating the factors linked with the rise of religious extremism such as post-colonial mentality, the politicisation of religion, corruption and the lack of transparency, in addition to, promoting ongoing changes in societal values and norms that emphasise moderation and social harmony.

The Muslim world is facing several dilemmas of governance resulting from colonial interference. For example, the politicisation of Islam which ignores its higher objectives (*maqasid al-Shari'ah*), intensified political competition among Muslim states to control or dominate regional geopolitics, petroleum politics, and a general lack of good governance and public policies. Before the colonial age, Muslims were accustomed to maintaining a certain distance from governing authorities. The traditional social fabric was completely different from the present nation-state based governing structure because the governments did not directly control the social, economic and cultural spheres of public life. During the last Muslim rule, which was the Ottoman state (1289-1918), society and rule were based on religious community structure, called the *millet* system, which was grounded on the values of mutual respect, religious freedom, and social cooperation. These values were customary of that time, and interactions between non-Muslim and Muslim societies were not a daily occurrence. In history, yet, every member of society had been counted and respected (Abdelgafar, 2018, p. 174).

The current realities and nature of governance are different. The existing nation-state governing structure eliminates the isolation of citizens, regardless of their ethnic, religious and ideological backgrounds. Everyone expects to be treated equally by the government. If the government fails to provide equal treatment, then society will suffer from the problems of ethnic or religious discrimination or hatred. Fareed Zakaria (2011) relates the current escalation of extremism, radicalism and violence in the Muslim world to the absence of good governance. He believes that extremism is a result of dysfunctional rule and widespread corruption. Thus, a good governance mechanism is essential to achieve equal treatment for all citizens and the provision of human dignity, respect and meritocracy.

In order to achieve social order and national security, the creation of a prosocial community is by tackling the existing public problems. Public policies are instruments that define a course of action or inaction taken by authorities to address public problems and concerns. Basma Abdelgafar (2018) considers that the *maqasid* (*maqasid al-Shari'ah*) approach to public policy and governance could be a solution for Muslim-majority countries. She suggests the integrated and purposeful reading of revealed and secular laws to provide individuals and social units with an ethical framework. For her, the *maqasid* approach is capable of providing an ethical framework for governance and policy. Public policies and governance should be based on universal values such as compassion, transparency, honesty, equality, meritocracy, accountability, justice, mercy, efficiency, dignity and respect. Purposeful reading of the primary sources of Islam (the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet) demonstrates that these values are highly recommended in Islamic governance. Governance in Islamic countries is a great responsibility given the impact on individuals, living creatures, communities, and the collective wellbeing of humanity (p. 3). It is essential to improve dialogue and work with religious leaders and religious organisations that promote a culture of peace, moderation and tolerance. Also, the strengthening of strategic communication, through the internet and social media, can help to prevent extremism (ASEAN, 2018).

Young people are a significant asset for Muslim nations as approximately 34 per cent of the population are younger than 15 years old. While discussing how to beat terrorism, Ibrahim (2011) suggested reducing the motivation for young people to become radicalised. For

him, education is the key. Terrorism and extremism can be prevented by changing minds through proper Islamic education within the right context. Thus, the young generation should be empowered through an unprejudiced education, and they should be given the appropriate attention, trust, and respect. These actions will encourage political and social responsibility based on meritocracy.

Global Level

Good governance measures concentrate on global aims to establish just and objective attitudes towards global events, especially those related to the Muslim world. While discussing the causes that contribute to the rise of extreme understanding of Islam, it was highlighted that the failure of local governments to challenge global injustices is a primary factor. For example, the recent radicalisation of Muslims in Malaysia is interpreted in a broader context as their reaction to the political crises in the Muslim world resulting from Cold War events like the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan 1978-1989, the US-led Global War on Terror following the events of 9/11 in 2001, the Israeli-Palestinian deadlock, and the failure of the international community to solve recent Muslim minority problems in Kashmir, China and Burma.

Most importantly, the Muslim citizens in the Muslim world are unhappy with the attitude of their governments towards global injustices and prejudices, and this is exploited by terrorist organisations to mobilise people against governments. In May 2016 *The New Straits Times* reported that Zainuri Kamaruddin, who was a supposed leader of the Malay speaking ISIS arm *Katibah Nusantara* until he died 2017, stated in a propaganda video that ISIS had declared Malaysia and its people as 'taghut' ('sinners' or those against the teachings of Allah). He also declared that they must be fought (Karim & Shah, 2016). The propaganda may have had an impact considering that in 2013 thirty-nine per cent of Malaysian Muslims believed violence was justified against the enemies of Islam (PEW Research Center, 2013). Whereas the 2019 survey conducted in KL for this research, shows that fifty-one per cent of respondents believe that non-Muslims want to defeat Muslims, while forty-one per cent want to be involved in physical *jihad* for the sake of religion (Jaafar, 2020, pp. 132-138). The results of such ISIS propaganda that promotes terrorist attacks against 'sinning' Malaysia could have disastrous consequences.

The United Nations (2016) adopted a global framework with seven priority areas to prevent extremism through (1) dialogue and conflict prevention; (2) strengthening good governance, human rights and the rule of law; (3) engaging communities; (4) empowering youth; (5) gender equality and empowering women; (6) education, skill development and employment facilitation; and (7) strategic communications, the internet and social media. These priority areas were also adopted by regional intergovernmental organisations such as ASEAN in 2018.

There is no doubt that global events are out of control for many nations, especially those in the developing world. Governments` stance towards global injustices and discriminations is crucial in cultivating dignified individuals and well-balanced societies. This study suggests that governments focus on fulfilling the needs of citizens rather than trying to satisfy the interests of superpowers. At the same time, nurturing a moderate and rational perspective among citizens towards global events must be one of the leading long-term targets of the educational curriculum.

Conclusion

After deliberating the definitions of religious extremism, the factors for its emergence, and the potential solutions to regulate it, this study proposes the following concluding remarks.

The first is related to the definition and features of religious extremism. The term religious extremism has a tendency to be prejudiced and is used as a tool of political or academic exploitation. Its dimensions depend on viewpoint, opinion, objectives, social context and the value system of the one who defines. Thus, its definition varies with regards to time and space and remains vague without any specific or fixed connotations. An action defined as extremist in one culture is considered normal in another because of varying values and traditions. Consequently, an analysis of extremism in a particular society depends on the value system of that particular community and not the value system of the definer.

Besides, the study found that none of the religions, including Islam, propagate extremism or violence. At the same time, any religious ideology can be utilised as the tool of propagating extremism like any other contemporary ideology such as nationalism, racism, or

communism. Extremism contradicts the main principles of Islam, which are moderation and commitment to the progressive reform of societies. The eradication of religious beliefs is not the option to produce a harmonious society, and governments should also provide an appropriate education and social reform under the principles of good governance.

Second, the recent rise of religious extremism is a multi-factorial phenomenon depending on personal and communal motives, environmental conditions, and their interactions. Human behaviour became more receptive to violence, and both the individual and collective understanding of religion is more radical today due to individual grievances, social environment, and global realities. Widespread injustices, foreign invasions and poverty due to the lack of good governance substantially contribute to the rise of extremism. Thus, the process of reducing extremism and radicalism in the Muslim world should encompass the individual, societal/governmental and transnational stratum.

Third, the study concludes that prevalent extremism and radicalisation of societies are a manifestation of the absence of good governance. Consequently, adhering to good governance may assist the authorities in regulating religious and other types of extremist behaviour by providing wellbeing, safety and happiness to an overwhelming majority of the population. The mechanism of good governance, in the long run, is expected to create well-balanced individuals in well-balanced societies, thus reducing the opportunity for the growth of extremism and radicalisation in that particular society.

Acknowledgment: This research was funded by the Ministry of Education Malaysia under the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (ID: FRGS/1/2017/SSI10/UIAM/03/2) titled "A Framework of Good Governance in Regulating Religious Extremism to Improve National Security in Malaysia"

References

Abdelgafar, B. I. (2018). *Public Policy Beyond Traditional Jurisprudence: A Maqasid Approach*. IIIT Publishers.

Abdullah, M. (3 January, 2020). "Politics and Policy: Countering Extremism," *The Edge Malaysia*.https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/politics-and-policy-countering-extremism.

Akhmetova, E. (26 February, 2015). "Islam, Extremism and Moderation." *New Straits Times*.

Akhmetova, E. (2019). "Islam and Politics in Malaysia since 1957: Fluctuation between moderation and radicalization of the State, Society and Religion." *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 9 (2): 01–19. doi:10.32350/jitc.92.01.

Al-Qaradawi, Y. (1991). *Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism*. IIIT Publishers.

Argo, N. (2011). Suicide Bombers are Motivated by Social Rather than Religious Injustice. In Laurie Willis (Ed.), *Extremism: Opposing Viewpoints* (p. 89). Greenhaven Press.

ASEAN. (2018). "ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and violent extremism (2018-2025)."

https://asean.org/storage/2012/05/Adopted-ASEAN-PoA-to-Prevent-and-Counter-PCVE.pdf

Bakar, O. (2011). "The Evolving Face of Religious Tolerance in Post-Colonial Malaysia: Understanding Its Shaping Factors." *Islam and Civilisational Renewal* 2 (4): 634.

Bernama. (31 January, 2019). "Malaysia Ranks Top 5 Globally in Mobile Social Media Penetration, Highest in Region," *New Straits Times*. https://www.nst.com.my/lifestyle/bots/2019/01/456119/malaysia-ranks-top-5-globally-mobile-social-media-penetration-highest

Bloom, M. (2006). "Dying to Kill." In Ami Pedahzur (Ed.), *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom* (p. 35). Routledge.

Casciani, D. (10 June, 2014). "How do You Define Islamist Extremism?" *BBC News*. https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-27777892.

El-Aswad, El-S. (2013). "Images of Muslims in Western Scholarship and Media after 9/11." *Digest of Middle East Studies* 22 (1): 39-56. doi:10.1111/dome.12010.

El-Muhammady. (2019). Interview with the Authors.

Funston. (2006). Malaysia. In Greg Fealy and Virginia Hooker (Eds.), *Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia: A Contemporary Sourcebook* (p. 54). Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Hafez, M. (2006). Dying to be Martyrs. In Ami Pedahzur (Ed.), *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom* (p. 67). Routledge.

Helliwell, J., Layard, R., & Sachs, J. (2020). "World Happiness Report 2019," WHR, https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2019.

Ibrahim, A. (2011). Islamic Extremists are Motivated by Moral Disgust. In Laurie Willis (Ed.), *Extremism: Opposing Viewpoints* (pp. 61-62). Greenhaven Press.

Jaafar, M. I. (2020). "Religious Extremism in Malaysia after 9/11: Causes and Consequences" (Unpublished MA Thesis). International Islamic University Malaysia.

Jaafar, M. I. & Akhmetova, E. (2020). "Religious Extremism And Radicalisation Of Muslims In Malaysia: The Malay Ties With The Mujahidin, Al Qaeda And ISIS." *Journal of Nusantara Studies* 5 (1): 104-123.

Kamali, H. (2015). "Extremism, Terrorism and Islam: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives." *Islam and Civilisational Renewal* 6 (2): 148-165.

Karim, F. and Shah A. (18 May, 2016). "Cops Monitoring 'Righteous Army." *New Straits Times*.https://www.nst.com.my/news/2016/05/146284/cops-monitoring-righteous- army-video.

Kilp, A. (2011). "The ontology and epistemology of extremism." *Estonian National Defence College Proceedings* 14(2): 9-25.

Kloos, D., & Berenschot, W. (2017). Citizenship and Islam in Malaysia and Indonesia. In Berenschot W., Nordholt H., & Bakker L. (Eds.), *Citizenship and Democratization in Southeast Asia* (pp. 178-208). Brill. www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76ws5.12.

Kressel, N. J. (2011). Terrorism is an Inherent Aspect of Islamic Extremism. In Laurie Willis (Ed.), *Extremism: Opposing Viewpoints* (p. 20-28). Greenhaven Press.

Liow, J. C. (2015). "Malaysia's ISIS Conundrum." https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/malaysias-isis-conundrum

Mason, P. & James, O. (2010). *Religious extremism*. Evans Brothers.

Mehden, F. R. Von Der. (1987). Malaysia: Islam and Multi-ethnic Polities Islam in Asia: Religion, Politics, and Society. In John Esposito (Ed.), *Malaysia: Islam and Multi- ethnic Polities Islam in Asia: Religion, Politics, and Society* (pp. 177-201). Oxford University Press.

Nozick, R. (1997). *Socratic puzzles*. Harvard University Press.

Pedahzur, A. (Ed.) (2006). *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom*. Routledge.

PEW Research Centre. (2013). "Muslim Publics Share Concerns about Extremist Groups Much Diminished Support for Suicide Bombing Survey: Report." *Pew Research Centre*. https://www.pewresearch.org/

global/2013/09/10/muslim-publics-share-concerns-about-extremist-groups/

Poushter, J. (May, 2017). "Majorities in Europe, North America worried about Islamic extremism." *Pew Research Centre*. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/24/majorities-in-europe-north-america-worried-about-islamic-extremism.

Rad, M. R. (2013). "What Turns Ordinary People Into Religious Extremists?" *HuffPost*. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-turns-ordinary-people-into-religious-extremists_b_3375890?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAABDLn8gkvcsVTWbHRkH7akm88jojibRFfHqUZRwiAym_ZKGgSe1PjidId-j9Ojiew8hSVZM8_TNIiGsUmZ5Q3EEVTLyFMNVdHnDG0E4XBM6JEKmbHppnr7NN8VJATxiiFrVbKr7Fejw47RNdzVFDpJLJyEL9ATddv5pworEJEdbd (accessed 19 May 2020).

Sageman, M. (2006). Islam and Al Qaeda. In Ami Pehadzur (Ed.), *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom* (pp. 122-131). Routledge.

Salim, S.M. Toha & Akhmetova, E. (2018). "Good Governance and Contemporary Islamic Political Thought: Towards an Applied Model." *The Islamic Quarterly* 62 (1): 61-84.

Samir, K. (2011). Fundamentalist Islamic Schools Teach Extremism. In Laurie Willis (Ed.), *Extremism: Opposing Viewpoints* (pp. 113-120). Greenhaven Press.

Shay, S. (2017). *Globalization of terror: The challenge of Al-Qaida and the response of the international community*. Routledge.

Stern, J. (2011). Islamic Extremists are Motivated by Social and Psychological Needs. In Laurie Willis (Ed.), *Extremism: Opposing Viewpoints* (pp. 66-68). Greenhaven Press.

Syahirah, S. (2019). "The Erosion of Partisan Politics and Polarization in Malaysia." https://www.newmandala.org/author/sharifah-syahirah-syed-sheikh.

Tibi, B. (2005). *Islam between Culture and Politics*. Springer.

United Nations. (2016). "UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism." https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/plan-of-action-to-prevent-violent-extremism.

United Nations Development Programme. (1995). "Public Sector Management, Governance and Sustainable Human Development." UNDP.

Willis, L. (Ed.). (2011). *Extremism: Opposing Viewpoints*. Greenhaven Press.

World Bank. (1989). *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*. World Bank.

World Happiness Report 2019. (2019). https://s3.amazonaws.com/happiness-report/2019/WHR19.pdf.

Zahiid, S.J. (May, 2016). "Forum Explores Creeping 'Arabisation' among Malays." *Malaymail Online*. http://www.themalaymailonline.com

Zakaria, F. (2011). Terrorism is not an Inherent Aspect of Islamic Extremism. In Laurie Willis (Ed.), *Extremism: Opposing Viewpoints* (pp. 29-39). Greenhaven Press.

In This Issue

ISSN 0128-4878 (Print)

ISSN 2289-5639 (Online)

ISSN 0128-4878

2289 5639