

**THE APPLICATION OF IBN KHALDŪN'S THEORY OF AŞABIYYAH TO THE
MODERN PERIOD WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MALAY MUSLIM
COMMUNITY IN MALAYSIA**

by

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ABSTRACT

This research studied the applicability of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* in a modern context, by choosing the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia as a case study. Although the theory was introduced by Ibn Khaldūn in the 14th century and has been discussed by numerous scholars, only recently has its relevance to the modern situation been reviewed. The current situation of the Muslim community in general and Malay Muslims in Malaysia in particular, who are mainly associated with the issues of moral degradation, misunderstanding of religion, economic stagnation, political division and lack of intellectuality, directs us to examine the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* in the modern context and to reflect on its relevance to the issues listed above. To achieve the research objective, the theory was reviewed via library study and fieldwork. The current situation of the Malay Muslim community, comprising its problems and challenges, was studied with this approach. In particular, a group of students of the University of Malaya undertook to distribute questionnaires and conduct interviews. To obtain further information regarding the applicability of *Aṣabiyyah* at the present time to the context of the Malay Muslim community, interviews were also conducted among Malaysian scholars who have expertise in the related area. The results of the fieldwork show that most of the respondents have a general and average understanding of the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*. Furthermore, most of the feedback from the respondents suggests that the current condition of the Malay Muslim community is at an 'average' level, with the exception of the political and social aspects, which are viewed as problematic and worrying. Yet, from the Malaysian scholars' standpoint, the situation of the Malay Muslim community at present is no way gratifying, but worrying, disturbing and unsatisfactory. Thus, the factors contributing to the existence of the problems and challenges of the community are not uniform but a combination of several factors, both internal and external, physical and spiritual. Thus, many suggest that the theory remains relevant and might well be applied and practised in the discourse of our own age. It can be applied to the Malay Muslim community in principle, although not perhaps in the sense which Ibn Khaldūn gave it. The sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* within this community requires mutual understanding and cooperation, the agreement to disagree and the acceptance, mainly in politics, of criticism and different opinions, irrespective of differences of background and understanding. Given this, the problems and challenges for the community might be reduced or overcome by adopting *'Aṣabiyyah* in its strongest sense.

ca. 76,655 words

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to,

My father, Dato' Haji Abdul Halim Abdul Rahman

my mother, Datin Hajjah Aminah Haji Abdullah,

my husband, Muhammad Rusdi Ismail,

my son, Ahmad 'Amru Hakeem,

and my whole family and friends.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Statement of the Problem	4
1.3	Rationale	8
1.4	Objectives	10
1.5	Research Questions	11
1.6	Scope and Limitations	12
1.7	Definition of Terms	14
1.8	Literature review	23
1.8.1	Ibn Khaldūn's theory of <i>'Aṣabiyyah</i>	23
1.8.2	Ibn Khaldūn's theory of <i>'Aṣabiyyah</i> and the contemporary situation	30
1.8.3	Historical background and dilemmas of the Malay Muslim community	36
1.9	Research Methodology	45
1.10	Organisation of the thesis	49
1.11	Conclusion	52

CHAPTER TWO

THE BACKGROUND OF THE MALAY MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN MALAYSIA

2.1	Introduction	53
2.2	Overview of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia	54

2.3	The historical overview of the Malacca Sultanate during the 15 th century	59
2.3.1	The rise of Malacca as a kingdom and its background	59
2.3.2	Governmental system under the Sultanate of Malacca	63
2.3.3	The achievement of the Sultanate of Malacca	66
2.4	Historical Overview of Malaysia During the pre- and post-independence periods	70
2.5	The Malay Muslim Community and Contemporary issues	82
2.5.1	Perspective on Contemporary Malaysia and contemporary Issues for the Malay community	82
2.5.2	The position of Islam in Malaysia	83
2.5.3	The issue of integration within the Malay Muslim community	86
2.5.4	Issue of the economy	91
2.5.5	Issue of education / low academic performance	96
2.5.6	Social and moral problems	99
2.6	Conclusion	105

CHAPTER THREE

IBN KHALDŪN'S THEORY OF 'AŞABIYYAH

3.1	Introduction	106
3.2	Ibn Khaldūn: The man and his context	107
3.2.1	Brief biography of Ibn Khaldūn, with reference to the introduction of the theory of ' <i>Aşabiyyah</i>	107
3.3	Ibn Khaldūn's theory of ' <i>Aşabiyyah</i>	116
3.3.1	Definition of ' <i>Aşabiyyah</i>	116
3.3.2	Ibn Khaldūn's interpretation of ' <i>Aşabiyyah</i>	120
3.3.3	Elements of the theory of ' <i>Aşabiyyah</i> (blood ties, religion and ' <i>Mulk</i> ')	124
3.3.4	Theory of ' <i>Aşabiyyah</i> from the perspective of Islam	135
3.3.5	Feasibility of the theory of ' <i>Aşabiyyah</i> in the modern period and	147

critiques of Khaldūnian thought

3.4	Conclusion	157
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CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY OF FIELD WORK RESEARCH

4.1	Introduction	159
4.2	The background to the locale of the research: The University of Malaya	160
4.2.1	Historical background of the University of Malaya	161
4.2.2	Mission, Vision, Quality Policy and Educational Goals	162
4.2.3	Faculties and Courses	164
4.2.4	The University Malaya Centre for Continuing Education (UMCCed)	166
4.3	Methodology of the research	168
4.3.1	The Research Approaches	168
4.3.2	Case study research	173
4.3.3	Process of Case Study Research	177
4.4	Research questions	179
4.5	Sampling Procedure	182
4.6	Pilot Case Study	187
4.7	Validity and Reliability	189
4.8	The Procedure of Data Collection	194
4.8.1	The Questionnaires	196
4.8.2	Interviews	200
4.9	Data Analysis	205
4.9.1	Questionnaires	207
4.9.2	Interviews	209
4.10	Problems and Limitations during the Fieldwork Research	210
4.11	Conclusion	21

CHAPTER FIVE
CASE STUDY PRESENTATION

5.1	Introduction	214
5.2	Descriptions and background of the respondents	215
5.2.1	The sample for Questionnaire	215
5.2.2	Sample for interviews	222
5.3	Respondent's knowledge of the theory of ' <i>Aṣabiyyah</i>	224
5.3.1	Questionnaire	224
5.3.2	Interviews	226
5.4	Respondents' perceptions on the problems and challenges of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia	230
5.4.1	Questionnaires (Closed-ended questions)	230
5.4.2	Open-ended Questions	235
5.4.3	Interview	240
5.5	Conclusion	257

CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

6.1	Introduction	259
6.2	Summary of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of ' <i>Aṣabiyyah</i>	260
6.3	The Malay Muslim community in Malaysia, its problems and challenges introduced by Ibn Khaldūn	266
6.4	The case of Malay Muslim community in Malaysia: Critical Appraisal of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of ' <i>Aṣabiyyah</i>	282
6.5	Conclusion	288

CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1	Summary and conclusion of the thesis	290
7.2	Recommendations of the research	293
	Bibliography	296
	Appendices	323

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

CONSONANTS

ء	‘
الف	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l

VOWELS

Long

آ	ā
أُو	ū
إِي	ī
أَيَّ	á

Shorts

أ	a
إِ	i
أُ	u

Double

يَي	iyy (final form ī)
وَو	uww (final form ū)

(continued) sConsonant

م	m
ن	n
و	w
ه	h
ة	h
ي	y

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	Differences between quantitative and qualitative research	170
Table 5.1	Respondents' background according to gender, marital status and age	216
Table 5.2	Respondents' states of origin	219
Table 5.3	Interviewees' background according to gender, marital status and age	223
Table 5.4	Respondents' knowledge regarding the theory of <i>'Aşabiyyah</i>	225
Table 5.5	Respondents' perception of the economic and political achievement of the Malay Muslim community	231
Table 5.6	Respondents' perception of the academic achievement and intellectuality of the Malay Muslim community	232
Table 5.7	Respondents' perceptions regarding religious affairs of the Malay Muslim community	233
Table 5.8	Respondents' perceptions regarding social affairs of the Malay Muslim community	234
Table 5.9	Respondents' perceptions regarding unity and integration of the Malay Muslim community	235

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1	The process of case study research	178
Figure 4.2	Steps in drafting and selecting research questions	180
Figure 4.3	Steps in selecting a sample	184
Figure 5.1	Respondents' background according to gender, marital status and age	217
Figure 5.2	Respondents according to ethnic background	218
Figure 5.3	Respondents' background according to religion	218
Figure 5.4	Respondents' background according to their states and origin	220
Figure 5.5	Respondents' education background	221
Figure 5.6	Respondents' background according to profession	222
Figure 5.7	Interviewees' background according to gender, marital status and age	223

ABBREVIATIONS USED

ABIM	Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia)
AD	Anno Domini
ADK	Agensi AntiDadah Kebangsaan (The Malaysia National Anti-Drug Agency)
AH	Anno Higerae (After Hijrah)
CD	Compact Discs
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
GERAKAN	Malaysian People's Movement
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IIUM	International Islamic University of Malaysia
ISMA	Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia (Malaysian Muslim Solidarity)
ISTAC	International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization
JIM	Jemaah Islah Malaysia
JUST	International Movement for A Just World
KUIS	Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia (Selangor International Islamic University College)
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
MAPEN	The Second National Economic Consultative Council
MIER	The Malaysian Institute of Economic Research
NEP	New Economic Policy
NOC	National Operation Council
NUS	National University of Singapore

PAS	Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party
PDRM	Polis Diraja Malaysia (Royal Malaysia Police)
PBUH	Peace be Upon Him
PKR	Parti Keadilan Malaysia (People Justice Party Malaysia)
QSR	Qualitative Research Software
RU	Research University
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science
TITAS	<i>Tamadun Islam dan Tamaduan Asia Tenggara</i> (Islamic and Asian Civilization)
UM	University of Malaya
UMCCed	The University Malaya Centre for Continuing Education
UMNO	United Malaya Nation Organization
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
UPSR	Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (Primary School Evaluation Test)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Writing on Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* is not something new in academia. Yet various aspects of it have been continuously discussed and debated by scholars, mainly in the fields of sociology, political science and philosophy. Muhsin, Issawi, Lacoste, Baali, Rosenthal, Simon and Rabī' are among such scholars. However, discussion of this theory in relation to the modern period, the Muslim world in particular, is yet to be discovered, or perhaps only a few scholars have tended to discuss this.

Concisely, the theory *'Aṣabiyyah* from Ibn Khaldūn's perspective can be understood as a notion or feeling among the members of a group of the principle that they share a common descent, where the most powerful sentiment is that of sharing the same blood. This notion, commonly found among the Bedouin, allows the members of the group to feel superior to others.¹ The strong sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* possessed by the Bedouin allowed them to defeat urban or sedentary people who were settled in towns and they subsequently established their own dynasties. As time passed, their sense of *'Aṣabiyya* loosened and wore thin once they had

¹ Mahmoud Dhaouadi, 'Ibn Khaldūn: The Founding Father of Eastern Sociology', *International Sociology*, 5, (1990) see <http://iss.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/5/3/319> (accessed May 19, 2009), p 325

comfortably settled down to a sedentary life and eventually another group with stronger *'Aṣabiyyah* was able to defeat them in their turn and replace their dynasty with a new one. Although this is characteristic of the Bedouin, Simon believes that it is not restricted to a nomadic group.² Hence, it is believed that it also applies to other groups in different situations including contemporary times. In another interpretation, *'Aṣabiyyah* is central to Ibn Khaldūn's concept of *Al-'Umrān*,³ a study of the development of a society encompassing all phases, starting from its beginning as a nomadic state to its establishment as an organized state of sedentary citizens, as it emerges and then declines.⁴ The concept of *Al-'Umrān* is also called the science of history. Ibn Khaldūn's initial intention to study this science was to distinguish the true from the false in historical accounts, where he found facts mixed with fictions.⁵

These interpretations are amongst the debates of scholars who wrote on Ibn Khaldūn and his theories of *'Aṣabiyyah* and *Al-'Umrān*. However, debates on his theories in relation to the modern period are still few. Hence, the question arises whether or not it is relevant to apply the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* at the present time. Scholars such as Alatas and Kayapinar have positive views and believe that there is a 'future' for this theory. In Kayapinar's words, "...Ibn Khaldūn's concept of *'aṣabiyya* seems to be a very promising tool for the future of

² Heinrich Simon, *Ibn Khaldun's Science of Human Culture*, (trans) Fuad Baali, New Delhi: Adam Publishers and Distributors, 2002, p 49

³ Dhaouadi identified Ibn Khaldūn's concept of *Al-'Umrān* as 'Ibn Khaldūn's *New Science*', see Mahmoud Dhaouadi, 'Ibn Khaldūn: The Founding Father of Eastern Sociology', *International Sociology*, 5, 1990, p 320

⁴ Mohammad Abdullah Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn: His Life and Works*, Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2007, p 88.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 87-88.

political theory.”⁶ He considers that this theory can be expanded and developed further and put into practice in comprehending and explaining contemporary politics.⁷ Meanwhile, to Alatas, Ibn Khaldūn’s works should continue to be read, examined and analyzed as “...it has a great potential applicability to areas and periods outside his own.”⁸ Hence, Nduka has produced a study on this theory in relation to the circumstances of the community in Nigeria. He is of the opinion that the theory of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ evolving from Ibn Khaldūn’s analysis of the situation of the Muslim world which had risen and then declined, could be identified as the key factor in this situation. For modern times this concept is replaced by nationalism or ethnicism.⁹ Overall, Ibn Khaldūn’s theory of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ has its place in the modern period. Nduka concludes that this theory “...‘could be’ a positive force in any united effort against exploitation, neo-slavery and war-like destructions...”¹⁰ Moreover, it could be an alternative form of social solidarity for the modern world and for the long-term future, adopted solely for the purpose of unity.¹¹

Therefore, this research deals with the practical applicability of the theory in the modern period, the Muslim world in particular, since nowadays we see the Muslim community facing many challenges and problems both from within and outside. Because dealing with the Muslim world in general entails a huge scope, the focus of discussion in this research is on the

⁶ M. Akif Kayapinar, ‘Ibn Khaldun’s concept of *Asabiyya*: An Alternative Tool for Understanding Long-term Politics?’ *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 36, (2008), p 405

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Syed Farid Alatas, ‘The Historical Sociology of Muslim Societies: Khaldūnian Applications’, *International Sociology*, 22, (2007), see <http://iss.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/22/3/267> (accessed May 19, 2009), p 270.

⁹ Ikechukwu Mike Nduka, *Al-‘Asabiyya: A conflict socio-religious factor in the modern times? Approximation of Nigeria’s “groups-in-group” syndrome*, Altenberge: Oros Verlag, 1998, p 95.

¹⁰ Ibid., p 18

¹¹ Ibid.

theory within the context of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia. Since this community is facing problems and challenges in various aspects of life, this research examines whether the theory could fit in such a context and moreover can perhaps suggest solutions and recommendations for it.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Both internal and external problems confront Muslims today. From within, come issues of injustice, corrupt governments, dictatorial regimes, weak countries and institutions, poverty, unequal distribution of wealth, moral degradation, under-development, slow progress, conflict and disunity, while among the external challenges are globalization and modernity. These challenges and problems have made it a difficult period in Muslim history, or possibly, as Wan Zakaria puts it, "...their worst state in history."¹² Although some Muslim countries are well endowed in natural resources and Muslims constitute one-fifth of the world's population, they are afflicted by "...illiteracy, poverty, unemployment and extremely difficult macro-economic imbalances".¹³ Thus, Chapra explains that there are several main factors; internal and external, which have brought Muslim civilization to a state of decay. He states:

"A number of scholars have emphasized different internal as well as external factors that led to the decline of Muslims, particularly after the twelfth century. Some of the most important of these are moral degradation, loss of dynamism in Islam after the rise of dogmatism and rigidity; decline in

¹² Wan Fariza Alyati Wan Zakaria *Future Studies in Contemporary Islamic and Western Thought: A Critical Study of the works of Ziauddin Sardar, Mahdi Elmandjra, Alvin Toffler and Daniel Bell*, A Thesis Submitted to the University of Birmingham, for the Degree of PhD, Birmingham, UK, February 2010, p 16

¹³ M. Umer Chapra, *Muslim Civilization: The Cause of Decline and the Need for Reform*, United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 2008, p 1

intellectual and scientific activity; internal revolts and disunity along with continued external invasions and warfare that ravaged and weakened the economies, created fiscal imbalances and insecurity of life and property and trade; exhaustion or loss of mines and precious metals and natural disasters, such as plague and famine, which led to a decline in the overall population and demand followed by the weakening of the economy.”¹⁴

It is not often that the problems and weaknesses of the current Muslim community are internally revealed and discussed, yet it is a situation which must inevitably be faced.

In Malaysia, the Malay Muslim community is no exception to this reasoning. Malaysia is one of the most prosperous countries in south-east Asia and has enjoyed decades of industrial growth, a peaceful environment and political stability. Yet the Malays who are mostly Muslims, 63.1% of the population,¹⁵ have to tackle such issues as under-development, poverty, worsening performance in academic, moral and social areas (mainly drug addiction among teenagers) and issues of integration and disunity. They are depicted as having less income than the Chinese who mainly live in urban areas and engage in small and medium-sized businesses or work in a number of industries. Though the poverty rate in this country has declined for the last three decades, it is reported that the poor remain concentrated in the ‘*bumiputera*’, comprising Malays and ethnic minorities.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ibid, p 2

¹⁵ Population and Housing Census Malaysia 2010, 2010 Census, see http://www.statistics.gov.my/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1215%3Apopulation-distribution-and-basic-demographic-characteristic-report-population-and-housing-census-malaysia-2010-updated-2972011&catid=130%3Apopulation-distribution-and-basic-demographic-characteristic-report-population-and-housing-census-malaysia-2010&lang=en (accessed September 13, 2011)

¹⁶ Poverty Profile Executive Summary Malaysia, Japan Bank for International Cooperation, February, 2001, see http://www.jica.go.jp/activities/issues/poverty/profile/pdf/malaysia_e.pdf (accessed June 11, 2011), p 2

Among the social and moral issues, it is reported that most of those who are having social problems are Malay teenagers, whose problems include alcohol, sexual impropriety, drug abuse, close proximity between the sexes in closed or secluded place (*khalwat*), loafing, illegal motor racing, truancy, smoking, vandalism and watching pornographic videos.¹⁷ The recent statistics released by the Malaysia National Anti-Drug Agency (Agensi AntiDadah Kebangsaan or ADK), show that from January to December 2010, Malays constituted the highest number of drug addicts in Malaysia – 18,693 people or 79.07% of the whole Malay population.¹⁸ Moreover, a study conducted by researchers from the University Putra Malaysia has reported that 300 Malay teenagers from urban and rural areas confessed to being involved in free sexual intercourse which led to cases of abortion. More alarming still, the results of this study show that nearly 85 per cent of respondents said that they had had intercourse without feeling guilty, but thought that it was ‘fun’.¹⁹ Hence, a subsequent report stated that most baby-dumping cases involved Malays. 13 out of 65 cases alleging dumping new-born babies involved Malays; they resulted in prosecution and unwanted pregnancies.²⁰

¹⁷ Mohamed Aslam Haneef, Selamah Abdullah Yusof, Ruzita Mohd. Amin and Hazizan Md. Noon, ‘Values and Their Relationship to Social Problems in Malaysia: An Islamic Framework’ see http://i-epistemology.net/attachments/689_Ajiss19-3%20-%20Haneef%20et%20al%20-%20Values%20and%20their%20Relationship%20to%20Social%20Problems%20in%20Malaysia.pdf (accessed September 19, 2011), p 69 (paper presented at the 30th Annual Conference of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, Dearborn, Michigan, October 26 to 28, 2001)

¹⁸ Agensi AntiDadah Kebangsaan Kementerian Dalam Negeri (National Anti-drug Agency, Ministry of Home Affairs), *Laporan Dadah Disember 2010*, see <http://www.adk.gov.my/web/guest/dadah-2010> (accessed September 19, 2011), p 6

¹⁹ This study was conducted among 400 respondents in the Klang Valley; for details, refer to Syuhada Choo Abdullah, ‘300 remaja Melayu salah laku seks, seks bebas’, *Berita Harian Online*, June 20, 2010, see http://www.bharian.com.my/bharian/articles/300remajaMelayusalahlakuseksual_seksbebas/Article (accessed September 19, 2011)

²⁰ Syed Mu’az Syed Putra and Radzi Razak, ‘Police say most baby-dumping cases involve Malays’, *The Malaysian Insider*, August 20, 2010, see <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/police-say-most-baby-dumping-cases-involve-malays/>

Despite, or perhaps because of these problems, this community is confronting issues from within of unity and integration, mainly in respect of politics. It is a long and ongoing dispute between the Malay parties, above all between the United Malay Nation Organization (UMNO) which is now the main party ruling the country and the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), one of the strongest opposition parties. It is believed that a crisis of integration occurred within this group, due to their contention over identifying Islam as a religion and its function within a state or government. Hence, it has brought clashes to all levels of the Malay community, even though they know that such clashes should not take place, for they will weaken and upset the society.

Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* explains that the strength of a group is based on its strong *'Aṣabiyyah*. Once the community reaches a peak of prosperity and lives in luxury, its sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* relaxes, an early signal of its decline. Hence, it could be asked if the Malay Muslims in Malaysia are experiencing a decline because of their current problems and challenges. Could their problems be solved? Could this theory propose solutions to overcome them, in particular the problem of integration? Could the theory be applied at all in the modern world in this context? The present research seeks to answer the above questions.

1.3 RATIONALE

There are several rationales for this study. First of all, this research studies the unique theory of Ibn Khaldūn's *'Aṣabiyyah* in the modern period. As Ibn Khaldūn talks of the building and demolishing of societies, many scholars agree that these principles are applicable not only to the past but also to our own age and, even the future. Yet, only recently contemporary scholars incline to study the theory in the context of modern situation which are still in small number. Therefore, the research endeavours to fill this gap by examining the theory in relation to the modern period.

Second, most of the reflections on this theory have been mainly sociological and historical. A theological exploration is quite difficult to find, except by a few scholars who have discussed the theory from the theological and religious perspective, such as Çaksu, Kayapinar, Alatas, Goodman and Gibb. Furthermore, as *'Aṣabiyyah* is a controversial term from the Islamic standpoint, the researcher would like to make clear the difference between the *'Aṣabiyyah* condemned by Islam, as mentioned by the Prophet and *'Aṣabiyyah* as meant by Ibn Khaldūn. Third, in relation to the practicality of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* in modern times, this research focuses on a case study of the majority Malay Muslim community in Malaysia. The Malays are the largest section of Malaysia's population and are mainly Muslims. Islam, came to this country perhaps in 674 A.D.²¹ and it became central to the spread of Islamic

²¹ According to Fatimi, there is a dispute over the date when Islam came to this country. The earliest contacts with Islam for this region date from 674 A.D. Islam took root first in the coastal towns starting from 874 A.D

teaching in the Malay Archipelago in the 15th century, under the kingdom of the Malacca Sultanate. However, after the decline of this kingdom, beginning in 1511, due to an invasion by Portugal and another by the Dutch in 1641, it was then colonized by the British in 1786 and later by the Japanese during the Second World War before the British took it back and granted the country its independence in 1957. Thus, the Malay Muslims were confronted with dilemmas of all kinds, despite the country's rich endowment of petroleum and other minerals. Although the country is ruled by Malay Muslims, they are not in charge of the economy. The figures on poverty have improved but the Malays are the main race affected by it. Moreover, they continue to experience conflicts and clashes, mainly of a political kind, which cause disunity. With these issues in mind, the researcher would like to examine Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* to see whether or not it is relevant in this context of Malaysia today and, if it is, to proffer some kind of solution.

and was perceived as a political power in the Malay world which led to large-scale conversions to it, from 1204 A.D. For details, see S.Q. Fatimi, *Islam comes to Malaysia*, Singapore: Malaysia Sociological Research Institute Ltd, 1963, pp 37-70.

1.4 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To critically examine Ibn Khaldūn's theory of '*Aṣabiyyah*' from his treatise in *The Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldūn* and its relation to the contemporary situation of the Malay Muslim community.
2. To critically analyze issues and problems within the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia, including the aspects of economics, politics, social affairs, education, religion and integration.
3. To investigate the perceptions of respondents regarding the problems and challenges faced by the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia in the aspects stated above via interview sessions.
4. To explore the possibility of applying the theory of '*Aṣabiyyah*' within the context of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia as a suggested step in solving the problems faced by it.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning or explanation of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*?
2. Is the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* applicable to be implemented or practiced in the modern context of Muslim community?
3. Is the theory applicable to be applied in the modern context of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia?
4. How the theory can be implemented in this context?
5. What are the problems and challenges faced by the current Malay Muslim community in Malaysia?

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The scope of this study is an examination of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* and its relationship to the current situation in a modern Muslim community. In examining the theory in detail, this research analyzes different scholars' interpretations and definitions of the term *'Aṣabiyyah* as used by Ibn Khaldūn, including his own. Furthermore, the perspective of the Qur'ān and Hadīth is also explored, to see whether or not the theory contradicts the concept of Ummah and Islamic brotherhood, on the reason of practising it in positive sense if it is in line with these Islamic concept.

In spite of focusing the situation of contemporary Muslim in general as a case study of the research, this thesis concentrates also on the situation of the Malay Muslim community in particular. This is because different Muslim communities possess different backgrounds and diverse of problems and challenges. Thus, concentration on a particular is perceived as more relevant in examining the applicability of the theory in nowadays situation. In discussing the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia as a case study in this research, the historical background of this community is examined. Since the history of this community is long and wide-ranging, its main focus is on the early Malay kingdom in the Malay Archipelago, the Sultanate of Malacca, which was established in the 15th century, from its founder, Parameswara (1400-1414 AD) to its last ruler Sultan Mahmud Shah (1488-1511 AD). This period is chosen because Malacca, during this time, had become a famous focal point for

commerce and trade, where traders from all over the world came, due to the strategic and influential seaport managed by this government. Malacca also had become the religious centre of the teaching of Islam after it embraced this faith in the early 15th century.²²

In addition, this research concentrates on the situation of the Malay Muslim community in pre-independence in Malaysia, the period of British colonization in particular. The researcher is of the opinion that the dilemmas of the Malays began then and in the conditions of post-independence, from 31st August 1957, perhaps due to period of colonization which has put the community in feeble condition and ‘occupied’ with problems such as poverty, racism, identity etc., Additionally, the problems and challenges faced by this community are also discussed, concentrating on political, economic, social and educational issues and integration.

To enhance the findings of this research, fieldwork was conducted to seek respondents’ views and knowledge in considering the practicality of Ibn Khaldūn’s theory of *‘Aṣabiyyah* at present and the problems and challenges faced by modern Malay Muslims. The University of Malaya was chosen as the locale of this research, since it is a particular place to which students come from a variety of backgrounds and different levels of society. Two kinds of students form the respondents: those who were studying Islamic and South-East Asian Civilization (Tamadun Islam dan Tamaduan Asia Tenggara or TITAS), a compulsory subject for all undergraduates; and diploma students in Usūluddin and Shariah. The first group of

²² Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1982, p 53

respondents represent the younger generation of Malay Muslims in Malaysia, while the second group stand for the working and older groups of the Malay community. The number of respondents was limited to 350.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

There are several terms which occur in this research and should be defined here.

1. *'Aṣabiyyah*

'Aṣabiyyah is an Arabic word derived from the Arabic root words, *'asab* (to bind), which means "...to bind the individuals into a group (*asabatun, usbatun, or isabatun*),"²³ and *'asabah* (union). The term "...*'aṣabīyah*' refers to a sociocultural bond which can be used to measure the strength of social groupings,"²⁴ or "...the nature of the group' or "groupdom".²⁵ *The Encyclopedia of Islam* defines the term originally as "...*'spirit of kinship*' (the *'aṣaba* are one's male relations in the male line) in a family or tribe."²⁶ Hence, The Arabic-English Lexicon identifies this term as,

²³ Fuad Baali, *Society, State and Urbanism: Ibn Khaldun's Sociological Thought*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988, p 43.

²⁴ Fuad Baali, '*Asabiyah*', in John L. Esposito, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Volume I, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p 140

²⁵ Heinrich Simon, *Ibn Khaldun's Science of Human Culture*, (trans) Fuad Baali, p 47

²⁶ F. Gabrieli, '*Aṣabiyyah*' in H.A.R. Gibb, J.H. Kramers, J. Schacht, et. al. (eds) *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Volume I, A-B., Leiden : E.J.Brill, 1986, p 681.

“The quality of him who is termed ‘aṣabiyyu (عَصَبِيٌّ) : i.e., of him who aids his people, or party, against hostile conduct: or of him who is angry, or zealous, for the sake of his party and defends them: or of him who invites others to the aid of his party and to combine, or league, with them against those who act towards them with hostility, whether they be wrongdoers or wronged: or of him who leagues with others: or of him who defends others; or partisanship; party-spirit; or zeal in the cause of a party: or...a strong attachment, which holds several persons closely united by the same interest or the same opinion...”²⁷

In the *Lisan al-Arab*, the term ‘Aṣabiyyah refers to “...the desire of an individual to help his people or group and for this group to be steadfast together against those who are hostile towards them, whether they are wrongdoers or wronged.”²⁸

This term is perceived as a negative type of conduct in Islam, because it signifies an act practised mainly by Arabs during a period of ignorance (*jahillyah*), which is contrary to the spirit of Islam and condemned by the Prophet. Yet from Ibn Khaldūn’s perspective it was meant to have a positive connotation in explaining his theory of ‘Aṣabiyyah and *Al-‘Umrān*. Thus, there are no exact or equivalent terms in English to translate it. Hence, contemporary scholars translate the term into English in various ways (as defined by Ibn Khaldūn), such as ‘group spirit’, ‘esprit de corps’, ‘social solidarity’, ‘tribal partisanship’, and so on.

In Ibn Khaldūn’s explanation, ‘Aṣabiyyah is one of the crucial elements influencing the rise and fall of a group or community. This sense which is based on blood ties and on having or sharing similar interests, became a force for a group to stay together and fight other groups

²⁷ E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* Volume Two. Cambridge: Islamic Text Society Trust, 1984, p 2059

²⁸ Muhammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab* Mujallad 1. Bayrut, Lubnan: Dar al-Sadr, 1997, p 202

which threatened to weaken *'Aṣabiyyah*. Additional elements of the religious spirit, which in his view was able to free the group members from jealousy, make the group stronger. However, once the group reaches its peak and its members can live in comfort and luxury, the sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* weakens and brings the group to a decline. Though not all communities experience the same sequence, excessive luxury brings about their decline and then they are replaced by a new governing entity or group which possesses stronger *'Aṣabiyyah*.

2. *Al-'Umrān*

The term *Al-'Umrān* originated from the words *'amara* and *'amura* which means "...a land, or house, inhabited, peopled, well peopled, well stocked with people and the like, in the flourishing state, in a state the contrary of desolate or waste, ruined..."²⁹ It also has the meaning of *bunyān* which means "a building, a structure, an edifice" or perhaps the act of building."³⁰ Meanwhile the terminology of *umrāni* has the meaning of "cultural, civilization, serving or pertaining to ... cultural development."³¹ Hence, it relates to the development of a society or civilization. The term also can be translated as 'civilization'.³²

In this thesis, the term *Al-'Umrān* refers to the terminology applied by Ibn Khaldūn in his writing, *the Muqaddimah*, to explain the science of history, which is *'ilm Al-'Umrān*. *'Ilm Al-*

²⁹ Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* Part 5, Lebanon: Librairie Du Liban, 1968, pp 2155-2166.

³⁰ Ibid, p 2156

³¹ Cowan J. Milton, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic (Arabic-English)*, London: Macdonald and Evans Ltd, 1974, p 643.

³² Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal. *An Introduction to History*, Volume 1, New York: Princeton University Press, 1958, p lxxvi.

'Umrān or the theory of *al-'umrān* can be defined as sociology,³³ the philosophy of history, social philosophy or the science of civilization.³⁴ Ibn Khaldūn also sees this theory as *'Ilm Al-Ijtimā' Al-Basharī* (the science of human social organization) or *'Ilm Al-Ijtimā' Al-Insānī* (the science of human society). The concept of *Al-'Umrān* is used mainly in or about studies on the development of a society in all its phases, moving from its beginnings as a nomadic state to its establishment as an organized state in sedentary life, together with its emergence and decline.³⁵ Ibn Khaldūn's initial intention in studying this science, as noted above, is to distinguish truth from the falsehoods with which it is mixed in historical accounts. By studying "...the state and characteristics of society, the elements it is composed of, its organization from the individual to the state and the circumstances and conditions encountered by these elements in their private and public life, the requirements of the safety of society and the symptoms of its decline,"³⁶ he could identify trustworthy facts or study the history more accurately. According to Alatas, Ibn Khaldūn uncovered the inner meaning or *'batin'* of history.³⁷

³³ M.A. Enan, *Ibn Khaldun: His Life and Work*, New Delhi: Kitāb Bhavan, 1984, p 135

³⁴ Mahmoud Dhaouadi, 'Ibn Khaldūn: The Founding Father of Eastern Sociology', *International Sociology*, p 321. There is a debate among modern scholars regarding the definition of *'ilm al-umran* propounded by Ibn Khaldun. For details, see Mahmoud Dhaouadi, 'Ibn Khaldūn: The Founding Father of Eastern Sociology', pp 321-322.

³⁵ Mohammad Abdullah Enan, *Ibn Khaldūn: His Life and Works*, p 88

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Syed Farid Alatas, 'The Historical Sociology of Muslim Societies: Khaldūnian Applications', p 269.

3. 'Orang Asli'

'Orang Asli' literally means 'natural people'³⁸ in Malay and refers to the rural and minority indigenous people who inhabit the Malay Peninsula.³⁹ According to Gomes, this term is used to replace the term 'aborigines' applied by the British administration during the period of colonization.⁴⁰ The early ancestors of this group settled in the peninsular before the establishment of the Malay Sultanate in the 15th century.⁴¹ The 'Orang Asli' consists of three main groups: the Negrito, the Senoi and the Proto-Malay,⁴² along with several distinct tribes or sub-groups within each main group⁴³ and there are perhaps around eighteen or nineteen linguistic subgroups.⁴⁴ In 2003, there were 147,412 'Orang Asli' in Malaysia, forming 0.6% of the whole Malaysia population (26.5 million).⁴⁵

³⁸ It also denotes the Original or First People in the Malay Peninsula. Nowadays, they are referred to by a variety of terms, such as 'Orang Hulu', 'Orang Darat', etc. For details, see Colin Nicholas, 'Origins, Identity and Classification'. *Center for Orang Asli Concerns*, see http://www.coac.org.my/codenavia/portals/coacv2/code/main/main_art.php?parentID=11497609537883&artID=11533782664236 (accessed February 16, 2011)

³⁹ Alberto G. Gomes, 'The Orang Asli of Malaysia'. *International Institute for Asian Studies*, see http://www.ias.nl/nl/35/IIAS_NL35_10.pdf. (accessed February 16, 2011).

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Colin Nicholas, 'Origins, Identity and Classification', *Center for Orang Asli Concerns* and Essex Malaysian Society Conference 2008, 'The Status of Indigenous Peoples in the 21st century: The Orang Asli of Peninsular Malaysia', Saturday, February 9, 2008, see http://markusngchungyau.tripod.com/EMSC_08_booklet.pdf (accessed February 17, 2011), p 13

⁴² Also known as Aboriginal Malays (Colin Nicholas, 'Origins, Identity and Classification', *Center for Orang Asli Concerns*)

⁴³ Essex Malaysian Society Conference 2008, 'The Status of Indigenous Peoples in the 21st century : The Orang Asli of Peninsular Malaysia', p 13

⁴⁴ Alberto G. Gomes, 'The Orang Asli of Malaysia', *International Institute for Asian Studies* and Colin Nicholas, 'Origins, Identity and Classification', *Center for Orang Asli Concerns*.

⁴⁵ Essex Malaysian Society Conference 2008, 'The Status of Indigenous Peoples in the 21st century : The Orang Asli of Peninsular Malaysia', p 13

4. 'Bumiputera'

'Bumiputera' means 'princes or sons of the soil'.⁴⁶ Basically, it refers to the indigenous groups in Sabah and Sarawak who are not regarded as Malays,⁴⁷ but who like them are granted special rights. The Malays are also classified as 'bumiputera'. Among the indigenous groups in Sabah are Kadazan/Dusuns, Bajaus, Indonesians and Muruts, while the indigenous communities in Sarawak are Ibans, Christian Bidayus and the Melanaus.⁴⁸ However, the Constitution of Malaysia in article 153 does not use the term 'bumiputera' to describe these groups. It refers to "...the Malays and natives of any of the States of Sabah and Sarawak..."⁴⁹ The 'bumiputera' have been given special rights and privileges, as stated in the Constitution of Malaysia, article 153. This includes holding positions in public service, obtaining "...scholarships, exhibitions and other similar educational or training privileges or special facilities given or accorded by the Federal Government..."⁵⁰ and obtaining a permit or license to operate a trade or business that is required by the federal law.⁵¹ These special rights or privileges are under the safeguard of the King of Malaysia, known in the Malay language as 'Yang di-Pertuan Agong'.⁵²

⁴⁶ Judith A. Nagata, 'Why is a Malay? Situational Selection of Ethnic Identity in a Plural Society, *American Ethnologist*, Vol.1, No. 2, May, 1974, see <http://www.jstor.org/stable/643553> (accessed June 12, 2009) p 334

⁴⁷ Richard Leete, *Malaysia: From Kampung to Twin Tower: 50 Years of Economic and Social Development*, Selangor: Oxford Fajar Bakti Sdn Bhd, 2007, p 25

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Constitution of Malaysia, see <http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/malaysia.pdf> (accessed February 20, 2011), p 123.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p 124

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² 'Yang di-Pertuan Agong' is the head of state of Malaysia. Literally it could be translated into English as 'He Who Is Made Lord'. For further detail, please refer to, 'Malaysia's new king takes office' BBC News, see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/6594325.stm> (accessed February 25, 2011).

5. 'Masuk Melayu'

'*Masuk Melayu*' literally means 'to enter Malay' or become Malay. It is a common saying in the Malay language within the Malaysian environment that those who are converted to Islam likewise become Malays or achieve Malay ethnicity or enter the Malay community.⁵³ This saying became common, perhaps due to the strong identification of the Malay groups with Islam. It is believed that these terms are used because of the firm identity of Malays as true believers and because their racial identity is reinforced by Islamic attitudes to true Islamic identity.⁵⁴

6. 'Adat'

The term '*adat*' is derived from the Arabic language term '*ādah*, which refers to the customary law of the native people of Malaysia and Indonesia.⁵⁵ It is an "...unwritten, traditional code..." covering all aspects of life or personal conduct from birth to death.⁵⁶ In Malay, '*adat*' is usually understood "...to cover all aspects of Malay culture and social life, from style of dress and housing to rules of etiquette and social interaction."⁵⁷ It also covers

⁵³ Ronald Provencher, "Malays" in Richard V. Weekes, (ed), *Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey*, London: Aldwych Press, 1984, p 478

⁵⁴ Gordon P. Means. *Malaysian Politics*, New York: New York University Press, 1970, p 17.

⁵⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online.* see <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/5336/adat> (accessed March 1, 2011).

⁵⁶ *Ibid*

⁵⁷ Judith A. Nagata, 'Why is a Malay? Situational Selection of Ethnic Identity in a Plural Society', p 335

major rites of passage, such as ceremonies relating to birth, engagement and marriage, as well as death. It is believed that some of the major ceremonies mentioned originate from Hinduism, although most Malays are Muslim.⁵⁸

7. 'Kaum Muda'

'Kaum Muda' refers to the reformist or modernist group which emerged in Malaysia in the early 20th century. Literally, it means the 'Young Group'⁵⁹ or 'Younger Faction'⁶⁰. This group has become known through the influence of the revivalist and Islamic reformist ideas from Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muhammad 'Abduh, which emerged in the Middle East in the late 19th century. The founders and leaders of the Malay reformist movement were Shaykh Tahir Jalal al-Din and Sayyid Shaykh b. Ahmad al-Hadi. Their criticism regarding the social backwardness of Malay society during this period and propagation of the ideas of reformation and resurgence by establishing Islamic schools 'madrasah' with a new curriculum was resisted by the traditional religious group known as 'Kaum Tua'. However, it is thought that the nationalist awareness which led to fighting the British colonists owes much to this reformist movement.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Ibid and Richard Winstedt, *The Malays: A Cultural History*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1947, pp 27-30.

⁵⁹ M. Kamal Hasan, 'Malaysia' in John. L. Esposito (ed), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islam World*, Volume 3, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p 36.

⁶⁰ L.Y. Andaya, 'Malay Peninsula' in C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Danzel, B. Lewis and Ch. Pellat (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Islam, Volume VI MAHK-MID*, Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1991, p 237.

⁶¹ M. Kamal Hasan, 'Malaysia' in John. L. Esposito (ed), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islam World*, p 36.

8. 'Kaum Tua'

'Kaum Tua' is the traditional or conservative group in Malaya opposed to the new ideas of the reformist 'Kaum Muda' who emerged in Malaya in the 20th century. The name of this group can be translated as 'the Old Group' or 'Older Faction'.⁶² This group regarded the ideas of 'Kaum Muda' as an unlawful innovation (*bid'ah*) and went on to label this young group of reformists 'communists' and 'deviants' and boycott their prayers, wedding and other ceremonies.⁶³ In retaliation, the 'Kaum Muda' condemned the 'Kaum Tua' for its traditional thinking, which it saw as the detrimental to Islam and a barrier to Malay progress, preventing the development of a Malay community and also preventing other races within the country from competing with each other.⁶⁴ In other words, they were the 'hawkers of religion'.⁶⁵ In the *Police Magazine*, this conflict was described as follows: "...there was hardly a village in Malaya where the Malays do not argue and discuss the teachings of the 'Kaum Muda'.⁶⁶ Hence, there was a long and deep conflict between these two groups.

⁶² L.Y.Andaya, 'Malay Peninsula' in *The Encyclopedia of Islam, Volume VI MAHK-MID*, p 36.

⁶³ Hussin Mutalib, *Islam in Malaysia: From Revivalism to Islamic State*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1993, p 23

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p 9

⁶⁵ Hussin Mutalib, *Islam in Malaysia: From Revivalism to Islamic State*, p 23

⁶⁶ Haji Abdul Majid bin Haji Zainuddin, 'The Malayan Kaleidoscope', *Police Magazine*, 1935 cited in William R.Roff, 'Kaum Muda-Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction amongst the Malays, 1900-41', in Ahmad Ibrahim, Sharon Siddique and Yasmin Hussain, *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985, p127.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.8.1 Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*

The theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* as proposed by Ibn Khaldūn has from different perspectives been discussed at length in the existing literature. Many scholars have discussed the theory within the area of the theory itself, but few of them are inclined to debate the issue in relation to contemporary affairs.

The writings of Mahdi (1957), Rosenthal (1958), Issawi (1950), Rabī' (1967), Baali (1988), Dhaouadi (1990), Simon (2002) discuss and interpret what Ibn Khaldūn meant by the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*. Initially, scholars such as Baali, Simon and Dhaouadi held the view that what Ibn Khaldūn meant by the term is difficult to translate and define, because he himself did not define it clearly, or perhaps in Baali's explanation, because Ibn Khaldūn did not see any requirement to define it since it was quite a familiar term to his contemporaries.⁶⁷ Hence, Simon (2002), Baali (1988) and Rabī' (1967) advise that, to preserve its meaning, the term should be left in Arabic without a translation. However, Simon also believes that even though Ritter's definition of *'Aṣabiyyah* as "solidarity" is the nearest equivalent to Ibn Khaldūn's sense of *'Aṣabiyyah*, it does not mean exactly the same.⁶⁸ He asserts that "... 'solidarity' is on

⁶⁷ Fuad Baali, *Society, State and Urbanism : Ibn Khaldun's Sociological Thought*, p 43

⁶⁸ Heinrich Simon, *Ibn Khaldun's Science of Human Culture*, (trans) Fuad Baali, p 51

a higher level of abstraction than ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’, which distinguishes between ‘solidarity’ and the meaning of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ intended by Ibn Khaldūn.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, Rabī’ (1967) and Dhaouadi (1990) point out that there are writers who are inclined to translate it by such phrases as the “sense of solidarity”, “group feeling”, “group loyalty” and “esprit de corps”.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, Rosenthal in his translation of *The Muqaddimah* explains that the term ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ traditionally meant ‘bias’, or precisely, “...blind support of one’s group without regard for the justice of its cause”.⁷¹ It is recognized as a primitive and pre-Islamic way for people to survive when beset by hardship, but this kind of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ is condemned by Islam. However, Rosenthal confirms that Ibn Khaldūn was fully aware of the common usage of this term. He clarifies that Ibn Khaldūn distinguishes between “...an objectionable pagan ‘*aṣabiyyah*’ and “the natural ‘*aṣabiyyah*’ that is inseparable from (human beings).”⁷² Of these two kinds of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’, the latter means “...the affection a man feels for a brother or a neighbour when one of them is treated unjustly or killed”, which is not forbidden in Islam, but rather required and useful, in particular in propagating Islamic teachings.⁷³ Thus, to Rosenthal, Ibn Khaldūn used the term in a very positive sense throughout his treatise *The Muqaddimah*. He elucidates further that ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ is based primarily on common descent, i.e. among relatives, where people feel intimately allied. Still, it can also be shared with those who do not have a

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Muhammad Mahmoud Rabī’. *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldūn*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967, p 49 and Mahmoud Dhaouadi, ‘Ibn Khaldūn: The Founding Father of Eastern Sociology’, *International Sociology*, p 325

⁷¹ Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal. *An Introduction to History*, p lxxviii

⁷² Ibid., p lxxviii-lxxix

⁷³ Ibid., p lxxix

blood relationship, "...by long and close contact as members of a group."⁷⁴ Thus, those who possess stronger *'Aṣabiyyah* will prevail over other groups and at the same time gain leadership within their own groups. Subsequently, the group may succeed in establishing a dynasty and 'winning *mulk*' 'royal authority', which is claimed by Ibn Khaldūn as the aim of *'Aṣabiyyah*. Generally, Rosenthal's explanations of the theory are restricted to his introduction, as translator, to *The Muqaddimah*, this being the purpose of his writing. However, the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* is explained in full and comprehensive details that readers can understand the theory. The rest of the introduction focuses on the life of Ibn Khaldūn and the textual history and translation of *The Muqaddimah*.

Rabī' agrees with Rosenthal that the term *'Aṣabiyyah* was been used positively by Ibn Khaldūn in his theory. He explains that Ibn Khaldūn "...tried, for the sake of his theoretical reasoning and later rationalizations, to approach it from another point of view in an effort to explore mutual grounds on which Islamic principles and *'aṣabiyya* can meet."⁷⁵ Moreover, having discussed the theory in depth in his writing on Ibn Khaldūn's political theory, he agrees with Issawi and Mahdi that *'Aṣabiyyah* emerged mainly from the hardship faced by a nomadic people, which forced them to unite and cohere as a group.⁷⁶ However, he states that strong *'Aṣabiyyah* within a particular group is not wholly based on blood ties, though these are the basis of its emergence. The leadership qualities of individuals count among the factors creating *'Aṣabiyyah* within the group. Hence, *'Aṣabiyyah* is not racism, in the view of Ibn

⁷⁴ Ibid., p lxxviii

⁷⁵ Muhammad Mahmoud Rabī'. *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldūn*, p 49

⁷⁶ Ibid., p 51

Khaldūn, but is demonstrated by qualities of leadership.⁷⁷ These arguments show that ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ does not refer to tribalism alone but must also meet the criteria of good leadership.

Furthermore, Rabī’ points out that the sense of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ found in Ibn Khaldūn is an outcome of similar factors, consisting of material and spiritual elements. Material factors are such things as experiencing hardship and spiritual factors, i.e., the influence of elements of religion, are believed to be preconditions “...to the phenomenon of ‘*aṣabiyya*.’”⁷⁸ Unlike Rosenthal, Rabī’ goes deeply into the debate on the theory, looking at several topics, such as the relationship between consent and obedience to the controlling power (the leader of which is the leader of the ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’) and the role of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ as a political and social force and moral value. This explanation gives a clearer view and deeper understanding of the theory. However, he specifically discusses the theory of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’, without extending the discourse to the situation of Islam in today’s world, since the aim of his writing is to explore the political principles constructed by Ibn Khaldūn on the basis of the *Muqaddimah*. Though the present research has other aims, Rabī’’s analysis of the theory provides a foundation for the researcher to further examine explanations of the theory and fulfil the objective outlined above.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p 58

⁷⁸ Ibid

Lacoste, for his part, criticizes most of the translation of *'Aṣabiyyah* proposed by authors because they do not fit the term *'Aṣabiyyah* as Ibn Khaldūn intended it., being either too specific or too general.⁷⁹ He argues that nearly "...everyone who has written on Ibn Khaldūn has his own interpretation of *'asabiya*."⁸⁰ For example, he criticizes the use of the term 'social solidarity' in defining the *'Aṣabiyyah* in a general sense, because it misses the element of "...tribal nature [in] the phenomenon"⁸¹ and the essential functions of ruler or chief who ruled the tribe. This is perhaps due to his claim that *'Aṣabiyyah* is inseparable from the phenomenon of tribalism.⁸² Therefore, to him, this theory is a complex notion, needing careful study and yet most authors who have written on Ibn Khaldūn have not examined the concept in much detail.⁸³ However, Lacoste himself does not conclude what might be the best interpretation of the term or bring out his own suggestions. Perhaps leaving it as an Arabic term is for him the best approach. Further, he is demanding a simplistic look at the concept. It seems it is he rather who does not appreciate the complexity of it. The other casting a wider eye over the concept in their discourse seems to be closer to exactly what he is asking for.

In explaining the theory further, Issawi (1950) and Mahdi (1957) are among those who discuss the theory as part of their noteworthy discussion on Ibn Khaldūn and his study of history. Issawi, in his work; *Ibn Khaldūn: An Arab Philosophy of History* defines *'Aṣabiyyah* as social solidarity (despite other scholars' finding no appropriate word to translate this term)

⁷⁹ Yves Lacoste, *Ibn Khaldūn: The Birth of History and The Past of the Third World*. London: Verso Editions, 1984, p 102-103

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p 100.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p 101

⁸² *Ibid*

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p 100

and the core of Ibn Khaldūn's political theory. Because establishing a society is a natural human desire and requisite, men look for others to help them defend themselves and obtain their basic daily needs. Sustaining life is impossible without support from other individuals. This kind of sense or spirit is recognized as *'Aṣabiyyah*. Hence, Issawi claims that *'Aṣabiyyah* or social solidarity is strongest within a nomadic tribal society because in facing "...the peculiar mode of living of nomads," this has continual mutual needs⁸⁴ In addition, Issawi agrees with Rosenthal and Rabi that blood ties are the origin of the *'Aṣabiyyah* traced by Ibn Khaldūn which bonds smaller societies together. However, this kind of kinship is meaningless unless it is followed by living closely together and sharing a common life.⁸⁵ Issawi, Mahdi, in his discussion on Ibn Khaldūn's philosophy of history, points out that *'Aṣabiyyah* or solidarity emerged from the simple life in primitive culture.⁸⁶ The rise of the spirit of *'Aṣabiyyah* within particular groups was influenced by nomadic people's natural desire to protect the whole community and defend themselves from any dangers from which they were not protected by any formal organization or institution. Hardship made them courageous and assertive and led them closer to virtuous living than those who live in cities. The simplest form of *'Aṣabiyyah* or social solidarity is held by such a group, as Ibn Khaldūn explains in his study of the origin and nature of the communal ethos or social solidarity.⁸⁷

Furthermore, based on Ibn Khaldūn's explanation, Issawi states that to establish a kingdom or possess sovereignty is the aim of a group with strong *'Aṣabiyyah*, since a state can be

⁸⁴ Charles Issawi, *An Arab Philosophy of History: Selections from the Prolegomena of Ibn Khaldun of Tunis (1332-1406)*, Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1992, p 11

⁸⁵ Ibid., p 10

⁸⁶ Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History*. London : George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1957, p 195

⁸⁷ Ibid., p 196

established only through quarrels and fighting between two or more groups to see whose *'Aṣabiyyah* is the stronger. Subsequently, notions of religion arise to strengthen the sense of *'Aṣabiyyah*, thereby maintaining the state as religion gathers "...men's will and emotions around a common purpose."⁸⁸ In other words, religion seems to be the strongest element in 'cementing' the notion of *'Aṣabiyyah*. On this point, Mahdi agrees with Issawi, highlighting the fact that, in addition to natural solidarity, religion acts as a further and effective force in establishing a great civilization. Once a religion is supported and accepted by the group, it will create a "...a new loyalty, absolute belief in and obedience to, the demands of the Law and the religious leader."⁸⁹ Religion removes the feelings of jealousy and envy and controls its followers from corrupt and unjust acts. It commands its followers to yield to their superiors and implements divine Law in order to control their political life.⁹⁰

Like Rosenthal, Issawi limits his discussion on the theory to the section introducing Ibn Khaldūn's text. Issawi's purpose is to introduce the work not to a 'specialized Arabic scholar' but to English readers who may not be familiar with it or its author, After Issawi's introduction, the remaining chapters are from Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddimah*, categorized in sections under modern headings, such as geography, economics or public finance, which are obviously not found in the original text. Though his explanation of the theory is limited, he highlights crucial points to make readers more familiar with the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*.

⁸⁸ Charles Issawi, *An Arab Philosophy of History: Selections from the Prolegomena of Ibn Khaldun of Tunis (1332-1406)*, p 11

⁸⁹ Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History*, p 201

⁹⁰ Ibid

Mahdi too does not discuss the theory in depth, because the focus of his writing is to analyse as a whole the foundation and principles of Ibn Khaldūn's new science of culture, not limited to the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*. To Mahdi, a comprehensive study is essential to understanding Ibn Khaldūn's works; this cannot be accomplished by simply abridging and summarizing it. Therefore, Mahdi's writing is based on the text of Ibn Khaldūn alone, since his objective is to clarify what Ibn Khaldūn describes and the way that he does so, without further explaining the underlying meaning. This includes the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*, which is extracted from *The Muqaddimah*, as set out by Ibn Khaldūn. He explains it in simple words, straightforward to understand, which present the theory clearly.

1.8.2 Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* and the contemporary situation

Recently, contemporary scholars have been more inclined to write on Ibn Khaldūn's philosophy of history in relation to the present time, though only a small number have yet done so. Alatas, Kayapinar, Chapra and Akbar are among those who view the theory from this perspective.

Chapra (2008) in his book *Muslim Civilization: The cause of decline and the need for reform*, believes that the factors which brought about the rise of Islam and its historical decline are closely connected to what is happening today and even in the future. He states that Ibn

Khaldūn, "...was of the view that the future resembles the past just as water resembles water."⁹¹ Hence, he comes out with a Khaldūnian model, where each element within the model is inter-related to each other. This consists of the sovereign or political authority (G), beliefs and rules of behaviour or the Sharī‘ah (S), people (N), wealth or stock of resources (W), development (G) and justice (J).⁹² Throughout this model, *‘Aṣabiyyah*, as propounded by Ibn Khaldūn, is found in connection with justice, in those societies where it leads to the development and strengthening of *‘Aṣabiyyah*. In spite of criticism that this Khaldūnian model is not ‘up-to-date’ enough to be applied at present, Chapra is confident that this theory is very useful and informative in analyzing the rise and fall of Muslim society and civilization. Since Chapra’s writing focuses on the Khaldūnian theory of the development of society as a whole, he has little to say about the significance of *‘Aṣabiyyah* for Ibn Khaldūn. Though Ibn Khaldūn’s theory of *‘Aṣabiyyah* is not the main focus of this writing, an overall discussion of the Khaldūnian theory is inescapable as a prerequisite to a deeper understanding of the theory of *‘Aṣabiyyah*. Moreover, his discussion on the Khaldūnian theory in relation to the modern times suggests that there is a positive future for this theory including the theory of *‘Aṣabiyyah* in practical terms in our own day.

Akbar Ahmed also discusses the contemporary situation of Muslims and suggests ways to solve the problems which they face by referring to the theory of *‘Aṣabiyyah*. He points out in his article that Muslim societies nowadays are becoming weaker and no longer providing

⁹¹ M. Umer Chapra, *Muslim Civilization: The cause of decline and the need for reform*, p 11

⁹² *Ibid.*, p 18

'*Aṣabiyyah*, which has led to the decline of Islamic civilization.⁹³ '*Aṣabiyyah* among Muslims has collapsed for many reasons, such as the wider gap between the rich and poor, mismanagement and corruption among the rulers, great urbanization and the crisis of identity. To his mind, this strikes especially hard in the large Muslim populations which are still 'young', mostly illiterate and jobless and consequently equipped simply for radical change or transformation.⁹⁴ However, Ahmed comes to quite unclear conclusion and makes no suggestion how Muslims should deal with this problematic situation, according to Ibn Khaldūn's concept of civilization and the theory of '*Aṣabiyyah*. Moreover, he even questions whether the Khaldūnian theory of '*Aṣabiyyah* can be implemented in non-Muslim populations and the current Muslim society, when the cycle of development no longer occurs as it did in the past.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, he does suggest the means for finding a solution to this issue: to continue to encourage dialogue between and across religions which are that commanded to understand other civilizations by endeavouring to recognize "...the world we live in and the way it is forming."⁹⁶ Hence, Ahmed's arguments on this subject seem contradictory. On the one hand, he believes that Ibn Khaldūn's theory of '*Aṣabiyyah* could be the remedy to the difficult situations encountered by current Muslim societies, and, moreover, suggests finding alternative terms to "human civilization" as propounded by Ibn Khaldūn.⁹⁷ On the other hand, he questions the practicality of the theory in the modern period. The question he raises points to a gap to be filled in, which is one of the attempts of the present research.

⁹³ Akbar Ahmed. 'Ibn Khaldun's Understanding of Civilization and the Dilemmas of Islam and the West Today' *Middle East Journal*, 56 (1), 2002, p 31

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p 43

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p 44

⁹⁷ Akbar Ahmed, 45

Meanwhile, Kayapinar in his article title, “Ibn Khaldūn’s concept of *Asabiyya*: An Alternative Tool for Understanding Long-Term Politics?”, highlights that Ibn Khaldūn’s concept of ‘*Aṣabiyya* is likely to be a very capable tool for the future of political theory,⁹⁸ due to the crisis of the modern political theory, i.e. the crisis of liberal democracy which is a staple of the Western political thought and practice.⁹⁹ From his point of view, this ideology has failed to tackle issues felt in people’s daily lives and widespread socio-economic injustices. Despite lacking all this, Ibn Khaldūn’s theory of ‘*Aṣabiyyah* cannot only play a role as a comprehensive philosophical or theoretical paradigm, but can also offer an alternative way of thinking which makes up for the weaknesses of liberal democratic ideology and may even replace it. It also talks about building a state and enhancing politics without forgetting the moral aspect. Hence, Kayapinar assures us that it can be developed further as a “...practical tool in understanding and explaining contemporary politics.”¹⁰⁰ To him, this theory can be practically applied “...at the sub-state, inter-state and supra-state (civilizational) levels.”¹⁰¹ Kayapinar’s explanation of this point is limited to the last chapter of his writing, despite the highlighted promise of his title. Instead of explaining the topic further, he leaves it for future studies. This is possibly due to the main focus of his writing, which is to examine “...the nature and genesis of *asabiyya* as a technical term developed cumulatively throughout the *Muqaddimah*,”¹⁰² instead of discussing the theory as an alternative tool in understanding long-term politics in detail. Yet, Kayapinar is clearly among the scholars who view the relevance and practical applicability of the theory to the modern world in a positive light.

⁹⁸ M. Akif Kayapinar, ‘Ibn Khaldun’s concept of *Asabiyya*: An Alternative Tools for Understanding Long-Term Politics?’, p 405

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p 402.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p 405

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p 375

Nduka is one of the researchers who deal with this subject by studying the theory within the context of the community in Nigeria at the present time. Initially, he maintains that nationalism or ethnicism could be a substitution for *'Aṣabiyyah* with both positive and negative connotations and meanings. In this respect, Lacoste had argued that substituting the term 'nationalism' to define *'Aṣabiyyah* is inappropriate. This kind of term, including such other linked concepts as 'patriotism', 'national awareness' and 'national feeling', he finds inaccurate and out-dated, besides being too general and too modern to stand for *'Aṣabiyyah*, which is associated with the context of North Africa where 'real nations' and tribal structures still exist.¹⁰³

Moreover, Lacoste declares that *'Aṣabiyyah*, according to Ibn Khaldūn, is restricted and specific to North Africa; he did not perceive *'Aṣabiyyah* as a general notion or as a foundation which apply to all governments in all societies.¹⁰⁴ He also rejects any attempts to adapt the theory to all times and places, for this, to his mind, disregards the crucial "...specific historical context within..." marked by Ibn Khaldūn.¹⁰⁵ From Lacoste's point of view, this is based on Ibn Khaldūn's claim that *'Aṣabiyyah* does not exist in all parts of the Muslim world, or even all parts which are strong and stable.¹⁰⁶ Thus, it can be presumed that he does not see any practicality for the theory in the modern period.

¹⁰³ Yves Lacoste, Ibn Khaldūn: *The Birth of History and The Past of the Third World*, p 101

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p 103

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 104

Furthermore, Nduka in his research looks for possible solutions by reflecting on the contribution of Ibn Khaldūn's thought in creating an idea of the "...peaceful co-existence of the different tribes and obviously ... the different religions and *'Aṣabiyyah* in a dynamic society, especially in the case of Nigeria."¹⁰⁷ The main focus of his research is on the socio-religious problems in Nigeria, mainly between the Muslims and the Christians. He comes out with conclusions that *'Aṣabiyyah* within an ethnic group (ethnic solidarity) is not suitable for the context of Nigeria, but could be applied to *'Aṣabiyyah* as a possession of religions.¹⁰⁸ He claims that this kind of *'Aṣabiyyah* can be 'activated' and "...[cemented]... with the common experience of struggle to change and pursue unity of purpose."¹⁰⁹ Hence, by attempting to preserve the 'fragile unity' of communities in Nigeria and working out how to promote peace, justice and welfare, Nduka believes that these communities can live in a "...unity of the religious and the political...", despite the group-solidarity conflicts which regularly occur in Nigeria.¹¹⁰

Nduka discusses this subject thoroughly and in depth, presenting it at length. It is sometimes difficult to work out in the discussion what his point is. It would have been better to set out more concisely without a loss of precision, directing the reader to the points which he wants to highlight. However, Nduka's work persuades us that there is a 'future' for *Aṣabiyyah*. He states that Ibn Khaldūn's works help us to grasp modern history, remedy the lack of certain historical and religious information and understand further the politico-economic side of

¹⁰⁷ Ikechukwu Mike Nduka, *Al- 'Asabiyya: A conflict socio-religious factor in the modern times? Approximation of Nigeria's "groups-in-group" syndrome*, p 18

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p 386

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 386-387

social interactions and modern sectarian or partisan religious conflicts.¹¹¹ This attempt is unprecedented. Nduka stresses that it “...entails searching primarily for the roots and cause of such conflicts by reflecting on past events that often shape and determine contemporary events.”¹¹²

His focus on *Aṣabiyyah* as a conflicting socio-religious factor in modern times within the context of Nigeria gives us a ‘clue’ that this theory can be examined and looked at from similar or different perspectives, in different contexts, such as Malaysia. Now that Nduka has undertaken this kind of research, it persuades the researcher more than ever that the study of this theory within the context of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia is possible and relevant.

1.8.3 Historical background and dilemmas of the Malay Muslim community

There is a great deal of literature to be found regarding the issue of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia and its historical background. Dartford (1957), Moorhead (1958) and Andaya and Andaya (1982), for example, have discussed the historical background of the Malay community, with a focus on the Malacca Sultanate in the 15th century. Dartford’s *The*

¹¹¹ Ibid., p 331

¹¹² Ibid

Short History of Malaya”, is quite brief yet precise and clear regarding the history of the Malacca Sultanate, in accord with its aim to simplify the history of Malaya in uncomplicated language. He mentions that the emergence of the Sultanate of Malacca in the Malay Archipelago represented the first and great development of the Malay centre during the 15th century.¹¹³ Furthermore, the development and achievement of the Sultanate of Malacca, including the Malacca government had a close relationship with the introduction of Islam to the Malay Archipelago. As a result, Malacca became a great empire whose system of administration was influenced by the teachings of Islam.

In the work by Andaya and Andaya, Malacca is described as “...a great success and considered as an inspiration and source of strength to ...later empires.”¹¹⁴ The success of Malacca was due to its systematic administration. It was also well-known as a great entrepôt, equipped with facilities for the merchants to store their goods. In addition, the Malay language was widely spoken by traders from different countries.¹¹⁵ As Dartford mentions, the organized administration of Malacca became an example for later Malay governments.¹¹⁶ In addition, the spread of Islamic teachings in Malacca had a great impact on the administration of the Sultanate of Malacca and the Malay culture.

¹¹³ G.P. Dartford, *A Short History of Malaya*, p 17

¹¹⁴ Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya. *A History of Malaysia*, p 37

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p 54.

¹¹⁶ G.P. Dartford. *A Short History of Malaya*, p 24

Though discussion on the Sultanate of Malacca is not covered in the whole book but features merely in a chapter, Andaya and Andaya discuss this subject in detail, pointing out the Malacca system of governance, its role as the seaport and centre of Islamic teaching, its territorial expansion and the reasons for its success. The writers fairly evaluate the success of this kingdom, also admitting that the situation of Malaysia today is also the result of a much earlier past, which can be understood as a reference to the Sultanate of Malacca.¹¹⁷ However, their statement that "...the British presence in Malaya in the nineteenth century was initially accepted by the Malays in the same spirit with which they had greeted earlier influences,"¹¹⁸ can be questioned. The impact of British colonization is not akin to the impact of Islam on the Malays during the Sultanate of Malacca. Syed Husin Ali examines this aspect, as is discussed below.

Nevertheless, the issues which concern the Malay Muslim society in Malaysia these days are also inseparable from what is being debated throughout this research. Mahathir Mohamad (1970), Syed Hussin Ali (1981) and Hussin Mutalib (1997) are among those who tackle this issue from a historical and political perspective. Mahathir Mohammad states that the three dilemmas confronting the Malay Muslim camp are the cultural, political and economic dilemmas in discussing their internal problems.¹¹⁹ The cultural dilemma is the conflict between challenging other races and wishing to defend their identity and the Malay value system, i.e. commending behaviour which is courteous, modest and non-aggressive. These

¹¹⁷ Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p 6

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p 299

¹¹⁹ Gayl D. Ness 'Book reviews; the Malay Dilemma by Mahathir Mohammad' (Nov 1971). *Journal of Asian Studies*, 31 (1), p 223-225

‘good manners’ have been misinterpreted by other races which consider themselves better placed than the Malay groups to move forward. The political dilemma concerns the desire of the Malays “...to retain the institution of parliamentary democracy against the fear (as demonstrated in the Selangor elections of 1969) that the Malays could be out-voted and effectively disenfranchised in their own land.”¹²⁰ Lastly, the economic dilemma concerns their desire to compete with other ethnic groups in maintaining a market system against the indications that the natural market is controlled by the Chinese.¹²¹

These are among the internal conflicts faced by the Malay Muslim community, which, from the researcher’s point of view, have to do with the crisis of identity. It is brave of Mahathir Mohammad to raise this issue and criticize the weaknesses of the Malay groups. Yet he is not inclined to propound solutions and tackle the issue from the Islamic point of view, which to the researcher is crucial. Furthermore, the issues highlighted by him concern the period of post-independence, rather than the current situation in the 21st century. Still, the researcher believes these issues are ongoing dilemmas. Therefore, what has been pointed out by Mohammad is taken as the groundwork for further exploration of the problems pointed out.

Syed Husin Ali also addresses the issues confronting the Malays in social, economic and political affairs, since he believes that “...the future of the Malays depends largely on changes

¹²⁰ Ibid p 224

¹²¹ Ibid

in these areas". He leaves other areas, including religion, cultural values and education to those who are knowledgeable enough to write on them.¹²² Overall, he connects the problems and challenges encountered by the Malays closely to their historical background, in particular the period of British colonization from 1786 to 1957. To him, without doubt the process of British colonization had made a lot of changes in the Malay community.

From the political aspect, the British limited the power of the Malay sultans (kings) and chiefs to those who were allies of the British and removed those who rose against them.¹²³ This situation initially occurred when the British were invited by the local Malay leaders to settle the local political conflicts in the Malay camp. Hence, this situation then created two kinds of traditional Malay nobility: those who worked in collaboration or cooperation with British colonization and the other groups, those who worked against or resisted the British.¹²⁴ Subsequently, Ali claims that the system of government applied nowadays is inherited from what was brought by the British during their colonization. This is because the leaders who were given power to rule Malaysia were those who had a history of cooperation with the British colonial rulers and were educated in the West.¹²⁵ Hence, he states that the background and attitudes of these leaders was reflected in the philosophy and policies which they chose in ruling the country. Therefore, the system of government which is applied nowadays is unquestionably based on the British governmental system.

¹²² S. Husin Ali, *The Malays: Their Problems and Future*, Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd, 1981, p viii.

¹²³ Ibid., p 27

¹²⁴ Ibid., p 14

¹²⁵ Ibid., p 31

Furthermore, to Ali, the problems and challenges encountered by the Malays can be overcome if true leaders emerge among them. 'True leaders' to him means leaders who "...give priority to the interests of their own country and people and not the interest of foreign countries and their people,"¹²⁶ and who "...emphasise greater concern for the poor and weak who form the majority of people in the lower classes and not for the rich and strong in the upper and middle classes who monopolize political and economic power."¹²⁷ Furthermore, he believes that poverty among the Malays can be eradicated if the economic structure and system undergo a complete overhaul, which certainly depends on the level of awareness and kinds of leadership that arise among the Malays. He concludes that the future of the Malays is in their hands; therefore the right people with the right attitudes are essential. They will become the leaders who will bring the Malays to progress and freedom.¹²⁸

Ali has discussed this issue from a very unusual perspective, not used often by most scholars. He even defines the Malays in historical and socio-cultural terms, not constitutional ones, as is customary for most of the scholars who write on the Malays. His comments are based on Malaysia's historical background from the early primitive period to the situation of Malaysia pre- and post-independence and on the situation, though not the conditions which prevail nowadays. This is perhaps due to the moment when his book was written - the 1970s; hence, issues which have arisen since could not have been addressed. Yet what he says is still relevant and demands careful examination, because any discussion to the historical

¹²⁶ Ibid., p 127

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ Ibid., p 132

background of the Malay community is certain to exert an influence on the problems of the present.

In focusing on issues of integration within the Malay Muslim community, Mutalib states that though Islam has integrated its members, it has split them into two groups. The difference behind the groups lies in "...the differing perception and attitude that different categories and groups of Malays have of their faith, especially regarding its role and position in the affairs of the state..." and "...the strength of the ethnic idiom in the Malay culture which inhibited the Malay practice in the universalistic context and approach of the faith."¹²⁹ In other words, due to these differences, several different movements in the Malay Muslim community have emerged, such as the United Malay Nation Organization (UMNO) and the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS).¹³⁰ And he mentions that there is "...a traditional UMNO-PAS ideological divide where both of them have accused each other of not following the 'right Islam'."¹³¹

This statement perhaps agrees with Barton's claim that religion was not the main issue in the development of Malay politics until the issue of race relations arose in the late 1960s, which

¹²⁹ Husin Mutalib, 'Islamisation in Malaysia: Between Ideals and Realities' in Hussin Mutalib and Tajul-Islam Hashmi, *Muslims and the Modern States: Case Studies of Muslims in Thirteen Countries*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994, p 164

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹ Ibid., p 165

saw the emergence of different movements.¹³² The dispute between the two main Malay parties, the United Malay Nation Organization (UMNO) as the ruling party and the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) as the opponent of UMNO, arose out of their attempt “... to prove themselves more Islamic than the other” and in perceiving Islam as their identity.¹³³ Implicitly, this split Malay voters, the target groups of both parties in the general election, above all in 1999 when UMNO had lost control of most of the Malay votes.¹³⁴

Hence, Barton discusses in detail the political situation of Malay Muslims, with their historical background, from the coming of Islam to Malaysia until the emergence of different Islamic movements in this country. He tackles the issue from the political perspective and does not discuss other related issues, such as social and economic ones. Moreover, though his discussion on the issue of integration touches the political scene in Malaysia, he provides essential and crucial points to give readers a greater understanding of the root causes of the Malay issue of integration.

In contrast, Syed Husin Ali argues that the purposes of Malay unity were promoted mainly by the government party, the United Malays of the Nation Organization or UMNO. In this respect, he raises several questions, such as ‘For whom is this unity meant?’ ‘What is the

¹³² Greg Barton. ‘Islam, Society, Politics and Change in Malaysia’, in Jason F. Isaacson and Colin Rubenstein, (eds), *Islam in Asia: Changing Political Realities*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publisher, 2002, p 102

¹³³ Ibid., p 119

¹³⁴ Ibid., p 152

basis of unity and its effects on the country and people? and ‘What type of leadership will hold the reins of Malay power?’ These questions must be answered, but according to him, the unity promoted by UMNO did not bring any socio-economic development to the Malay lower class, such as the peasants.¹³⁵ Moreover, it did not change the colonial economic structure by calling for Malay unity to oppose the Malayan Union,¹³⁶ whereas implicitly it gave more opportunity for the Malay leaders and the Malay upper and middle class, such as politicians, businessmen and civil servants, to gain more power and influence and to become richer. Though he claims that unity within a particular ethnic group or between different ethnic groups is not easily reached in the circumstances which will always give rise to disparities and clashes, he is optimistic that it can be achieved. But it can only happen when the kinds of ideology, politics and leadership of unity are for the benefit of the masses mainly the common and poor people and not intended “...to strengthen the position of foreign monopoly capitalists together with local capitalists so that they can continue to exploit the country and the poor.”¹³⁷ Hence, the ideology needs to be oriented towards unity, based on a majority formed by the less privileged lower class, the largest in the Malay population; and it must “...safeguard national independence and not encourage imperialism and neo-colonialism to persist in new forms.”¹³⁸ Apart from these, in other words, Malay unity directed only to benefiting the Malay upper class, is meaningless.

¹³⁵ S. Husin Ali, *The Malays: Their Problems and Future*, p 39

¹³⁶ The Malayan Union was suggested by the British to replace the British government system when they won the nation back from the Japanese armies after the Second World War.

¹³⁷ S. Husin Ali, *The Malays: Their Problems and Future*, pp 40-41

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p 40

In this respect, his discussion on the issue of integration and unity of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia is limited to the last part of Chapter Three in the section on the political problems of the Malays, *The Malays: Their Problems and Future*. His explanation and arguments on this issue are limited, perhaps due to his focus on other issues encountered by the Malays, including politics, religion, and socio-economic affairs.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a case study as its research design out of all the designs available such as research survey. A case study design is a study of a single case which investigates a certain period of time and records the results at the end.¹³⁹ The study can focus on a person, group, family, school or classroom, town, organization, community or nation. The aim of the present study design is to describe what happened to the focus or subject without making any comparison between two or more different groups.¹⁴⁰ In this research, the problems and challenges of the current Malay Muslim community are studied in order to determine whether Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* can be applied to this context and whether it would be practicable to do so. This accords with the definition given by Yin, for whom a case study is a research design which tackles the "how" and the "why" questions arising from certain current situations.¹⁴¹ Moreover, it focuses on one single group, namely, the Malay Muslim

¹³⁹ Beverly R. Dixon, Gary D. Bouma and B.J. Atkinson, *A Handbook of Social Science Research*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p 110

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Robert Kin Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003, p 20

community in Malaysia and on a specific time, which is the present. The background and the historical overview of the group is also studied, encompassing the period of the Sultanate of Malacca in the 15th century and the period of British colonization until Malaysia's post-independence era.

In term of its methodology, this research employs triangulation approaches. Triangulation research is a type of research which assumes that more than one method is being used to collect material from more than one kind of source or gathering of data.¹⁴² It is believed that the combination of two types of research methodology, the quantitative and the qualitative, can be claimed to provide more valid research findings and give greater confidence in the results.¹⁴³ In this research, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is used to collect and analyze the data. In general, quantitative research is "...empirical research where the data are in the form of numbers..." whereas qualitative research is "...empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers" (i.e. are mostly in the form of words).¹⁴⁴ Hence, the quantitative method emphasizes quantification, while qualitative research stresses words or other non-numerical forms in analyzing and collecting data.¹⁴⁵ In collecting data, quantitative research usually employs such methods as social survey, experiments or structured observation and laboratory experiments, whereas qualitative research is associated with unstructured, in-depth interviewing and participant observation.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Ibid., p 131

¹⁴³ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p 274

¹⁴⁴ Keith F. Punch, *Developing Effective Research Proposal*. London: Sage Publications, 2000, p 4

¹⁴⁵ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, p 4 and 20

¹⁴⁶ Alan Bryman, *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. London: Unwin Hyman, 1988, p 1

In gathering the data, the researcher applies two kinds of method, library and fieldwork research. The library research involves collecting data from books, journals, articles, magazines, newspapers and electronic sources such as articles from the internet and compact discs (CDs). The data collected concerns the examination of the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* and its relation at present time, the background of the current Malay Muslim community in Malaysia, including the historical account of the Malacca Sultanate in the 15th century and the situation pre- and post-independence and their contemporary implications.

Meanwhile, the fieldwork research employs two kinds of technique, questionnaires and interviews. The technique of circulating questionnaires is used to seek the views and opinions of a large number of respondents on the problems and challenges faced by the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia and on their knowledge of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* and its practicality nowadays. Hence, a sample of undergraduate and diploma students from the University of Malaya was chosen, representing respectively the youth and the working class of the Malay Muslim group in Malaysia. Two kinds of question are found in the questionnaires; open-ended and closed-ended.

As regards interviews, two types of these were conducted, namely structured and semi-structured interviews. The structured interview was extended from the questionnaire, to put further questions to some of its respondents. The purpose of conducting these structured interviews was to obtain further opinions from respondents regarding the issues discussed.

Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were arranged to seek further information and views from academics regarding the problems and challenges confronting the Malay community in Malaysia and the possibility of implementing Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* at present. Using this approach, interviews with several prominent figures in Malaysia were conducted. Among them were Dr. Chandra Muzaffar (President of the International Movement for A Just World or JUST), Yusri Mohamad (former President of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia or ABIM), Tan Sri Dr. Professor Mohd Kamal Hassan (Professor of the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences and former Rector of the International Islamic University of Malaysia, IIUM), Professor Abdullahil Ahsan (Professor of the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University of Malaysia, IIUM), Associate Professor Dr. Zaid Ahmad, of the University Putra Malaysia or UPM, Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty (Kolej Universiti Islam Selangor or KUIS), Associate Professor Syed Farid Alatas (National University of Singapore or NUS), Professor Datin Dr. Azizan Baharuddin (the University of Malaya) and Ustaz (Dr.) Muhammad Uthman El-Muhammady of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC).

The quantitative data obtained from the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS software version 17.0. Meanwhile the qualitative data gained from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire were read through without software. Each of the questionnaire scripts was read thoroughly and coded. However, the structured and semi-structured interviews were analyzed using QSR Nvivo version 8. Beforehand, the data were

first transcribed and translated.¹⁴⁷ The details of the methodology for this research are discussed further in Chapter Four below.

1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis is organized in six chapters. The first chapter introduces the research, the justification of the research comprising a statement of problem, objectives, definition of terms, rationale, the scope and limitations and a literature review. The literature review assesses the core existing writings, mainly regarding Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*, discussions of this theory in relation to the modern world and the background of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia covering a historical overview and contemporary issues, problems and challenges for the community. The research methodology which was implemented is discussed in general, mainly the methodological approaches, data collection and analysis. The details of the research methodology, i.e., the process of the fieldwork are discussed in Chapter Four.

¹⁴⁷ This refers to the structured interviews, which were conducted in the Malay language, while the semi-structured interviews were conducted in English.

The second chapter deals with the background of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia and its current issues, problems and challenges for readers to understand the context of the present research community. The general background of this community is first discussed, followed by the historical background of the Malay community during the period of the Malacca Sultanate in the 15th century, subsequently their circumstances during the British colonization and the post-independence period after 1957. The problems and challenges faced by this community in economic, social, political matters and in integration are also discussed at the end of this chapter.

The third chapter discusses Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* in some depth. First, the background of Ibn Khaldūn and his context are discussed, to examine the factors which may have influenced his introduction of the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*. To understand the theory better, the definitions of *'Aṣabiyyah* are discussed according to debates by contemporary scholars on the term. Furthermore, this term is discussed in the light of the Qur'ān and Hadīth, as well as in relation to the Islamic concept of brotherhood and Ummah, as the purpose is to examine whether the theory as proposed by Ibn Khaldūn agrees with or contradicts the doctrines of Islam. This chapter also explains in some detail the theory as Ibn Khaldūn propounded it, together with the elements constituting the theory for further understanding. Lastly, the discussion deals with the relevance of this theory to modern conditions, by briefly discussing the circumstances of the Muslim community and the relations of the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* to this context.

The fourth chapter describes the methodology employed in this research, including the background of the empirical research conducted. Initially the local background of the fieldwork is described, namely, the University of Malaya and its undergraduate and diploma programmes. It then discusses the research design employed, that of a case study and the details of collecting and analyzing data, by distributing questionnaires and conducting structured and semi-structured interviews. Thus, the problems and limitation faced throughout the fieldwork research are reported at the end of this chapter.

The findings and analysis of data from the fieldwork are found in the fifth chapter. The chapter describes the sample who responded to the questionnaire and interviews. Here, the respondents' knowledge of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* and their views on other problems and challenges to the Malay Muslim community are reported as the findings of the research. The findings are derived from both the questionnaires (open and closed ended questions) and interviews.

Meanwhile, in Chapter 6, the chapter discusses the findings of the field work research reported in the Chapter 5. It is a crunch of the research, which includes several important outcomes such as the complete explanation of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*, the practicality of the theory to the modern period, notably in the context of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia, the overall views of the factors contributing to it and possible

solutions to the problems and challenges to this community. The views of the academic interviewees are also stated to support the discussion.

The last chapter, Chapter Seven, provides a summary and conclusion, along with recommendations and suggestions arising from this research. The suggestions underline some recommendations based on the findings and discussion of this research, for improving aspects of future research on similar topics.

1.11 CONCLUSION

Overall, this chapter forms an introduction to the present research. It sets out an introduction, a statement of the problems, scope and limitation, objectives, definitions of terms, literature review and research methodology in the hope of giving an overview and providing an understanding to the reader of the background of this research. Hence, the research topic undertaken is hoped to be capable of providing fresh insight in discussing Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* in a modern setting, not only as a theory in itself. Furthermore, it is expected that this will be a worthwhile study the results of which will be significant for the needs of contemporary society and contribute to the existing debate on the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*.

CHAPTER 2

THE BACKGROUND OF THE MALAY MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN MALAYSIA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Before discussing the applicability of the theory of *Aşabiyyah* in this context, we should first discuss the background of the Malay Muslim society in Malaysia, so as to understand this community. Hence, the chapter starts with a historical background, showing how Islam came to this country, its situation during the British colonization and its state in the pre- and post-independence periods. The establishment and the achievements of the Malacca Sultanate in the 15th century are discussed in some depth, specifically to examine the success of this kingdom in the past and perhaps to identify what factors contributed to this success and to its decline. We end by discussing the problems and challenges for the Malay community at present paying particular attention to the aspects of politics and integration, the economy and social and academic life.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF THE MALAY MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN MALAYSIA

Malaysia is situated in Southeast Asia and has borders with Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei and the Philippines. It is a multi-religious country but Islam is its official religion. According to its Population and Housing Census in 2010, the total population of the country was then 28.3 million, 91.8 per cent of whom were Malaysian citizens and 8.2 per cent non-citizens.¹⁴⁸ Malaysian citizens encompass the ethnic groups of *Bumiputera* (67.4 per cent), Chinese (24.6 per cent), Indians (7.3 per cent) and others (0.7 per cent). Within the *Bumiputera*, the Malays were the majority ethnic group in Peninsular Malaysia, constituting 63.1 per cent, while the Ibans made up 30.3 per cent of the overall population in Sarawak, and 24.5 per cent of the Kadazan/Dusun ethnic group in Sabah.¹⁴⁹

The Malays are usually described as the indigenous people of Malaysia, though it is stated that the historical evidence does not support this claim.¹⁵⁰ Means asserts that "...[the] ancestors of the Malays came to Southeast Asia in prehistoric times, probably migrating from Indo-China or Yunnan over 3,500 years ago."¹⁵¹ Hence, there is a dispute among scholars

¹⁴⁸ Population and Housing Census Malaysia 2010, 2010 Census, see http://www.statistics.gov.my/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1215%3Apopulation-distribution-and-basic-demographic-characteristic-report-population-and-housing-census-malaysia-2010-updated-2972011&catid=130%3Apopulation-distribution-and-basic-demographic-characteristic-report-population-and-housing-census-malaysia-2010&lang=en (accessed September 13, 2011)

¹⁴⁹ Ibid

¹⁵⁰ Gordon P. Means. *Malaysian Politics*, p 15.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. Means's view is accepted by Ryan, who also believes that the inhabitants of the Peninsula were Proto-Malays who entered the land from the north (Yünnan) in about 2500 B.C. For details, see N.J. Ryan, *The Making of Modern Malaysia and Singapore : A History from Earliest Times to 1966*, London: Oxford University Press,

regarding the origin of the early inhabitants of Malaysia. Mence supports the claim, stating, “The people now regarded as Malays migrated from Southern China to the Malay Archipelago via the Pacific region, primarily from Sumatra, occupying the coastal regions and pushing the Orang Asli tribes into remote areas of the hinterlands.”¹⁵²

Based on the Malaysian Constitution, Article 160, the Malays have Islam as their religion and they “...habitually speak the Malay language and conform to the Malay culture...”¹⁵³ Malays are the majority race of the country and comprise nearly half of the 15 million residents of the Federation of Malaysia.¹⁵⁴ Since Islam is so closely associated with the Malay groups, conversion to the Islamic faith is recognized as one way to ‘become Malay’ or ‘*masuk Melayu*’. Although some believe “...the concept of being a Malay is more religious than racial...,”¹⁵⁵ possessing the Malay identity means in reality having a stronger sense of racial identity which the Islamic notion strengthens.

1969, p 5 and J.M.N. R. Chandei (ed), *The Population of Malaysia*, see <http://www.cicred.org/Eng/Publications/pdf/c-c34.pdf> (accessed June 14, 2011), p 1

¹⁵² Victoria Mence, ‘View on Malaysia’, in *View on Asia Briefing Series*, Uniya Social Justice Centre, see http://www.uniya.org/research/view_malaysia.pdf (accessed June 20, 2008), p 3

¹⁵³ Constitution of Malaysia, see http://www.malaysia-today.net/malaysia_constitution.pdf (accessed June 20, 2008).

¹⁵⁴ Ronal Provencher, ‘Malays’, p 477

¹⁵⁵ Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*, p 17.

Islam seems to have come to this country in 647 AD.¹⁵⁶ There are two assumptions about this. First, it is assumed that it came from Arabia through the ‘Indian inhabitants’ who practised law according to the school of Shafi‘i. Since there was trading between the Indian islands and the Malay Archipelago, Islamic teachings spread to this country by this means.¹⁵⁷ However, a second assumption is that it came from India via the traders who engaged in overseas commerce between India and South East Asia.¹⁵⁸ Hamid states that most of the orientalist scholars of this subject agree with the latter assumption. They conclude that “...the religion of Islam was brought to the Malay Archipelago from the Indian subcontinent, but not from Arabia or Persia.”¹⁵⁹ Pijnappel (a Dutch scholar), Snouck Hurgronje, T.W. Arnold, J.P. Morquette, D.G.E Hall and R.O Winstedt are among those who support this assumption. Morquette, for example, had discovered that the style of the gravestones found in Pasai and dated 1424 and in Gresik, belonging to Maulana Malik Ibrahim and dated 1419, were identical to those found at Cambay, Gujerat. From this discovery, he suggests that Gujerati stones were manufactured not only for the local market, but also to export to other places, including Java and Sumatra. This evidence leads him to think that Islam was brought to the Malay Archipelago from Gujerat, India.¹⁶⁰

But Hamid believes that the early Arab missionaries also played a crucial role in spreading Islam to this region. This is based on reports from the natives of the region, most of which

¹⁵⁶ S.Q.Fatimi, *Islam comes to Malaysia*, p 69

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p 5

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Isma‘īl Hāmid, ‘A Survey of theories on the introduction of Islam in the Malay Archipelago’, *Islamic Studies*, Vol. XXI, No. 3, 1982, p 89

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p 90

indicate that "...the early Muslim missionaries who converted their forefathers to Islam were Arabs, or of Arab origin that they came directly from Arabia and that some of them resided permanently in certain parts of the East."¹⁶¹ For instance, *Sejarah Melayu* reports that Sultan Muhammad Shah, one of the rulers of Malacca was converted by Sayyid 'Abdul Aziz, an Arab from Arabia.¹⁶² Furthermore, *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* and *Malay Annals (Sejarah Melayu)* had narrated that the Ruler of Mecca had sent a ship led by one Shaykh Isma'il to teach about Islam in Sumatra.¹⁶³ From this, it seems clear that missionaries whether from India or Arabia played an important role in Islamizing the Malay Archipelago.

One of the significant pieces of evidence and contemporary records for the introduction of Islam into the states of the Peninsula was the discovery of the Terengganu inscription, a four-sided stone on which was written the date of Friday 4th Rejab 702 A.H./ Friday 22nd February 1303 AD¹⁶⁴ This stone was found in the early 1920s. According to the local account, the stone was found in front of a *muşalla*, where it was used as a stepping stone when people wanted to wash their feet before entering the building to pray. Thus, when the *imam* of the *masjid* discovered there were characters written on it, he had it removed to a more suitable place.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹Ibid., p 95

¹⁶² *Sejarah Melayu 'Malay Annals'*, C.C. Brown (trans.), Oxford University Press, 1970, pp 31-32.

¹⁶³ Isma'il Hāmid, 'A survey of theories on the introduction of Islam in the Malay Archipelago', p 95

¹⁶⁴ S.Q.Fatimi, *Islam comes to Malaysia*, p 60A

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p 60.

Subsequently in the fifteenth-century, several Malay kingdoms, including the Sultanate of Malacca, came to power. The founder of the Malacca government, Parameswara, converted to Islam and changed his name to Iskandar Shah.¹⁶⁶ His successors established Malacca as a successful and influential kingdom which was described as "...a great success and considered as an inspiration and source of strength to the later empires."¹⁶⁷ However, this great Malay civilization reached its peak and started its decline during the period of Sultan Mahmud. Due to the weakness of the ruling government, Malacca fell to the Portuguese in 1511. This was the beginning of the colonization of the Malays for four and a half centuries. The country was conquered by the Dutch in 1641 and at the beginning of 17th century it was occupied by the British.

¹⁶⁶ According to Dartford, it is uncertain whether Iskandar Shah indeed refers to Parameswara, who later converted to Islam, or to his son (for details, see G.P. Dartford, *Short History of Malaya*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958, p 18).

¹⁶⁷ Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p 37

2.3 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE MALACCA SULTANATE DURING THE 15TH CENTURY

2.3.1 The rise of Malacca as a kingdom and its background

In discussing the historical background of the establishment of Malacca as a realm, many historians tend to discuss the background of its founder, Parameswara and his founding of the place that he named Malacca. Tome Pires, for example, gives in detail the ancestry of Parameswara in the treatise *Suma Oriental*.¹⁶⁸ Parameswara, which in the Palembang Javanese language means ‘the bravest man’, was the prince of Palembang who married the princess of Majapahit.¹⁶⁹ Meanwhile, *Sejarah Melayu (The Malay Annals)* states that Parameswara could trace his descent “...back to Seri Turi Buana who himself was a descendent of Alexander the Great (Raja Iskandar Dhu’l-Qarnain).”¹⁷⁰

According to Tome Pires, the history of the nation began when Parameswara declared independence for his territory and no longer surrendered to the ruler of Java. When the news reached the King of Majapahit, he sent troops to Palembang to attack the country.

¹⁶⁸ For details, see; *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires: An Account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan, written in Malacca and India in 1512-1515 and The Book of Francisco Rodrigues :rutter of a voyage in the Red Sea, nautical rules, almanac and maps, written and drawn in the east before 1515*, Volume II, to Armando Cortesão, (trans. and edited), London: Hakluyt Society, 1944, pp 230-231

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 231.

¹⁷⁰ *Sejarah Melayu ‘Malay Annals’*, C.C. Brown (trans.), p xxviii

Parameswara fled to Singapore with his wife and some men and was welcomed by the king of Temasik, mentioned in *Suma Oriental* as *Sam Agy Syngupara*.¹⁷¹ Yet, probably due to his political ambition and his feeling of personal rivalry,¹⁷² after a few days, Parameswara killed the king and took the throne himself.¹⁷³ Unfortunately, when the King of Siam, who was the King of Temasik's father-in-law, received the news, he wanted to avenge the death of his son-in-law and thus declared war on Paramewara. As Paramewara knew he would not win the fight against the King of Siam, he fled again to Muar with his wife and a thousand of his men.¹⁷⁴ He settled down there with his family and his men lived by cultivating and fishing. After staying there for a while, Parameswara took advice from a local group known as the *Celaties Bugis*¹⁷⁵ to move to a better place near Muar where he remained. This place was described by the group as "...as large and spacious space with large fields and lovely water...surrounded by beautiful mountain ranges and abundant waters near the river which comes into Malacca."¹⁷⁶ Hence, they continued to cultivate the land for their survival. And Parameswara declared himself their ruler. As the reward for offering him such a pleasant place for settlement, Parameswara honoured the group of *Celaties Bugis* as his noblemen. According to the account of Tome Pires, Malacca's royal family descended from them and later became the rulers of Malacca.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷¹ *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, Armando Cortesão, (trans. and edited), pp 231-232

¹⁷² J. Kennedy, *A History of Malaya A.D. 1400-1959*, London: Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1962, p 1.

¹⁷³ Some scholars follow their own assumptions regarding Parameswara's motive in killing the ruler of Temasik. Moorhead assumes that Parameswara took that action, perhaps believing that Temasik rightly belonged to Majapahit, or probably because he was a cruel and treacherous person. Meanwhile, according to Kennedy, Parameswara's motive in killing the ruler of Temasik, was perhaps his political ambition and feeling of personal enmity. For details, see F.J. Moorhead, *A History of Malaya and Her Neighbours*, Volume One, London, Longmans, 1957, p 117 and Kennedy, 1962, p 1.

¹⁷⁴ *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, Armando Cortesão, (trans. and edited), p 232.

¹⁷⁵ This group is also referred to 'sea gypsies' by Moorhead (1957), 'Orang Laut' or 'Cellates' of Proto-Malay by Dartford (1958) and 'pirates' by Kennedy (1962).

¹⁷⁶ *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, Armando Cortesão, (trans. and edited), pp 234-235

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p 235.

Thus, the Sultanate of Malacca was established in 1398 AD / 1400 AH and continued until 1511 AD. In the course of the Malacca dynasty, there were seven rulers. Due to the influence of Islamic teaching, they later carried the title of ‘*Sultan*’, starting with Muzaffar Shah. The most widely accepted chronology of the Malacca dynasty is that Sri Parameswar, who was the founder of the kingdom (1400-1414),¹⁷⁸ was followed by Megat Iskandar Shah (1414-1424), Sri Maharaja Sultan Muhammad Shah (1424-1445) and Raja Ibrahim or Sri Parameswara Dewa Shah (1445-1446).¹⁷⁹ Raja Ibrahim or Sri Parameswara Dewa Shah was the prince to Sultan Muhammad Shah. The Sultan also had another son, named Sultan Muzaffar Shah or Raja Kassim.

According to Dartford (1958) and Kennedy (1962), there was a struggle between the two main Malay groups to install the new ruler after the death of Sri Maharajah Sultan Muhammad Shah. The first group supported one of the dead king’s son, Raja Ibrahim, who was married to a princess of Rokan in Sumatera. The second camp were loyal to Raja Kassim or Sultan Muzaffar Shah, led by Tun Ali, a Tamil Muslim merchant who came from Pasai and had settled down in Malacca. In this struggle, the younger prince, Raja Ibrahim and his supporters were killed by Tun Ali and his followers, due to the interest of Tun Ali’s family and wanted to secure “...a Muslim dynasty on the Malacca throne”,¹⁸⁰ as Raja Kassim was married to a member of Tun Ali’s family.¹⁸¹ The leadership of Malacca then passed to Raja Kassim, known as Sultan Muzaffar Shah (1446-1459). He was followed by Sultan Mansur

¹⁷⁸ N.J. Ryan, *The Making of Modern Malaysia and Singapore; A History From Earliest Times to 1966*. London, Oxford University Press, 1974 (have been cited before?), p 15.

¹⁷⁹ Barbara Watson Andaya, ‘Malacca’ in C.E. Bosworth, et al. (eds), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Volume VI MAHK-MID, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991, p 208.

¹⁸⁰ J. Kennedy, *A History of Malaya A.D. 1400-1959*, p 10

¹⁸¹ Ibid

Shah or Raja Abdullah, (1459-1477), later by Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah (1477-1488), and finally by Sultan Mahmud Shah (1488-1511).¹⁸²

It was believed that the reigns of Sultan Mansur Shah, Sultan Alauddin Shah and Sultan Mahmud Shah (during the last half of the 15th century) comprised the ‘golden age’ of the Sultanate of Malacca.¹⁸³ The strategic location of Malacca in the middle of the trade route between China and India and the system of prevailing winds, as well as the willingness of the local inhabitants to respond to the demands of international trade, had led to its establishment as a kingdom and as an international entrepôt.¹⁸⁴ In addition, the strong characters of these Sultans contributed to its achievements. Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah, for example, was described by Tome Pires as a person who was “...more devoted to the affairs of the mosque than anything else.”¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, he was described as a person who was “...an energetic ruler and was not afraid of his powerful relatives.”¹⁸⁶ He was dedicated to his position as a ruler and would go out of the town of Malacca by himself at night to investigate robberies. He once killed two thieves who were running off with a chest. The next day he rebuked the *Temenggung* (Chief of Security), his brother in-law, and other officers for their failure to do their job properly.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² Ibrahim Abu Bakar, ‘Malaysian Perceptions of China’, *Haol, Núm, 7*, 2005, p 99. For details, refer to Appendix II.

¹⁸³ G.P. Dartford, *A Short History of Malaya*, p 23

¹⁸⁴ Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p 35

¹⁸⁵ *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, Armando Cortesão, (trans. and edited), p 251.

¹⁸⁶ G.P. Dartford, *A Short History of Malaya*, p 25.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

2.3.2 Governmental system under the Sultanate of Malacca

One reason for Malacca's success as a kingdom as well as an international trading centre was the efficiency of its administration. As Malacca had become a centre for international trade, an efficient and high quality administration was essential for organizing the trading activities and the affairs of foreign merchants.

The structure of the Sultanate of Malacca was led by the head of the state, acknowledged as the '*Raja*' or '*Yang diPertuan*' ('he who is made lord'), or '*Paduca Raja*' (captain-general),¹⁸⁸ which later was recognized as the Sultan, due to the influence of Islamic teaching.¹⁸⁹ The word of the Sultan was believed to be 'law', hence his orders must be obeyed and no one must ever be disloyal to him. Though the Sultan was the head of state, in practice the work of administration was carried out by his administrators. Therefore, the *Sultan* never took action without consultation with his ministers. Yet the stability of the government also depended on the character of a Sultan. If a Sultan had a strong character, he was able to rule the country successfully and control the power of his ministers. But the ministers, in particular the *Bendahara* (Prime Minister) could use their authority to administer the state if the Sultan was weak and not interested in meeting his political responsibilities.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, Armando Cortesão, (trans. and edited), p 264.

¹⁸⁹ F.J. Moorhead, *A History of Malaya and Her Neighbours*, p 125

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p 127.

Thus, the *Bendahara* was the highest minister in the administration of the government. His position was a combination of Prime Minister and Treasurer.¹⁹¹ He had the roles of Head of the Treasury, Commander-in-Chief and the Chief Justice in criminal and civil affairs.¹⁹² He was also in charge of the internal and public matters of the state, as well as the mediator between the Sultan and the foreign policy of the state.¹⁹³ Furthermore, the *Bendahara* became the arbiter in any dispute either between Malays and foreign traders or among the Malays themselves. The *Bendahara* had the authority to proclaim the death sentence, whether the person was a nobleman or foreigner, in consultation with the *Laksamana* (the Admiral of the fleet) and *Temenggung*.¹⁹⁴ In addition, *Sejarah Melayu* describes "...the ideal picture of the powerful Bendahara who refused to commit treason against the ruler, despite being unjustly accused; only God Almighty, the text reminded Malays, could punish a wicked king."¹⁹⁵ The *Bendaharas* were not of royal birth but came from a noble background. Among all *Bendaharas*, Tun Perak was the most outstanding during the reign of the four *Sultans*.¹⁹⁶

The *Temenggung* was the second most important position after the *Bendahara* and had to take over the *Bendahara*'s role during his absence. His main role concerned the security of Malacca, hence he held the positions of Chief Magistrate¹⁹⁷ and Chief of Police, as well as the Master of Royal Ceremonies.¹⁹⁸ In preserving the security of Malacca, he had the authority to

¹⁹¹ G.P. Dartford, *A Short History of Malaya*, p 26.

¹⁹² F.J. Moorhead, *A History of Malaya and Her Neighbours*, p 126.

¹⁹³ C. Carolina López. 'The British Presence in the Malay World: A Meeting of Civilizational Traditions', *Sari 19* (2001), <http://pkukmweb.ukm.my/~penerbit/jsari19-01.pdf> (accessed October 15, 2008), p 11.

¹⁹⁴ *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, Armando Cortesão, (trans. and edited), p 264.

¹⁹⁵ Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p 46.

¹⁹⁶ J. Kennedy, *A History of Malaya A.D. 1400-1959*, p 15.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p 7.

¹⁹⁸ J. Kennedy, *A History of Malaya A.D. 1400-1959*, p 16.

kill anyone who was not “...carrying a torch...” or who refused to be arrested.¹⁹⁹ His other responsibilities were to take charge of merchandise, including the supervision of weights and measures. Furthermore, the *Laksamana* was recognized as “...the Admiral of the Fleet and Warden of the Coast...”²⁰⁰ When it came to war matters, the position of *Laksamana* was viewed as being almost as important as that of the *Bendahara*, for the navy was the most effectual arm of Malacca’s forces. In addition, the *Laksamana* was the head of the military administration and the bodyguard of the Sultan.²⁰¹ *Laksamana* Hang Tuah was believed to be the best-known *Laksamana* during the Sultanate of Malacca.²⁰² Another important position was that of *Penghulu Bendahari* (Treasurer). He was the chief of all *Shahbandar* (Harbour Masters),²⁰³ and was responsible for collecting revenue from the merchants. *Penghulu Bendahari* or *Sri Naradiraja* took the role of Secretary and Royal Treasurer to the Sultan. He controlled the state income and kept records which were obtained in various ways, for example from the taxes exacted by Malacca’s small government and from trading activities.²⁰⁴ Moreover, he was responsible for the Sultan’s servants and clerks.

In addition, there were four individuals who held the position of *Shahbandar* or harbour master. Each of them was fully responsible to the group of merchants assigned to them. The first *Shahbandar* was assigned for the traders from Gujerat and the second for the Indian merchants from southern India and Bengal, Pegu in Burma and Pasai. Two more

¹⁹⁹ F.J. Moorhead, *A History of Malaya and Her Neighbours*, p 127.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p 47.

²⁰² J. Kennedy, *A History of Malaya A.D. 1400-1959*, p 16 (see footnote 1).

²⁰³ Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p 47.

²⁰⁴ C. Carolina López., ‘The British Presence in the Malay World’, p 11-12.

Shahbandars were appointed for the group of traders who came from Java, the Moluccas, Banda, Palembang, Borneo and the Philippines and the traders from Champa, China and the Ryukyu Islands (perhaps including Japan).²⁰⁵ The *Shahbandar*'s role was to look after the welfare and matters of the particular group of which they were in charge, to organize the market place and the warehouse, administer all matters concerning the harbour and the collection of customs such as maintaining checks on weights, measures and coinage and to arbitrate in any dispute between the ships' captains and the traders before such matters were brought to the *Bendahara*. Hence, the positions mentioned above were held by essential and well-known officials in the administration of the Sultanate of Malacca. This systematic efficient administration led to its success as a kingdom, despite other factors, which will be discussed next.

2.3.3 The achievement of the Sultanate of Malacca

The Sultanate of Malacca was not only well-known as a successful kingdom, but it was also recognized as a famous international entrepôt and a centre for the spread of Islamic teaching; it introduced the Malay language as an international language. The strategic location of Malacca, "...on the narrow Straits through which shipping between China and India passed and where the dominant monsoonal wind systems met,"²⁰⁶ assisted its formation as an international entrepôt. Its importance as a port began when the founder of Malacca,

²⁰⁵ Barbara Watson Andaya, 'Malacca', p 209

²⁰⁶ Barbara Watson Andaya, 'Malacca', p 208.

Parameswara, made a trade and political alliance with the government of Pasai in northern Sumatra.²⁰⁷ Since Pasai had established a trading relationship with several parts of India and Java, its link with Malacca brought traders to join the business activities in Malacca.

Hence, merchants from the east and west came to Malacca to meet their counterparts and sell and buy goods. In other words, Malacca had links with traders from all over the world, "...the Mediterranean, Europe, the Middle East, East Africa (via Gujerat and the Red Sea ports), India, most parts of South-East Asia and with China."²⁰⁸ Traders from places in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, such as Cairo, Mecca, Aden, Parsi and Ormuz first sailed to the Indian port of Cambay in Gujerat for business, because the monsoon made the route to Malacca inaccessible at certain periods.²⁰⁹ They brought with them merchandise such as Venetian glass, coloured woollen cloth, copper, quicksilver, Arabian opium, perfumes, rosewater, seed-pearls and dyes. Thus, these traders purchased goods such as cloth and incense and then went on to Malacca, usually in March.²¹⁰

Pulicat, another port in the north of Madras, was where traders from the west coast of India started their journey to Malacca. There they met the traders from China, Formosa and the Philippines as well as those from Malacca's neighbours, such as Sumatra, Java, Borneo and other small islands in the Malay Archipelago and from Pegu in southern Burma. According to Tome Pires, trading in Malacca was very active and four ships from Gujerat came to Malacca

²⁰⁷ J. Kennedy, *A History of Malaya*, p 3.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p 6

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

every year. Each ship carried merchandise which was "...worth fifteen, twenty or thirty thousand 'cruzados', nothing less than fifteen thousand *cruzados*."²¹¹ Meanwhile, a ship from Cambay sailed to Malacca every year with merchandise valued at seventy or eighty thousand *cruzados*.²¹² Furthermore, Tome Pires states that at this time nearly eighty-four languages were spoken in the port of Malacca, showing how busy the place was and how attractive to foreign traders.²¹³

In addition, Malacca was recognized as the centre for the spread of Islamic teaching, mainly through the interaction among the Muslim traders who came to the entrepôt, through the intermarriage with royal families as well as through conquest. The engagement of Muslim traders from Tamil India and Gujerat and from Turkey and Arab countries in the trading activities in Malacca had encouraged its establishment. As Islamic teaching is easily accepted by all levels of the community, the practice of Islam by these traders had attracted others to join this religion. It was reported that Java converted to Islam due to the propagation of this religion in Malacca, which is stated as Malacca's greatest achievement in this matter.²¹⁴ The marriages of the royal family of Malacca to members of the ruling house of Kelantan and Indragiri helped "...to spread Islam at court level."²¹⁵ Through conquest, Malacca being a powerful kingdom, a conquered state under its rule would be influenced to adopt this religion.

²¹¹ *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, Armando Cortesão, (trans. and edited), p 270.

²¹² Cruzados is equivalent to £2,178 of modern value, or 69 lbs tin or 'timas'. For details, refer to *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, p 270.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p 269.

²¹⁴ D.G.E Hall., *A History of South-East Asia*, London: Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1955, p 183.

²¹⁵ J. Kennedy, *A History of Malaya A.D. 1400-1959*, p 17.

Moreover, due to its influence as a kingdom and international entrepôt, Malacca implicitly promoted Malay to become an international language. It was widely spoken among the foreign traders and became the national language of the state.²¹⁶ The main factor in this achievement was the role played by the middlemen, the smaller Malay traders who helped the foreign traders to sell their merchandise, clear their cargoes and buy new goods to bring back to their country once the appropriate monsoon allowed them to sail home. They sold or bartered goods either in front of their homes, in the licensed stalls on the bridge over the Malacca River, or in the market.²¹⁷ Since they were using the Malay language, it became the “...*lingua franca* in ports throughout the archipelago,”²¹⁸ probably “...from Aceh in the west to Ternate in the east.”²¹⁹ Hence, these achievements and the rise of Malacca as a kingdom were the pride of the Malay community and were not matched by successive governments after Malacca’s fall to the Portuguese in 1511 AD

²¹⁶ Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p 54

²¹⁷ Barbara Watson Andaya, ‘Malacca’, pp 209-210.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p 210

²¹⁹ Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p 54.

2.4 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF MALAYSIA DURING THE PRE- AND POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIODS

After the Sultanate of Malacca collapsed and fell into the hands of the Portuguese in 1511 AD, it was taken over by the Dutch in 1641 and then colonized by the British in 1789. The influence of Portuguese and the Dutch colonizers were not as great as that of the British, probably because their periods of colonization were shorter. Most of the scholars who describe the British colonization of Malaysia agree that it had great influence on the country and the Malay community.

The colonization by the British is depicted by Mutalib as changing “...the course of Islam in Malay life...”²²⁰ which involved “...its social, legal and economic relationships; the organization of its government; even its religious affairs.”²²¹ Ali mentions that the power of the Malay Sultans under the British control from 1824 to 1957 was eliminated. “Politically they began to serve only as symbols of Malay political sovereignty, but without having any authority to make their decisions or to have them carried out, because they always had to refer matters to the British Residents or Advisers.”²²² Described by Yegar, the Residents appointed by the British as advisors to the Malay rulers were supposed to act in consultation with them,

²²⁰ Hussin Mutalib. *Islam in Malaysia: From Revivalism to Islamic State*, p 20

²²¹ Moshe Yegar, ‘The Development of Islamic Institutional Structure in Malaya, 1874-1941: The Impact of British Administrative Reforms’, in Raphael Israeli and Anthony H. John (eds), *Islam in Asia Volume II Southeast and East Asia*, Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1984, p 189.

²²² S. Husin Ali, *The Malays: Their Problems and Future*, p 27

but ultimately these Residents were the ones who controlled the administration in the Malay states.²²³

As described by Baharuddin, though the colonization of the British in Malaya has contributed to "...the improvement of Malaysian life, many criticize them for being responsible for whittling away the domination of Islam in Malaysian society."²²⁴ This occurred in both the political and the education systems. The British through their Residents gradually dominated political affairs, but not the Malay religion or customs (*adat*). Even though they reformed religious areas by introducing the Council of Islamic Affairs and Malaysian Customs (*Majlis Hal Ehwal Islam dan Adat Melayu*), implicitly this reduced the role of Islam in all aspects of life and limited it to religious matters.²²⁵ A similar situation occurred with Malay education. Islamic teaching used to dominate Malay education and a special Arabic script known as "*tulisan jawi*",²²⁶ a combination of Arabic script and the Malay language was introduced which became part of the Malay community identity. However, through British colonization, elements of secularism were inserted in Malay education which indirectly separated it from the notion of religion. The British introduced English-medium schools into urban areas and Malay-medium and Islamic religious schools in rural areas, with the intention "...to educate the rural population in a suitable rural manner and equip them to continue to live a useful,

²²³ Moshe Yegar, 'The Development of Islamic Institutional Structure 874-1941: The Impact of British Administrative Reforms', p 191.

²²⁴ Shamsul A. Baharuddin, 'Islam Embedded: 'Moderate' Political Islam and Governance in the Malay World' in K.S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali (eds), *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005, p 114.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p 115.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p 116.

happy rural life.”²²⁷ However, the English-medium schools were favoured by the British and it became their policy to tolerate a lower quality of Malay and Islamic education than of English education.²²⁸

Furthermore, the British government’s attitude towards the Malay community was largely negative. According to Swettenham, for example, the Malay people have no initiative and they will act upon what they have been told by their chiefs, “...no more, no less.”²²⁹ He also stated that the British liked the Malays, though they regarded the Malays as being less confident of their ability to rule themselves.²³⁰ Hence, the attitude and actions taken by the British colonial rulers towards the Malay community implicitly created a dilemma and crisis of identity within this group.

²²⁷ O.T. Dussek, May 1, 1960, cited in William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967, p 28. In this respect, Ali thought that there are reasons why the British had no intention of promoting development in the economy and education of those whom they colonised. Their intention was merely “...to harvest as much from the colonies as possible.” (Ali, 1981:125). Moreover, to allow higher and wide education among the colonies would threaten their position, as it would lead to groups of educated people challenging the colonial power. Ali mentions that, “By limiting the opportunity for education, the colonist would delay somewhat the process of social and political consciousness and the emergence of leadership that could challenge them” (Ali, 1981: 125). For further reading, see S. Husin Ali, *The Malays: Their Problems and Future*, pp 125-126.

²²⁸ Shamsul A. Baharuddin, ‘Islam Embedded: ‘Moderate’ Political Islam and Governance in the Malay World’, p 117

²²⁹ F. Swettenham, *British Malaya*, rev. Ed. London 1948, p 141 cited in William R Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967, p 9.

²³⁰ William R Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967, p 14.

Thus in the late nineteenth century, the notion of an Islamic reformist movement arose within Malaya, influenced by the idea of Islamic reformism introduced by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muhammad ‘Abduh. This notion was propagated mainly by two Malay reformists, Shaykh Tahir Jalal al-Din and Sayyid Shaykh b. Ahmad al-Hadi, through the periodical *al-Imām* (the leader). The purpose of this group, known as ‘*Kaum Muda*’,²³¹ was to re-think Islam in relation to the requirements of the contemporary situation as well as enhancing the identity of Malay Muslims as limited by what was perceived as backwardness under the British rule of their country.²³² The ‘*Kaum Muda*’ in addition condemned the Malay rulers and traditional religious scholars, recognized as ‘*Kaum Tua*’, for “...for their failure to act as effective ‘referent groups’ or models for their community.”²³³ They urged the Malays to return to the fundamentals of Islamic teaching and equip themselves with the knowledge and skills of modern life to deal with the challenges which faced them. Therefore, they introduced a new system in schools which stressed Islamic education together with modern secular knowledge through the establishment of new *madrasah* (schools) such as the School of al-Hadi in Malacca and the Madrasah al-Mashor in Penang.²³⁴

Furthermore, they suggested that there was a need to use reason (*‘aql*) in resolving the truth of religion and to follow the teaching of Islam without the “...blind acceptance of an

²³¹ ‘*Kaum Muda*’ literally means ‘Young Group’ or ‘Young Faction’, which refers to the modernist or reformist group which had emerged in Malaysia in the early 20th century. ‘*Kaum Tua*’ can be translated as ‘the Old Group’ or ‘Older Faction’; these were the traditional or conservative groups who opposed the new ideas brought by the reformist ‘*Kaum Muda*’. For a detailed analysis, see ‘Definition of Terms’ in this thesis, pp 18-19. For further references, see William R Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967, pp 56-90

²³² William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p 76.

²³³ *Al-Imam*, July 23, 1906, cited in Hussin Mutalib, *Islam in Malaysia: From Revivalism to Islamic State*, p 21.

²³⁴ Hussin Mutalib, *Islam in Malaysia: From Revivalism to Islamic State*, p 22.

intermediary authority.”²³⁵ Roff states that, “...the perfection and purification of Islam was for the Kaum Muda not simply an end in itself but a means for the acceleration and direction of social and economic change for the betterment of Malay society, a process held to be retarded by traditional Islam as practiced in the states.”²³⁶ They believed that the traditional thinking promoted by the traditional religious scholars or ‘*Kaum Tua*’ had prevented the Malay community from developing and competing with international challenges. Thus, Al-Murtazi condemned the ‘*Kaum Tua*’ in Malaya because he thought they wanted the same as that of “...Saint Peter of the Roman Church, to hold the only key to the gates of heaven.”²³⁷ However, these ideas were not well received by the ‘*Kaum Tua*’ which created a long and deep conflict between them. The ‘*Kaum Tua*’ thought that this group was irreligious. Moreover, an attack on ‘*Kaum Tua*’ implicitly meant an attack upon the traditional elites and traditions which were strongly supported by the Malay community.²³⁸ Still, Mutalib thought that the notion of reformism propounded by the ‘*Kaum Muda*’ had shaped a new identity, ideas and attitudes for the Malay group in overcoming their dilemma.²³⁹

The Malay community later faced a new situation when the country was overrun by the Japanese during World War II. Given the hardships they endured under the occupation of the Japanese, they were described as being much happier when living under the British administration which returned to Malaya after Japan was defeated. However, the idea of the

²³⁵ William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p 77.

²³⁶ Ibid., p 78

²³⁷ Abu Al-Murtazi, ‘Kaum Muda dan Kaum Tua: Dunia Islam’ (Kaum Muda and Kaum Tua: The Islamic World), *Al-Ikhwān*, October 3, 1928, cited in William R Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 1967, p 78.

²³⁸ William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p 79.

²³⁹ Hussin Mutalib, *Islam in Malaysia: From Revivalism to Islamic State*, p 23.

Malayan Union, a concept introduced by the British to replace the previous government system and form “...a more rational and uniform system of government,”²⁴⁰ was opposed by the Malay group. It was considered that it would weaken the power of the Malay rulers and grant citizenship and similar rights to other races. As Means maintains, the contents of the agreement signed by the Malay rulers needed them “...to accept ‘such future constitutional arrangements for Malays as may be approved by His Majesty’, while ‘full power and jurisdiction’ was transferred to Britain.”²⁴¹ Furthermore, it also affirmed that “...all those who have made the country their homeland should have the opportunity of a due share in the country’s political and cultural institutions.”²⁴² Thus, it gave citizenship to those who resided or were born in Malaya or Singapore “...for ten out of the preceding fifteen years, with the occupation period disregarded, while naturalized citizenship could be acquired after a residence of five years in Malaya or Singapore.”²⁴³

Due to their fear of losing their country and of the country being ruled by non-Malay communities, the Malay group strongly opposed the idea. They supported the Malay rulers or Sultans in their boycott of the installation ceremony of Sir Edward Gent as the new Governor of the Malayan Union. As a result of the strong resistance by Malays to the idea of a Malayan Union and their deep desire to achieve independence, the British government agreed to their demand and transferred the ideas of the Malayan Union to the Federation of Malaya

²⁴⁰ Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*, p 51.

²⁴¹ Harry Miller, *Menace in Malaya*, London: George G. Harrap & Co., LTD., 1954, p 21, cited in Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*, p 52.

²⁴² *Malayan Union and Singapore* Cmd. 6724, London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1946, p 1, cited in Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*, p 52

²⁴³ *Ibid*

Agreement.²⁴⁴ This time, representatives of the Malay group were invited to sit together with the other draftees of the agreement.

Consequently, a general election was held for the first time in Malaya in July 1955.²⁴⁵ Several parties won seats in the election, such as the United Malays Nation Organization (UMNO) representing the large Malay Muslim group, the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). These three parties formed a coalition known as The Alliance Party (*Parti Perikatan*). Other parties established at the time were the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (Parti Islam Se-Malaya or PAS) and the Party Negara. The Alliance Party, which was the favourite to win the election, won 51 out of 52 seats. The only seat lost by them was won in Krian, one of the districts in Perak by Tuan Haji Ahmad, candidate of the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PAS), with a slim majority of 450 votes.²⁴⁶ Thus the new government was established and continued to struggle for independence.

When it was achieved, an agreement was signed between the Malay and the non-Malay groups that a 'bargain' should be made. On the non-Malay side, the Malay group was recognized as the indigenous residents in Malaya, though the non-Malays, mainly Chinese

²⁴⁴ Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*, p 55

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p 170

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p 166.

and Indian, would be granted Malayan citizenship. According to the Reid Commission,²⁴⁷ anyone who had been born in Malaya after independence would be a citizen of Malaya. Non-citizens were entitled to obtain citizenship by fulfilling several conditions, such as “...(a) residing for five to eight years in Malaya (depending on place of residence at the time of independence), (b) taking an oath of allegiance, (c) renouncing foreign citizenship and (d) passing an elementary examination in the Malay language (subject to exception for one year after independence).”²⁴⁸

Furthermore, special Malay rights or privileges must be acknowledged by the non-Malay group. Those special privileges are “...the system of Malay reservations, reserving selected lands for Malays only; the operation of quotas within the public services reserving a certain portion for Malays; the operation of quotas for licenses and permits for certain businesses, chiefly those related to road transport; and special quotas for public scholarship and educational grants.”²⁴⁹ In addition, for the Malays to have Islam as the official religion²⁵⁰ and the Malay language as the national language²⁵¹ in the Federation of Malaya were other

²⁴⁷ The Reid Commission was a commission established by the British to draft the constitution of Malaya in achieving their independence. It consisted of five members, Sir Ivor Jennings from the United Kingdom, Sir William McKell from Australia, Mr. B. Malik from India and Mr Justice Abdul Hamid from Pakistan and was chaired by Lord Reid from the United Kingdom (Gordon P. Means, 1970:173) For details, please refer to Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*, pp 173-175

²⁴⁸ *Report of the Federation of Malaya Constitutional Commission, Appendices II, III and IV*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1957, pp 128-133, Articles 14-23, cited in Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*, p 175.

²⁴⁹ Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*, p 177.

²⁵⁰ Islam as defined in the Malaysia Constitution is the religion of the Federation, but other religions may be practised in any part of the Federation. For details, refer to the Constitution of Malaysia, article 3. <http://www.pogar.org/publications/other/constitutions/malaysia-e.pdf> (accessed June 20, 2008).

²⁵¹ The Malay language is the national language of the country, but there is no prohibition against learning and using other languages except for official purpose. For details, please refer to the Constitution of Malaysia, Article 152,

<http://www.pogar.org/publications/other/constitutions/malaysia-e.pdf>, (access June 20, 2008).

privileged matters, though these were not categorized as special privileges.²⁵² Subsequently, Malaya succeeded in achieving its independence on 31st August 1957. The independence or *Merdeka* signified the end of British rule in Malaya which had lasted for 171 years, starting in 1786 when a treaty between the Sultan of Kedah and the British East India Company was signed.²⁵³ Hence, Tunku Abdul Rahman, leader of the UMNO party, was appointed as the first Prime Minister of Malaya.

Although Malaya had been granted independence, the new government struggled to stabilize the country. Many problems had to be tackled, including the tension between the three major groups; the Malay, Chinese and Indians. Due to the British and Japanese occupations of Malaya, a huge gap between these main groups had occurred. During the British administration, social and administrative contacts between them were kept to a minimum. The Malays lived separately from and had minimum contact with other races. According to Mohamad, there were no racial clashes during this time, but there was no racial harmony or tolerance.²⁵⁴ No clash ensued, there was no reason for it to occur, but "...[the] seeds for conflict were in fact already there..."²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, this situation was forestalled by the British government. However, the separateness, aggravated by differences in culture and language, also led to tension.²⁵⁶ During the Japanese occupation, the separation between the Malay and Chinese groups widened. At the beginning of the war, the Chinese were mistreated

²⁵² Gordon P. Means, *Malayan Politics*, p 178.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p 189.

²⁵⁴ Mahathir Mohamad, *The Malay Dilemma*, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur: Times Books International, 1970, p 6.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p 120.

by the Japanese, while the Malays were either allied to or not anti-Japanese. However, by the end of the war, the situation had changed. The Chinese were cooperating and being favoured by the Japanese and the Malays, who were perceived as not useful to the Japanese, were ignored. This created further division and hostility between these two groups.²⁵⁷

This situation continued until ethnic riots occurred on 13th May 1969. To Soong, “The ‘May 13 incident’ of 1969 was the worst racial riot in the history of Malaysia.”²⁵⁸ It seems that the incident occurred in response to the results of the general election which the Alliance party and government won with a slim majority over the opposition party. UMNO won only 51 parliamentary seats and lost 17 to PAS. Meanwhile, MCA won only 13 seats, giving away 20 seats to the opposition and MIC won only 2 out of the 3 seats assigned to this party.²⁵⁹

Initially on 12th May 1969, following the unexpected election results, Dr. Tan Chee Khon who won a seat in Batu Selangor, got police permission for the members of Malaysian People’s Movement (GERAKAN) party to hold a parade to celebrate their victory, but in the event it caused widespread traffic jams. Matters grew more heated when the parade walked in triumph along Jalan Campbell (Campbell Street) and Jalan Hale (Hale Street) shouting

²⁵⁷ Ibid., p 6

²⁵⁸ Kua Kia Soong, ‘Racial Conflict in Malaysia: against the official history’, *Race and Class*, Vol. 49 (3), 2007, see <http://rac.sagepub.com/content/49/3/33.full.pdf+html> (accessed June 15, 2011), p 34

²⁵⁹ Furthermore, the Alliance again lost Kelantan to PAS, was defeated in Penang and Selangor, won 13 out of 24 seats in Terengganu and had to share the ruling power with the opposition parties in Selangor. For details, see Kua Kia Soong, ‘Racial Conflict in Malaysia: against the official history’, p 40

provocations at the Malays. Jalan Hale is the main street to Kampung Bharu, where 30,000 Malays were living. The next day, 13th May 1969, the GERAKAN Party's Yeoh Tech Chye, the President of the Malaysian Trades Union Congress, issued an open apology in the press for the inconvenience to the public caused by his supporters. But, as stressed by Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Malaysia Prime Minister at the time, "the emotional damage had already been done."²⁶⁰

In response to what had happened and also to celebrate their victory in the General Election, the UMNO members decided to hold a procession which began in the compound of Dato' Harun bin Idris's house at Jalan Raja Muda (Raja Muda Street). Tunku Abdul Rahman later admitted in his writings that he had felt uncomfortable at the idea of such a procession despite the police permit, as it might lead to the same sort of trouble as the opposition party had experienced.²⁶¹ Consequently, on 13th May, according to Tunku Abdul Rahman, the incident began around 6.45 pm on Jalan Raja Muda (Raja Muda Street), when some Chinese people were beaten.²⁶² Later, he received news that someone had been killed.

Hence, the city was put under immediate curfew at about 7 pm. Later, the Chinese attacked the Malays in Setapak, a mile or two to the north of Kuala Lumpur, while the Malays were on

²⁶⁰ Tunku Abdul Rahman, 13 May - Before and After, see <http://www.littlespeck.com/ThePast/CPast-My-tunku-030513.htm> (accessed June 15, 2011).

²⁶¹ Ibid

²⁶² Ibid

their way to join the parade which had begun at Jalan Raja Muda (Raja Muda Street). Afterwards, two Chinese men were attacked and killed when they passed by the Malay group on their motorcycle. This riot spread throughout the city of Kuala Lumpur within hours.²⁶³ It was reported that hundreds of people had been injured or killed. Consequently, the National Operations Council was set up by Tunku Abdur Rahman to lead the country to a temporary settlement, led by Tun Abdul Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister.

The condition of the Malays at the time also influenced this incident. They felt threatened, for most *Bumiputera*, including the Malays, lived in poverty and were mostly involved in traditional economic activities, while other races, such as the Chinese and Indians, chose work in the modern economic sector.²⁶⁴ The economy, moreover, was not the main agenda item proposed by the early Malaysian government. Following the incident, Malaysia's New Economy Policy (NEP) was introduced to ensure that at least 30 per cent of the economic share had passed to the Malays and indigenous groups by 1990.²⁶⁵ The main objectives of the policy were to eradicate poverty and to re-structure the society. In addition, the '*Rukun Negara*' or National Creed was introduced to preserve the unity of the multi-racial groups in the country. It consists of five principles for all Malaysians to follow regardless of their ethnic background. These are "Belief in God, Loyalty to King and Country, Upholding the

²⁶³ Zainon Ahmad, May 13, 1969-The truth and Reconciliation, *The Sun*, 26 July 2007, see <http://may131969.wordpress.com/2008/09/27/the-tragedy-of-may-13-1969/> (accessed June 16, 2011).

²⁶⁴ A.J. Stockwell, 'Malaysia' in C.E. Bosworth, et al (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Volume VI MAHK-MID, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991, p 241

²⁶⁵ This plan did not reach its target. As reported by Jomo, these groups achieved around 18 per cent of this share in 1990 and slightly more than 20 per cent in 2000. For details, please refer to Jomo K. Sundram., *The New Economic Policy and Interethnic Relations in Malaysia*, (presented at the UNRISD conference in Durban, South Africa, 3 - 5 September 2001), see [http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/\(httpPublications\)/A20E9AD6E5BA919780256B6D0057896B?OpenDocument](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpPublications)/A20E9AD6E5BA919780256B6D0057896B?OpenDocument) (accessed July 19, 2008)

Constitution, the Rule of Law, Good Behaviour and Morality.”²⁶⁶ It is one of the ways introduced by the Malaysian government to encourage unity among Malaysian citizens.

2.5 THE MALAY MUSLIM COMMUNITY AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

2.5.1 Perspectives on contemporary Malaysia and contemporary issues for the Malay community

Today, the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia has a better standard of living than ever before. Malaysia is at present viewed as an example of the combination of Islam and modernization.²⁶⁷ As stated by Funston, Islam in Malaysia is seen as “...both moderate and enlightened, rejecting extremism in any form” and tolerant of the rights of Muslim women in economic, academic, social and political activities.²⁶⁸ It is also viewed as “...one of the most stable and peaceful religious and sociopolitical orders in the Islamic world.”²⁶⁹ In economic terms, it is depicted as a country which has “...achieved, or almost achieved, the status of NIEs (newly industrialized economies)” due to its high rank economic growth.²⁷⁰ Malaysia is also recognized as one of the so-called ‘Tiger Economies’ in Southeast Asia along with

²⁶⁶ Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p 281.

²⁶⁷ Golam W. Choudhury, *Islam and the Modern Muslim World*, Kuala Lumpur: WHS Publications Sdn. Bhd, 1993, p 163.

²⁶⁸ John Funston, ‘Malaysia’, in Virginia Hooker and Greg Fealy (eds), *Voice of Islam in Southeast Asia: A Contemporary Sourcebook*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006, p 5.

²⁶⁹ Osman Bakar, ‘Malaysian Islam in the Twenty-First Century: The Promise of a Democratic Transformation?’ in John L. Esposito, John. O. Voll and Osman Bakar (eds), *Asian Islam in the 21st Century*, , Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p 81.

²⁷⁰ R.S. Milne and K. Diane Mauzy, *Malaysian Politics under Mahathir*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999, p 50.

Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam, due to its rapid economic growth in recent years.²⁷¹
Hence, Malaysia is one of the most reputable Muslim countries.

Despite these achievements, there are several issues and problems faced by the Malay community, which are highlighted below. These include such as the political, comprising issues of Malay unity and integration, the economy, society and education. As issues of politics and integration will be discussed first, it is essential to view the position of Islam in this country, because it is recognized as influencing the issue of integration of the different camps, despite their different perceptions of Islam and its role within the state and government.

2.5.2 The position of Islam in Malaysia

Since most Malays in Malaysia are Muslim, the position of Islam as the country's religion must be examined. According to the Constitution of Malaysia, Islam is the official religion of the country, yet there is no restriction on the practice of other religions in any part of the

²⁷¹ Ellina Badri, 'Malaysia to regain 'Asian Tiger' status', *The Edge Malaysia*, November 23, 2009, see <http://www.theedgemaalaysia.com/business-news/154202-malaysia-to-regain-asian-tiger-status.html> (accessed November 29, 2011)

country.²⁷² The Reid Commission which drafted the Constitution of Malaysia has stated that “...‘the religion of Malaysia shall be Islam. The observance of this principle shall not impose any disability on non-Muslim natives professing and practising their religion and shall not imply that the State is not a secular State.’”²⁷³ This means that the constitution preserves the civil rights of the non-Muslims in religious matters.

It might be thought that this article shows the supremacy of Islam as the official state religion. However, Islam, as mentioned in the constitution, has been interpreted as being similar to the Western Christian understanding of religion, which means that there is separation between Islam as a religion and public matters, including the affairs of government. Thus, it has weakened the roles of Islamic Law or *Shari‘ah* within the state. According to Justice Salleh Abbas, the term Islam in this article refers only to any act with regard to ritual and ceremonies.²⁷⁴ Islamic law or *Shari‘ah* is not the main law implemented in this country, whereby the pattern of the Westminster form of government is the form followed by the Malaysian government.

²⁷²Article 3, The Constitution of Malaysia, http://www.malaysia-today.net/malaysia_constitution.pdf (accessed June 20, 2008).

²⁷³ Report of the Federation of Malaysia Constitutional Commission 1957, Kuala Lumpur 1957, paragraph 169, p 73, cited in Ibrahim, Ahmad, ‘The Position of Islam in the Constitution of Malaysia’ in Mohamed Suffian, H.P. Lee and F.A. Trindade (eds), *The Constitution of Malaysia: Its Development 1957-1977*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978, p 48.

²⁷⁴ S.U Balogun, ‘The Status of *Shari‘ah* in Malaysia’, *Hamdard Islamicus*, Vol. XX, No.2 (April-June, 1997), p 54.

In responding to this situation, The Hon. Datuk Haji Yahya has pointed out that it is meaningless for the Malaysian government to acknowledge itself as an Islamic government if the teaching of Islam and the Islamic Law or *Sharī'ah* are neglected and not fully implemented, since they are essential in an Islamic government.²⁷⁵ At the same time, Tan Sri Datuk Ahmad Ibrahim has argued that “...although the constitution does not speak in favour of an Islamic government – it is based on a secular form of government – as long as the principles of Islamic government are strictly adhered to, the constitution could be operated in perfect harmony with them.”²⁷⁶

Furthermore, the administration of the Malaysia government, led by Tunku Abdul Rahman at the beginning of Malaysia's establishment, was inclined to the notion of secularism and opposed to the “...Islamic political struggle and ideals.”²⁷⁷ Hassan mentions that only certain aspects of the Muslim group were influenced by Islamic values and norms.²⁷⁸ Hence, the differences in perceiving Islam as a religion and its role within a state or government are among the main reasons underlying the clashes and disputes in the Malay community.

²⁷⁵ The statement made by The Hon. Datuk Haji Yahya on this matter can be found in Ahmad Ibrahim, ‘The Position of Islam in the Constitution of Malaysia’, p 54.

²⁷⁶ Tan Sri Datuk Ahmad Ibrahim, ‘The Principles of an Islamic Constitution and the Constitution of Malaysia: A Comparative Analysis’, a paper presented at a symposium, *Towards a Better Understanding of the Sharia (Islamic Law)*, 2nd September, 1989, cited in S.U. Balogun, ‘The Status of *Sharī'ah* in Malaysia’, p 54.

²⁷⁷ M. Kamal Hasan, ‘Malaysia’ in John. L. Esposito (ed), *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islam World*, p 36.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

2.5.3 The issue of integration within the Malay Muslim community

The issue of integration within the Malay Muslim camp is an ongoing internal problem for them. They believe that conflicts should not occur, for they weaken the people and affect unity.²⁷⁹ Conflict is seen mainly in politics, where there are two main political parties which represent the group within the Malay community, the United Malay Nation Organization (UMNO) and the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS).

UMNO is currently the ruling party of Malaysia in coalition with the other political parties, namely the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) and several parties in East Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak. UMNO was founded in May 1946 by Dato' Onn bin Ja'afar in Johor, in response to the objections of the Malay leaders to the proposal for a Malayan Union by the British government, after the British took over when the Japanese were defeated in World War II. Forty-one Malay associations from all over the peninsula later agreed to form this political party, representing the voice of the Malay community. Meanwhile the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party, known as PAS, originally developed from the religious bureau of UMNO. It broke away in 1951 and formed its own

²⁷⁹ Mohamad Abu Bakar, 'Islam and Nationalism in Contemporary Malay Society' in Taufik Abdullah and Sharon Siddique (eds), *Islam and Society in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986, p 155.

group, led by Ahmad Fuad Hassan.²⁸⁰ They left UMNO due to their dissatisfaction with UMNO's neglect of the issue of Natrah's apostasy,²⁸¹ the launching of fun fairs and gambling by the government and the dominance of UMNO by secularist figures.²⁸² This party was gradually established under the leadership of Dr. Burhanuddin Al-Helmi and at first promoted the idea of a *Melayu Raya* (Greater Malaya) in establishing a land of Muslims.²⁸³ Nowadays, PAS continues to be one of the main opposition parties to UMNO and its alliance, the National Front (*Barisan Nasional*).²⁸⁴

UMNO are not merely doubtful, but perhaps reject the applicability and validity of Islamic teaching in modern Malaysia and the fact that Malaysia is a multi-racial and multi-religious

²⁸⁰ Before PAS was formed, there was an Islamic movement in Malaya known as *Hizbul Muslimin* established in 1948. This lasted for less than five months, however, as some of its leaders were detained under the Emergency Regulations in August 1948 and it was later banned by the British government. Hence, when the religious bureau split from UMNO, a meeting was held among the local religious scholars, including those previously involved in *Hizbul Muslimin*. The meeting decided to form an Islamic political party, known as Pan Islamic Malaysian, or PMIP, and currently known as PAS.

²⁸¹ This was a custody issue which later turned into religious antagonism. Natrah or Maria Hertogh was a daughter of Dutch Catholics living in Tjimahi, near Bandung, Java. She was raised as a Muslim under the care of Aminah binti Mohamed, a close friend to Natrah's grandmother, Nor Louise. Aminah claimed she had permission from Nor Louise to raise Natrah as her foster daughter. Due to the situation created by World War II, Aminah brought Natrah to her home town in Kemaman, Terengganu, Malaya. When the war ended, Natrah's father wanted to take her back, searched for her and found that she was living in Terengganu. As Natrah herself refused to return to her family in the Netherlands, Aminah appealed to have the legal right of custody of Natrah and won. The issue was again brought to court when Natrah at the age of 13 was married to a Malay man of 22, called Mansor Adabi. According to Dutch law, the marriage was invalid, since girls are under the guardianship of their father until the age of 16. This time Natrah's Catholic family won the case. As a result, Natrah had to be returned to them. Thus, the issue became a focus for religious antagonism. A riot occurred on 11 December 1950 in Singapore due to the anger and frustration of the Malays with Natrah's conversion to Catholicism. For details, see *Nadra Tragedy (Nadra Ma'arof or MariaHertogh)*, see <http://nadra-natrah.blogspot.co.uk/> (accessed September 28, 2009)

²⁸² 'Sejarah Parti Islam Semalaysia (PAS)', *Parti Islam Semalaysia (PAS)*, see http://pas.org.my/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=180&Itemid=438 (accessed November 21, 2008)

²⁸³ One of the purposes of *Melayu Raya* (Greater Malaya) was to unite the Malays "...wherever they might be..." (Means, 1970: 229). It was believed that this movement would include Malaya, Singapore, the Borneo states, Indonesia and possibly the Philippines.

²⁸⁴ In the general election of 2008, PAS with *Parti KeAdilan Rakyat* or People's Justice Party and Democratic Action Party (DAP) under a coalition known as *Pakatan Rakyat* (People's Pact) defeated the National Front (*Barisan Nasional*) in several states and won Kelantan, Kedah, Perak, Penang and Selangor.

society where implementing Islamic law would not be appropriate.²⁸⁵ The first Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, strongly opposed the interposition of Islam within the state administration. He stated, "...I would like to make it clear that this country is not an Islamic State as it is generally understood, we merely provide that Islam shall be the official religion of the State."²⁸⁶

UMNO, in contrast, has not completely ignored the elements of Islamic teaching. They have concentrated on various activities in religious matters such as "...supporting the construction of mosques and other prayer houses, continued to administer the established practices of marriage, *zakat* collection, prayers and fasting..."²⁸⁷ Furthermore, the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir, instilled Islamic values within the government and introduced programmes which related to it, such as the expansion of an Islamic *Sharī'ah* court, the establishment of an Islamic insurance company, the foundation of the International Islamic University of Malaysia and the introduction of "...interest-free banking facilities in conventional commercial banks..." due to the influence of the Islamic resurgence and demands from the *da'wah* movement in the 1970s.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ Deliar Noer, 'Contemporary Dimensions of Islam' in M.B Hooker (ed), *Islam in South-East Asia*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983, p 204.

²⁸⁶ Official Report of Legislative Council Debates, 1 May 1958, Columns 4631 and 4671-2, cited in Ahmad Ibrahim, 'The Position of Islam in the Constitution of Malaysia', p 55.

²⁸⁷ Deliar Noer, 'Contemporary Dimensions of Islam', p 20.

²⁸⁸ M. Kamal Hasan, 'Malaysia', pp 37-38.

However, from the PAS point of view, UMNO has not met all the requirements for becoming an Islamic government. PAS considers that Islam is “...an alternative on which society and the state should be built”²⁸⁹ and that there should be an Islamic state, meaning all that aspects of Islam should be implemented, though not that the state should be ruled by the *ulama*’.²⁹⁰ Furthermore, the teaching of Islam and the implementation of Islamic law is already practical and valid at all times and in all places because Islam is a universal religion. However, PAS approach in propagating these ideas is considered to be quite radical and is not accepted by some of the groups within the community. Hence, Mutalib argues that there is a long-established UMNO-PAS ideological divide in which each blames the other for not following the ‘right Islam’.²⁹¹ In 1987, there was open hostility between these two parties, accusing each other of being ‘infidels’, which is a serious accusation in Islamic teaching.²⁹²

It is interesting to note that this difference did not occur during the anti-colonial struggle. The Islamist and nationalist groups of the time shared the same view of Islam and fought for the same aim, to achieve independence for the country. To them, “Malay nationality and the Islamic religion were practically synonymous.”²⁹³ According to Abu Bakar, the Islamists and the *ulama*’ of the time believed that this fight for Malay nationalism had strong ties with the notion of Islam. Implicitly there was integration and unity among the Malay Muslims who had fought together in objecting to the proposal for a Malayan Union propounded by the

²⁸⁹ Deliar Noer, ‘Contemporary Dimensions of Islam’, p 204.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Hussin Mutalib, ‘Islamisation in Malaysia: Between Ideals and Realities’, p 164.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Mohamad Abu Bakar, ‘Islam and Nationalism in Contemporary Malay Society’ in Taufik Abdullah and Sharon Siddique (eds), *Islam and Society in Southeast Asia*, p 156

British. As mentioned by Marican, the campaign “...brought together the divergent strains in the previous Malay nationalist movements of the twenties and thirties by including Islamic reformers, the Malay educated intelligentsia and Malay civil servants.”²⁹⁴ Perhaps the situation led them to fight together to release the country from colonial bondage.

A similar situation occurred after the ethnic riots of 13th May 1969 where the National Operations Council (NOC)²⁹⁵ led by Tun Abdul Razak invited all the political, administrative and military elite, including PAS, to cooperate in helping the government to face the crisis.²⁹⁶ Consequently, some of them were offered positions in the government, such as ministers, deputy ministers and parliamentary secretaries. PAS agreed to join the coalition at the state level in 1973 and thus became the component party of the National Front (*Barisan Nasional*) in 1974.²⁹⁷ However the PAS-UMNO coalition lasted for only five years because of UMNO’s alleged interference in PAS’s internal political affairs. This led to a vote of no confidence against the PAS president, led by Mohamad Nasir, who was proposed by Tun Abdul Razak, the leader of UMNO and the National Front, as the chief minister of Kelantan.²⁹⁸ Subsequently, Kelantan was brought “...under the federal rule through emergency legislation

²⁹⁴ Y. Mansoor Marican, ‘Malay Nationalism and the Islamic Party of Malaysia’, in *Islamic Studies*, Spring, 1977, p 295 cited in Mohamad Abu Bakar, ‘Islam and Nationalism in Contemporary Malay Society’, p 157.

²⁹⁵ This council was an emergency administrative body which was launched after the incident of 13th May 1969, acted as an acting Malaysian government until the new government was elected in 1971.

²⁹⁶ S. Husin Ali, *The Malays: Their problems and future*, p 34.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p 37.

²⁹⁸ Tun Abdul Razak the leader of the National Front had named Mohamad Nasir as the chief minister of Kelantan instead of the candidate suggested by the PAS President, Asri. Mohamad Nasir refused to obey the order of the PAS leader; hence, the Federal government brought Kelantan under emergency legislation as mentioned above.

passed in December 1977 pending a new state election.”²⁹⁹ As PAS refused to support the emergency bill, it ended its coalition with the National Front. Consequently, PAS was defeated in the March 1978 election, losing the state of Kelantan to UMNO.³⁰⁰

Nevertheless, UMNO have recently had discussions and expressed interest in forming a new mutual agreement with PAS. They are interested in a compromise regarding the issue of Malay Muslims because they lost Penang to the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and a majority of the seats in Perak were also won by the DAP in the Malaysia General Election in 2008. However, the PAS President, Abdul Hadi Awang, has clearly stated that there will be no coalition between PAS and UMNO whether at the federal or state level of government. Thus PAS remains with *Pakatan Rakyat*³⁰¹ and continues to strengthen this coalition.³⁰²

2.5.4 Issue of the economy

The current condition of the Malays as regards the economy, at least, relates to what they experienced in the past, in particular during the period of British colonization. Beforehand, we should acknowledge the Malays’ remarkable economic growth during the era of the Sultanate

²⁹⁹ Syed Ahmad Hussein, ‘Muslim Politics and the Discourse of Democracy’ in Francis Loh Kok Wah and Teik, Khoo Boo Teik (eds) *Democracy in Malaysia: Discourse and Practices*, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2002, p 90.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 90-91.

³⁰¹ Pakatan Rakyat (People’s Pact) is a coalition of three main opposition parties in Malaysia, the Pan Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), *Parti KeAdilan Rakyat* (PKR) or the People’s Justice Party and the Democratic Action Party (DAP)

³⁰² Abdul Hadi Awang, ‘Kenyataan media:Isu kerjasama Pas-Umno’, (June 26, 2008), <http://mppas.wordpress.com/2008/06/26/isu-kerjasama-pas-umno/> (accessed November 24, 2008).

of Malacca. Being a great kingdom, well-known as an international entrepôt, had placed them at the forefront as a great kingdom. However, the situation changed since "...both the political and economic situation disintegrated after the fall of Melaka to the Portuguese."³⁰³ It is seen that from the fall of Malacca until the British interference in the Malay land, the Malays mainly depended economically on trade and agriculture, under the control of their rulers and chiefs.³⁰⁴

During the period of British colonization, the Malays mainly lived in villages, practised traditional agriculture and fishing and were not involved at all in state or commercial activities, not "...even on a small scale."³⁰⁵ This was perhaps due to the British encouragement to continue as traditional agriculturalists and not to engage in industry or stable labourers, like the Chinese and Indians, and not even to involve themselves in new economic ventures such as commerce and manufacturing. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Malays of today are not as competent as the Chinese in such economic activities. The non-Malays, the Chinese in particular "...have had much experience, have invested a lot of capital and were established earlier in these new economic activities," so their position is stronger than that of the Malays, who find it very hard to succeed in such areas.³⁰⁶ In addition, the laissez faire system implemented in the economic system nowadays expects everyone to compete, hence they are prone to lose, as the stronger predictably tends to beat the weaker. In Ali's words', "It is just impossible for anybody without sufficient capital or experience, be the

³⁰³ S. Husin Ali, *The Malays: Their problems and future*, p 77

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid, p 78

³⁰⁶ Ibid., p 87

Malay or non-Malay, to compete against the monopoly-capitalists who are already well-entrenched in business.”³⁰⁷

Therefore, it is reported that in the early years of independence, there was a substantial inequality of income between the *Bumiputera* (the Malays and other indigenous groups) and the non-Malay (non-*Bumiputera*), a result of the continued laissez-faire economic policy inherited by the Alliance government from the last colonial ruler.³⁰⁸ Though this economic policy has resulted in rapid economic growth, reportedly a growth rate for the GDP of 4.1 percent in 1956-1960, 5.0 percent in 1961-1965 and 5.4 per cent in 1966-1970,³⁰⁹ nearly half the population at the end of the 1960s was still living in poverty.³¹⁰ It is reported that, during this period, the Malays had a particularly high rate of poverty compared to the non-Malays. For example, in 1970, the percentage of Malays in poverty was 65.9 compared to only 27.5 percent for the Chinese and the 40.2 percent for the Indians.³¹¹ Furthermore, it was perceived that poverty at the time was the problem of the rural areas and Malay households. Therefore, it could be said that, “As the majority of the rural households were the Malays, the Malay then became synonymous with the poor, i.e. the poor were generally the Malays and the Malays were generally poor.”³¹² Additionally, two-thirds of the Malays at the time tended to be engaged in the primary sector, for instance in agriculture, which has low productivity,

³⁰⁷ Ibid

³⁰⁸ A.H. Roslan, ‘Income Inequality, Poverty and Policy Development in Malaysia’, (paper presented at the International Seminar on Poverty and Sustainable Development organised by Université Montesquieu-Bordeaux IV and UNESCO, Paris, France, November 22-23, 2001) see <http://ged.u-bordeaux4.fr/SBROSLAN.pdf> (accessed November 29, 2011), p 2 and 5

³⁰⁹ Bank Negara, *Money and Banking in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur :Bank Negara Malaysia, 1994, p 4

³¹⁰ Ibid., p 5

³¹¹ Ibid

³¹² Ibid

whereas the non-Malays by and large worked in the secondary and tertiary sectors such as mining, manufacturing, construction, wholesale and retail trade, labelled as high in productivity.

Thus, a New Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced by the government in 1970, and succeeded by the New Development Policy in 1990.³¹³ These aimed "...to achieve national unity and to foster nation-building."³¹⁴ They had two precise objectives, which were "...‘poverty eradication regardless of race’ and ‘restructuring society to eliminate the identification of race with economic function.’"³¹⁵ One of the NEP’s attempts was "...to achieve a target of 30 percent *Bumiputera* control of share capital in 1990". According to Ali, the 30 per cent target referred not to the percentage of the Malays to be involved in the ‘programme’, but to the "...the amount of the capital that they, as a group, will hopefully control."³¹⁶ Hence, the involvement in achieving the target came mainly from the privileged group of Malays of the upper class. As a result, it is argued that this policy did not change the structure of the economy, but gave people more opportunities to take part and earn greater profits. Probably this is one of the reasons that the target was not achieved. The effect of the policy reached a total of about 18 per cent in 1990 and marginally over 20 per cent in 2000.³¹⁷

³¹³ Ibid., p 2

³¹⁴ Ibid., p 11

³¹⁵ Jomo K. Sundram,, *The New Economic Policy and Interethnic Relations in Malaysia*, p iii.

³¹⁶ S. Husin Ali, *The Malays: Their problems and future*, p 89

³¹⁷ Jomo K. Sundram,, *The New Economic Policy and Interethnic Relations in Malaysia*, p 18

Though the NEP did not reach its target of 30 per cent equity by the Malays in 1990, it did make many improvements in Malay life and seemed to bear fruit in reducing poverty. The Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER) has reported that the number of poor households declined from 1.6 million in 1970 to below 574,000 in 1990 and 267,000 in 2002.³¹⁸ Furthermore, a recent survey carried out by the Second National Economic Consultative Council or MAPEN II shows that the rate of poverty in Malaysia declined from 16.5 per cent in 1990 to 4.3 per cent in 2004. The rate of poverty in the rural areas dropped from 21.1 per cent in 1990 to 9.6 per cent in 2004.³¹⁹ These figures show positive changes regarding poverty and economic development within the community.

Though the NEP succeeded in reducing poverty amongst the Malays, it is reported there is still a huge economic gap between rural and urban areas as well as amongst different ethnic groups. Furthermore, the issue of poverty remains concentrated on the *Bumiputera*, including the Malays. The MAPEN II report shows that in 2004, the rate of poverty remained higher in rural areas (9.6 per cent) than in urban areas (1.6 per cent). Meanwhile, regarding ethnic groups, the percentage of poverty among the Malays in 1997 was still higher than among other races, 7.7 per cent compared to the Indian group (1.3 percent) and the Chinese (only 1.1 percent).³²⁰ Additionally, in 1997, income distribution between ethnic groups shows that the

³¹⁸ Musalmah Johan, 'Eradicating Rural and Urban Poverty' Malaysian Institute of Economic Research, October 2005, see http://www.mier.org.my/mierscan/archives/pdf/musalmah3_10_2005.pdf (accessed November 20, 2008), p 1

³¹⁹ Faridah Abu Hassan et al., 'Kemiskinan dan Pendidikan : Perubahan Minda Orang Melayu ke Arah Kecemerlangan Pendidikan Akademik' *Jurnal Penyelidikan Pendidikan*, Disember, Volume 7 (2005), http://www.moe.gov.my/galeri_awam/selidik/2005/2005_BTMK_5_9637_3446.pdf (accessed November 28, 2008), p 30.

³²⁰ Ibid.

monthly household income of the *Bumiputera* is lower than the Chinese and the Indians. The *Bumiputera* formed the largest group (70.2%) in the lowest 40 percent income category compared with the Chinese (14.4%) and Indians (5.3%).³²¹ Hence, this situation slightly affects the Malay students' academic performance, which will be discussed next.

2.5.5 Issue of education / low academic performance

According to Alfian and Othman, "The issue of students' performance in a multi-racial country like Malaysia can become a matter for concern, particularly if the students' performances vary amongst the three major races – the Malay, Chinese and Indian."³²² Hence, Malay leaders and scholars have a number of worries over Malay students' academic performance. The former Education Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Mahadzir Khir, articulated this issue as follows, "...the ministry is concerned with the *Bumiputera* students' performance in the university and is disappointed with the number of drop-outs involving *Bumiputera* students."³²³ His view is shared by Professor Dr. Awang Had Salleh, who asserts that "...the academic performance among the bumiputra (sons of the soil-Malays) students are generally

³²¹ Ibid

³²² Ervina Alfian and Md. Nor Othman, 'Undergraduate students' performance: the case of University of Malaya', *Quality Assurance in Education*, Vol 13, No 4 (2005), see http://www.swetswise.com.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/FullTextProxy/swproxy?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.emeraldinsight.com%2Fcgi-bin%2Fcgi%3Fini%3Dswets%26abs%3Dno%26body%3Dlinker%26reqidx%3D0968-4883%2820050401%2913%3A4L.329%3B1-%26lkey%3D787169%26rkey%3D275181&ts=1323331539988&cs=4080529940&userName=8080910.ipdirect&emCondId=1244868&articleID=25045052&yevoID=1561589&titleID=169496&referer=1&remoteAddr=147.188.128.74&hostType=PRO&swsSessionId=mTxsoz3t-slfOUmYfxVvtg_.pasc2 (accessed June 11, 2011), p 330.

³²³ 'Institutions to conduct study on students' performance', *New Straits Time*, August 6, 2001, cited in Ervina Alfian and Md. Nor Othman, 'Undergraduate students' performance: the case of University of Malaya', p 330

average and in most cases lower than the non-bumiputra students.’³²⁴ Moreover a study reports that Malay students’ performance in English is still weak, even in conquering the standard Malay language.³²⁵

A study conducted by Faridah and her colleagues concluded that the achievements of the *Bumiputera* students (comprising Malay and other indigenous groups) are lower than those of the non-*Bumiputera* or non-Malay students at all levels of education, either in rural or urban areas.³²⁶ For example, the non-*Bumiputera* students have gained better results in the Primary School Evaluation Test or *Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR)* than have the *Bumiputera*.³²⁷ Meanwhile at the tertiary level, a survey shows that the results of the Malays and the Indians are satisfactory, while the Chinese students operate at the excellent level. The survey states that the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of the Chinese students overall is around 3.34, while for the Malay students, it is 2.79 and for the Indian students it is 2.87.³²⁸

³²⁴ Awang Had Salleh (1986). ‘Ke Arah Pencapaian Akademik Yang Cemerlang Dikalangan Pelajar Bumiputera Melalui Kaunseling’ (paper presented at 2nd Seminar On Counselling In The Context of Bumiputera Academic Achievement in the Country, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia, 1986), cited in Nor Azmi Bin Mostafa, ‘Bilingualism and the Academic Achievement of Malay Students’, (paper presented at International Conference IPBA, 24-26 September 2002), see <http://kajianberasaskansekolah.files.wordpress.com/2008/05/bilingual1.pdf> (accessed November 30, 2011), p 4

³²⁵ Ibid

³²⁶ Faridah Abu Hassan et al., ‘Kemiskinan dan Pendidikan : Perubahan Minda Orang Melayu ke Arah Kecemerlangan Pendidikan Akademik’, p 31-32

³²⁷ Ibid., p 32.

³²⁸ National Higher Education Research Institute, ‘A Study on Academic Performance of Matriculation Students in Public Institutions of Higher Learning’, <http://www.usm.my/ipptn/fileup/Matrikulasi%20IPTA.pdf> (accessed November 25, 2008).

The Malay socio-economy and attitude are seen among the reasons contributing to this situation. The Malays and indigenous families who live in rural areas are usually poor. Hence, it has become a burden for them to provide a good education for their children. They not only have to pay school fees and for uniform, books, stationery and pocket money, but also certain school activities which usually are not free.³²⁹ Though these families have government help, receiving “...financial assistance through education support programme such as subsidies, scholarships, textbooks-on-loan and hostel facilities,” they still have to carry “... some [of the] costs of schooling their children.”³³⁰ As a result, the children score poorly in academic performance, for they either suffer by having to spend more time in helping their parents to get more income by working on the farm or at sea (as fishermen) or in the shop³³¹ instead of concentrating on their studies, or by lacking the education facilities which their parents cannot afford, such as extra tuition and extra reading materials.³³²

In addition, the attitude of the parents has an impact on children’s academic success. Hassan and Rasiah in their survey reported that 15 per cent of parents, whether in urban or rural areas are skeptical about the future of their children in education. In other words, they “...did not give much hope that their children’s education could lead them to better lives in future,” though they still think that education is important and having an education is a better

³²⁹ Osman Rani Hassan and Rajah Rasiah, ‘Poverty and Student Performance in Malaysia’, *International Journal of Institutions and Economics*, Vol.3. No.1, April 2011, see <http://ijie.um.edu.my/RePEc/umk/journal/v3i1/Fulltext3.pdf> (accessed November 26, 2011), p 63

³³⁰ Ibid

³³¹ Faridah Abu Hassan et al., ‘Kemiskinan dan Pendidikan : Perubahan Minda Orang Melayu ke Arah Kecemerlangan Pendidikan Akademik’, p 31-32

³³² Osman Rani Hassan and Rajah Rasiah, ‘Poverty and Student Performance in Malaysia’, p 63

option.³³³ In addition, the low achievement of Malay students is also due to their own attitude, in not being serious about excelling in education, as the Chinese are. This is due to their preference for "...feeling comfortable (complacent), laziness, lack of competitiveness, [being] easily influenced by negative external factors, lack of constructive interaction, low self-esteem, [engaged] in useless activities, [tendency] to choose easy subjects and lack of academic and career guidance."³³⁴ Thus, it is not surprising that the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, spoke of his concern in this matter, thus: "...the attitude of the Malays seemed to be at an old level and that the Malays now are placing less importance on excellence."³³⁵

Surprisingly, the issue of Malay students in academic life, together with the issue of poverty among the Malays leads to another critical issue, that of social morality in particular among Malay teenagers, which is the next focus.

2.5.6 Social and moral problems

Despite Malaysia's economic growth in the last three decades, there is a rising trend of social problems above all among teenagers. According to the Ministry of National Unity and

³³³ Ibid., p 69.

³³⁴ Faridah Abu Hassan et al., 'Kemiskinan dan Pendidikan : Perubahan Minda Orang Melayu ke Arah Kecemerlangan Pendidikan Akademik', p 40

³³⁵ 'Malays need to buck up in education, says DPM', *Utusan Malaysia*, December 20, 2002, cited in Ervina Alfian and Md. Nor Othman, 'Undergraduate students' performance: the case of University of Malaya', p 330

Community Development, social problems among Malaysian teenagers are listed as “...drinking liquor, sex (discriminate or indiscriminate), stealing, drug abuse, close proximity between the sexes in a closed/secluded place (*khalwat*), gambling, running away from home, loafing, illegal motor racing, truancy, smoking, vandalism, gangsterism and watching pornographic videos.”³³⁶ Hence, a number of concerns from various levels of the community has arisen, looking for the causes and the solutions for these problems.

The Malaysia National Anti-Drug Agency (Agensi AntiDadah Kebangsaan or ADK) reported that there was an increasing number of drug addicts from January to December 2010, 23,642 compared to the total for the same period in 2009, of 15,736, the percentage of increase being 50.24.³³⁷ The Malays, unhappily, record a higher number of drug addicts than do the Chinese and Indian population – 18,693 people (79.07 per cent), or 0.21 per cent of the entire Malay population (9,052,000 people) between 15 and 64 years of age.³³⁸ However, the increase in the number of Malay drug addicts from 2009 to 2010 is quite low, 36.4 per cent, while the Indian group increased by 116.4 percent and the Chinese showed an increase of 139.64 per

³³⁶ The Ministry of National Unity and Community Development, Malaysia, ‘Executive Summary Report on Current Social Problems’ (paper presented by the chief secretary of the Ministry of National Unity and Community Development, Brainstorming Session on Social Issues and Problems, Kota Tinggi, Johor, Malaysia, March, 6-8, 1997), cited in Mohamed Aslam Haneef, Selamah Abdullah Yusof, Ruzita Mohd. Amin and Hazizan Md. Noon, ‘Values and Their Relationship to Social Problems in Malaysia: An Islamic Framework’ see http://i-epistemology.net/attachments/689_Ajiss19-3%20-%20Haneef%20et%20al%20-%20Values%20and%20their%20Relationship%20to%20Social%20Problems%20in%20Malaysia.pdf (accessed September 19, 2011), p 69 (paper presented at the 30th Annual Conference of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, Dearborn, Michigan, October 26 to 28, 2001)

³³⁷ Agensi AntiDadah Kebangsaan Kementerian Dalam Negeri (National Anti-drug Agency, Ministry of Home Affairs), *Laporan Dadah Disember 2010*, p 2

³³⁸ Ibid.

cent (951 cases in 2009 and 2,279 cases in 2010), which is the highest percentage of increase.³³⁹

Furthermore, there is a trend among Malaysian youngsters, male more than female, to engage in illegal motor racing on the street, and become what is called '*Mat Rempit*'. From 2005 to July 2008, 1,557 illegal motor race participants were arrested under Section 42 of the Road Transport Act 1987. Again, the Malays were the 'champions' of the people seize. Of those arrested, 1,436 were Malays, 51 were Chinese and 63 were Indian.³⁴⁰ Moreover, the proportion of teenagers (aged between 16 and 20) arrested was the highest, 913 of the total, while 550 people were aged between 21 and 25, 26 people were under 15 years old and 5 people were above the age of 31.³⁴¹

Another alarming social problem is having sexual intercourse outside marriage, now current among teenagers and adults. It seems that this conduct has become the norm for community members, notably teenagers, even though it is perceived as taboo in the Malay community and prohibited in Islam. It is reported that 3 out of 6 teenagers and young people (aged between 15 and 28 years old) were found to have had pre-marital sexual intercourse due to

³³⁹ Ibid., p 6 and 7, see appendices

³⁴⁰ Hashim Haji Bedu, Khairulhelmi Katip, Mohd Fahmi Mohd Sahid, Syed Mohamed Syafeq Syed Mansor, 'Keruntuhan Akhlak dan Gejala Sosial dalam Keluarga; Isu dan Cabaran', (a paper presented at Conference of Family Counselling 2008 /Seminar Kaunseling Keluarga 2008), see http://eprints.utm.my/6511/1/HashimBedu2008_KeruntuhanAkhlakGejalaSosialKeluarga.pdf (accessed November 29, 2011), pp 56-57

³⁴¹ Ibid., p 57.

watching pornographic videos and wanting to 'try'. Shockingly, most of them were well-educated and had university degrees.³⁴²

Moreover, a study conducted by a local research team led by Associate Professor Dr. Lekhraj Rampal from the University Putra Malaysia, finds that 1,809 respondents (9.6 per cent) from a total of 18,805 respondents aged between 12 and 60, admitted that they had had sex before marriage. Hence, from 5,114 unmarried respondents, 448 of them confessed that they had had sex. From this number (448 respondents), 38 respondents admitted they had had their first experience of sexual intercourse at ages between 12 and 15, while the rest (155 respondents) said that they had had sexual activity when they were 16-18 years old.³⁴³ However, the shocking aspect is that most of the respondents were Malays (10,599) with 3,875 Chinese and 1,210 Indians, 1,302 *Bumiputera* Sabah, 692 *Bumiputera* Sarawak and 233 others. No doubt, the Malays are in a crucial situation when it comes to social problems.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons for the rise in cases of teenage pregnancy, illegal abortions, illegitimate children and baby-dumping. A report states that, since 2008, 768 girls of 13 years

³⁴² Muhd Amirul Faiz Ahmad and Mohd Nasaruddin Parzi, '3 daripada 6 remaja terbabat seks bebas', *Berita Harian Online*, October 1, 2011, see

<http://www.bharian.com.my/articles/3daripada6remajaterbabatseksbebas/Article/> (accessed December 5, 2011)

³⁴³ Fuad Hadinata Yaacob and Asmizan Mohd Samiran, 'Trend serah tubuh', *Mymetro Online*, 2005, see metahad@hmetro.com.my (accessed December 5, 2011)

old most of whom were not married, had given birth to babies.³⁴⁴ In addition, the Department of Social Welfare declared that in the first six months of 2010, 111 cases of teenage pregnancy were reported, compared to 113 cases in 2009 and 107 cases in 2008.³⁴⁵ However, these pregnancies may have occurred when the girls concerned were raped, not having sex by consent. Consequently, 152,182 births of illegitimate children were recorded from 2008 to 2010 under the National Registration Department, Ministry of Home Affairs in Malaysia.³⁴⁶ This is true whether or not the children were born to unmarried mothers. There are other depressing and unacceptable cases where mothers or couples abandon their babies in unacceptable places (too embarrassing to specify here) since their pregnancies were unwanted and they feel guilt and shame brought on their family and fear lest they will be shunned by society. According to statistics released by the Royal Malaysia Police (Polis Diraja Malaysia or PDRM), 517 cases have been reported in the past six years, with the highest incidence, 102 cases, in 2008. Out of this total, 203 babies were boys, 164 were girls and the gender of the remaining 105 could not be detected, either because they were still fetal or had impaired bodies.³⁴⁷ 230 of the babies were found to be still alive, whereas 287 were dead when found. Though it was difficult to identify the ethnic origins of these unfortunate babies, the police stated that "...a majority of baby-dumping cases involve Malays..."³⁴⁸ Furthermore, it was stated that,

³⁴⁴ Hafizah Iszahanid, 'Kes remaja hamil kronik', *Berita Harian Online*, July 25, 2010, see <http://www.bharian.com.my/bharian/articles/Kesremajahamilkronik/Article> (accessed December 5, 2011)

³⁴⁵ Ibid

³⁴⁶ Utusan Malaysia Online, '152,182 orang anak luar nikah 2008-2010,' November 16, 2011, see http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2011&dt=1116&pub=utusan_malaysia&sec=Parlimen&pg=pa_03.htm&arc=hive (accessed December 5, 2011)

³⁴⁷ Nor Affizar Ibrahim, 'Remaja gadai 'kehormatan' demi cinta', *Berita Harian Online*, February 19, 2011, see http://www.bharian.com.my/bharian/articles/Remajagadai_8216_kehormatan_8217_demicinta/Article/ (accessed December 15, 2011)

³⁴⁸ Syed Mu'az Syed Putra and Radzi Razak, 'Police say most baby-dumping cases involve Malays', *The Malaysian Insider*.

“While there is no actual racial breakdown available because it is often difficult to determine the race of the babies, police say that anecdotal evidence and prosecutions show the majority to involve Malays. Police say that 13 out of 65 cases involving the dumping of newborns have resulted in prosecution. All of the accused were Malays”³⁴⁹

Heng Seai Kie, the Deputy Minister of Family, Unity and Community Affairs stated that watching videos and pornographic websites, the ‘desire to try’, the influence of peers, the desire to have sex, ignorance of reproductive and sexual health matters, being raped by their own brothers, a less religious upbringing and a lack of parental attention are among the reasons for these social problems.³⁵⁰ Poverty and lack of academic attainment are also seen as contributors. Though responsibility for addressing the problems must fall on the government and society, the main people to join in solving and preventing the problems from worsening are the parents, families and the individuals concerned. As stated by Zaid Kamaruddin, President of Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM) “Yes, it is the responsibility of the society to tackle this issue, but it still boils down to the individuals. They need to take care of themselves.”³⁵¹

³⁴⁹ Ibid

³⁵⁰ 152,182 orang anak luar nikah 2008-2010, *Utusan Malaysia Online*, November 16, 2011, see http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2011&dt=1116&pub=utusan_malaysia&sec=Parlimen&pg=pa_03.htm&arc=hive (accessed December 15, 2011)

³⁵¹ Syed Mu’az Syed Putra and Radzi Razak, ‘Police say most baby-dumping cases involve Malays’, *The Malaysian Insider*.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The discussion in this chapter shows that several factors have contributed to the present situation, problems and challenges of the Malay Muslim community. The historical background of this community, in particular during the era of British colonization has clearly had an impact on their current economic condition, which has gone on to affect their poor performance in education and social matters. Despite all these problems, they continue to debate in politics and to discuss the issue of unity. Although the country is ruled by the Malays and has recently experienced economic growth, the Malays as the majority community in Malaysia are beset by all sorts of problems. Hence, the question arises whether Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* could fit into the context of this society and consequently provide a solution to these problems. The next chapter discusses the theory in detail and examines its applicability in our own day, before discussing it within the context of the Malay Muslim community.

CHAPTER 3

IBN KHALDŪN'S THEORY OF 'AṢABIYYAH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we discuss Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* in greater depth, as it is one of the central focuses of the present research. The discussion covers his background as the proposer of this theory, as well as the factors which may have inspired him to introduce it. The discussion on the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* begins with the linguistic definition of the term *'Aṣabiyyah*, in the sense of its general meaning. Then the theory is discussed from Ibn Khaldūn's viewpoint, to reach the meaning of *'Aṣabiyyah* as he would have perceived it. The term is also viewed from the perspective of Islam in the light of the Qur'ān and Hadīth as regards its usage. Next, the theory is argued in relation to the concept of Ummah and 'brotherhood' in Islam, to see whether it is harmonious or contradictory to these two concepts. This leads to a debate on its applicability in modern circumstances and as a recommended theory to use in encountering and reflecting on the dilemmas and malaises of contemporary Muslim society.

3.2 IBN KHALDŪN: THE MAN AND HIS CONTEXT

3.2.1 Brief biography of Ibn Khaldūn, with reference to the introduction of the theory of *‘Aṣabiyyah*

Ibn Khaldūn is regarded as a historian, sociologist and philosopher. He is also recognized among Muslims as a fourteenth-century economist, for in *The Muqaddimah of Ibn Khaldūn* he formulated a theory of production, distribution, value, money and prices.³⁵² His biography can be found in Volume Seven of *Kitāb al-Ibar*,³⁵³ which he wrote for those who wanted to know more about him. According to Enan, he considered himself to be a distinguished person, worthy of putting his biography on record for others to read.³⁵⁴

His full name was Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Al-Hassan bin Muhammad bin Jabir bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Abdul Rahman bin Khaldun.³⁵⁵ He is generally known as Ibn Khaldūn, a nickname taken from the name of his first great-grandfather, Khalid bin ‘Uthman bin Hani bin Al-Khattab bin Kuraib bin Ma’dī

³⁵²Jean David C. Boulakia, ‘Ibn Khaldun: A Fourteenth Century Economist’, *Chicago Journals*, Vol. 79, No. 5 (Sept-Oct, 1971), see <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1830276> (accessed April 30 2009), p 1105

³⁵³ Ibn Khaldūn, *Tarikh Ibn Khaldūn Al-Musamma Kitāb Al-‘Ibar wa Diwan Al-Mubtada’ Wal Khabar Fi Ayyam Al-‘Arab Wal ‘Ajam Wal Barbar Wa Man ‘Asarahum Min Dhawi Al-Sultan Al-Akbar*, (Volume 7), Beirut: Dar al-Kitāb Al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1992, p 451

³⁵⁴ M.A. Enan, *Ibn Khaldun: His Life and Work*, p 143

³⁵⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *Tarikh Ibn Khaldūn Al-Musamma Kitāb Al-‘Ibar wa Diwan Al-Mubtada’ Wal Khabar*, Mujjalid Sābi’ (Volume 7), 1992, p 451.

Karib bin Al-Haris bin Wail bin Hajar, who was known as Khaldūn.³⁵⁶ He had another, less well-known name, Abu Zayd. He also carried the title of *Waliyy al-Din*, which means ‘Guardian of Religion’, given to him by the Egyptian government during his service as a judge in the court of Cairo in 786 AH.³⁵⁷ His elder brother was called Muhammad and his younger brother Yahya, who later, like him, became a politician and historian.³⁵⁸

Ibn Khaldūn was born in Tunis, on 27th May 1332 /1 Ramadhan 732 AH.³⁵⁹ It is believed that he was descended from the Yemenite Arabs of Haḍramaut and he attributed his lineage to Wa‘il ibn Hajar.³⁶⁰ He married the daughter of Muhammad bin al-Hakim, from a noble family, who was a Hafsid general and Minister of War.³⁶¹ It was reported that he was already married when he stayed in the Merinid court in Fez, from 1354 AD to 1363 AD.³⁶² It is uncertain how many children he had and whether he married more than once. Nevertheless, one authentic source states that his wife and five daughters died in an incident on their journey back to Egypt from Tunis in 1384, but two of his sons, Muhammad and ‘Ali, survived and reached Egypt safely.³⁶³

³⁵⁶ Ibid., p 452.

³⁵⁷ ‘Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldūn*, Volume 1, Egypt: Dar al-Nahdah, 1980, p 33 / Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Volume 1, p xxxviii

³⁵⁸ Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Volume 1, p xxxviii

³⁵⁹ M.A. Enan, *Ibn Khaldun: His Life and Work*, p 3

³⁶⁰ Ibn Khaldūn mentions in detail his lineage from Wa‘il in his treatise of al-‘Ibar. See, Ibn Khaldūn, *Tarikh Ibn Khaldūn*, p 451.

³⁶¹ Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Volume 1, p xlv.

³⁶² Ibid

³⁶³ Ibid, p xlvi

Ibn Khaldūn's great contribution is *The Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldūn*, which is the first book of *Kitāb al-'Ibar Wa Diwan Muqtada' wal Khabar fī Ayyām al-ARabī' Wal Ajam wal Barbar, wa man Asarahum min zawi al-Sulṭān al-Akbar*.

(كتاب العبر وديوان المبتدأ والخبر في أيام العرب والعجم والبربر والبربر ومن عاصروهم من ذوي السلطان الأكبر).

Of the seven volumes of the *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, the introduction, which is also known as the 'Prolegomena', had a great impact on the sciences of history and sociology when the new science of *Al-'Umrān* and the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* were introduced. In writing history, he studied the causes and nature of historical events, in order to formulate these new theories. Hence, *Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldūn* became better known than *Al-'Ibar*. Nevertheless, some scholars have criticized *Al-'Ibar* for not fulfilling the requirements he set out in *The Muqaddimah* for writing a historical account. Yet Talbi has argued that no man could write a universal history according to the requirements of *The Muqaddimah*.³⁶⁴ Though some of it is quite vague, it is different from other historical accounts in the way that it is written.

The seven volumes of *Kitāb al-'Ibar* are divided into three large books.³⁶⁵ The first book is the introduction, while the second and third books deal with historical events. In general, they discuss the history of the Arabs and also the history of the Berbers. Ibn Khaldūn ended by

³⁶⁴ M. Talbi, 'Ibn Khaldūn', in B. Lewis, V.L. Ménage, C.H. Pellat et al. (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986, p 829

³⁶⁵ M.A. Enan, *Ibn Khaldun: His Life and Work*, p 106

writing an autobiography, entitled *Al-Ta'arif*, which can be found in the last volume. This covers his background as the author of *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, his lineage and the story of his family, his education and public life in various places (discussed below). Enan comments that it is not strange for a scholar to write an autobiography; it was done by earlier scholars, such as Yaqūt al-Hamawi and Al-Suyūtī. Ibn Khaldūn's autobiography is considered a worthy successor to these.³⁶⁶

According to Talbi, Ibn Khaldūn's life can be divided into three parts. The first concerns his first 20 years, his childhood and education, the second part is the next 23 years, when he was involved in study and political affairs, and the last part, another 31 years, covers his involvement in scholarly affairs, as a teacher and judge (magistrate).³⁶⁷

He received his early education from his father, who taught him Arabic and how to use it. Thus, he learned how to read al-Qur'ān or *Qira'at al-Qur'ān*, Hadith and Islamic jurisprudence from various distinguished and prominent scholars. Among them are Shaykh Abu Abdullah bin Al-'Arabi al-Hasa'iri, Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin al-Shawwash al-Zarzali, Abu Abbas bin al-Qassar, Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Bahr, Abdullah Muhammad

³⁶⁶ Ibid., p 143

³⁶⁷ M. Talbi, 'Ibn Khaldūn', in B. Lewis, V.L. Ménage, C.H. Pellat et al. (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, p 825.

bin Sa'd bin Bural al-Ansari, Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad bin Muhammad Al-Batarani³⁶⁸, Shams al-Din Abdullah bin Jabir bin Sultan al-Wadiyashi, Abu Abdullah bin Abdullah Al-Jayyani and Abu al-Qasim Muhammad al-Qasir.³⁶⁹

His career began as the Master of the Signature (*Sabih al-'Alamah*) in Tunis, offered this position by the Hafsid ruler there. He left this position and migrated to Fez in the year 755 AH, after the Tunis government was defeated by the Amir of Constantine, Abu Zayd, in 753 AH.³⁷⁰ As he was loyal to the Hafsid government, he had to seek refuge in one place after another before settling in Fez.³⁷¹ Later, he was appointed by Abu 'Inan, a new ruler of Fez, as the king's secretary and seal bearer, who convened meetings of the royal circle of scholars.³⁷² Thus, when he resumed his studies, he became an influential person in local political affairs as a result of his work and through his close friendship with local scholars. However, due to political intrigue, he was put in prison as an opponent of Abu 'Inan. He again became involved in political conspiracy and was appointed first to the position of Abu Salīm's secretary and later as Chief Justice.³⁷³ Abu Salīm was brother to Abu 'Inan, a future king of Morocco, according to Ibn Khaldūn. Under the new government of 'Umar ibn Abdullah, however, Abu Salīm was opposed by his brother-in-law, who had stood against the tyranny of the government Vizier, Ibn Marzk and was supported in this by Ibn Khaldūn. The writer then asked permission to go to Tunis, frustrated at not being offered a higher position; but his

³⁶⁸ Ibid

³⁶⁹ For further reading of his biography, see Ibn Khaldūn, *Tarikh Ibn Khaldūn*, pp 457- 475

³⁷⁰ Ibid, pp 16-17.

³⁷¹ The places where he stayed were Aba (Ebba), Ceuta/ Tebessa, Gafsa / Cafsa and Biskra (Talbi, 1986: 826 and Enan, 1984: 16)

³⁷² M.A. Enan, *Ibn Khaldun: His Life and Work*, p 17

³⁷³ Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Vol.1, p xlviii.

request was refused, because the ruler was afraid that Ibn Khaldūn might co-operate in opposition to him with Abu Hamu, Amir of Tlemcen, .³⁷⁴ As a result, Ibn Khaldūn and his family moved to Granada.

In Granada, he became ambassador and was sent to Pedro the Cruel, King of Castille, to conclude a peace treaty between Granada and Castella,³⁷⁵ which he secured. However, his increasing influence at court did not please the ministers, Ibn Khatib in particular.³⁷⁶ Thus, in the middle of 766 AH / 1364 AD, he was given leave by the King of Granada³⁷⁷ to go back to Bougie³⁷⁸ to work for the Amir of the government, Abu Abdullah Muhammad. However, in Bougie, in Tunis, Ibn Khaldūn was again swept into a political rebellion against the government. In his dissatisfaction with the position that the new ruler in Bougie had given him, he changed his allegiance and followed the rebel leader. Nonetheless in the last part of his stay in Tunis, he became tired of all the political plotting and retired from public office. He then spent time in Qal‘at Banu Salamah,³⁷⁹ concentrating on learning, before migrating to Egypt. It was during this period that he wrote a good proportion of *Kitāb al-‘Ibar* and *The Muqaddimah*, based on his forward-thinking view of society and his personal experience of over a decade of political affairs and conspiracy. He stayed writing there for four years, from

³⁷⁴ M.A. Enan, *Ibn Khaldun: His Life and Work*, p 23

³⁷⁵ Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Vol. 1, p xlix

³⁷⁶ Ibid

³⁷⁷ Abu Abdullah Muhammad was the Amir of Bougie, who had succeeded in recapturing his throne in Tunis

³⁷⁸ M.A. Enan, *Ibn Khaldun: His Life and Work*, p 35

³⁷⁹ Qal‘at Banu Salamah is a village in the province of Oran.

1375 AD to 1379 AD, until, at 45 years of age, he moved to Egypt to concentrate on academic activity.³⁸⁰

In Egypt, Ibn Khaldūn's focus was more on academic than political matters. He arrived in Cairo on 1st Dhulqa'idah 784 A.H. and was amazed by the culture and level of development of the city. Later, as one of its adherents, he delivered lectures on Maliki fiqh and also on Hadīth and he introduced the new science of *Al-'Umrān* and *'Aṣabiyyah* in the mosque of Al-Azhar. He found a new post as professor at Qamhiyya Madrasah³⁸¹ and became the Maliki Chief Justice. However, he was appointed to and dismissed from the job as the chief justice about six times, due to the jealousy of his colleagues and his endeavour to be fair and unbiased, which did not please other administrators.³⁸² During his stay in Cairo he also had an important historical meeting, with Tamerlane, or Timur, with whom he had an intellectual discussion. Tamerlane was the most powerful Mongol leader, who had invaded Syria and was on his way to conquer Egypt. Hence, Ibn Khaldūn was sent to intercede and it is believed that Ibn Khaldūn's wisdom at this meeting saved Egypt from being invaded by Tamerlane.³⁸³ Consequently, Ibn Khaldūn's later life in Egypt was occupied by his duties as a Maliki judge. He was chosen to be the Chief Maliki Judge (*Qadi*) in 1401 AD and discharged in February 1402 AD owing to his strict principles when dealing with cases in court.³⁸⁴ He was reappointed and dismissed several times and had secured the job for the sixth time when he

³⁸⁰ M.A. Enan, *Ibn Khaldun: His Life and Work*, p 51

³⁸¹ *Ibid*, p 67

³⁸² *Ibid*, p 69

³⁸³ *Ibid*, p 80

³⁸⁴ Walter Fischel, *Ibn Khaldūn In Egypt: His Publications and His Historical Research (1382-1406), A Study in Islamic Historiography*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967, p 67

died on 16th March 1406 AD / 26th Ramaḍān 808 AH³⁸⁵ at the age of 78. He was buried in Cairo in the cemetery outside Bab al-Naṣr.³⁸⁶

Ibn Khaldūn's personal experiences in politics and the chaotic, disintegrated and destabilized Muslim world of his time are seen as motivating him to record the events of his time and what had led to them; subsequently he came out with a new science of history, *ʿIlm al-ʿUmran*, and the theory of *ʿAṣabiyyah*. Ibn Khaldūn experienced the rise and decline of Muslim governments during the last two-thirds of the fourteenth century and the first decade of the fifteenth.³⁸⁷ This was a period that saw the warning signs for Muslim power. In Simon's words, "Ibn Khaldūn's lifetime falls into the period of stagnation in ... [Islamic] culture and [the] breakdown of [Islamic] power."³⁸⁸ In spite of the chaos and political intrigue in North Africa, Ibn Khaldūn's experience in Egypt was fruitful. Mahdi states that Egypt was "...the most prosperous and civilized kingdom in the whole [of the] Islamic world, or at least this is how it seemed to Ibn Khaldūn and his compatriots in western North Africa."³⁸⁹ Yet the Muslim world as a whole at this time was not developing rapidly.³⁹⁰ Such conditions led Ibn Khaldūn to look for the nature and causes of the state of the Islamic world, above all in North Africa and "...to write a summary of the past of humanity and to draw lessons (ʿibar) from it."³⁹¹ Thus, Alatas and Talbi agree that the writing of *The Muqaddimah* by Ibn Khaldūn is

³⁸⁵ M.A. Enan, *Ibn Khaldun: His Life and Work*, p 89

³⁸⁶ Walter Fischel, *Ibn Khaldūn In Egypt: His Publications and His Historical Research (1382-1406)*, p 68.

³⁸⁷ Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History*, p 17

³⁸⁸ Heinrich Simon, *Ibn Khaldun's Science of Human Culture*, (trans) Fuad Baali, p 9

³⁸⁹ Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History*, p 20.

³⁹⁰ Ibid

³⁹¹ M. Talbi, 'Ibn Khaldūn' in B. Lewis, V.L. Ménage, C.H. Pellat, et al. (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, p 830

closely linked to his political experiences, for he had witnessed great changes of course in history, which were likely to have motivated and influenced the advancement of his thought.³⁹² It is believed that there were consequences brought in by Ibn Khaldūn's introduction of the new sciences. Ibn Khaldūn's initial intention in writing his account was specifically to record and summarise past human history as well to take lessons from it. However, in writing *The Introduction*, he found that there were two aspects of history which were closely related and needed scrutiny. To understand the causes and nature of historical occurrences, correct information is essential. But to sift out the correct and accurate information about historical events, one needs to know their nature and causes.³⁹³ Hence, Ibn Khaldūn needed to study the internal aspects of history,³⁹⁴ if he was to write "...an accurate history of contemporary western Islam..."³⁹⁵ After discovering that previous Muslim historians did not possess such knowledge or that they did not discuss it as they meant to in disciplines such as politics, rhetoric and the fundamentals of Islamic or religious law,³⁹⁶ Ibn Khaldūn felt that it was vital for him, not only to introduce a new science of history but also to deal with its problems and identify its principles, method and subject matter.³⁹⁷ This new science is seen as essential to master before discussing any historical account in depth, since it allows an individual to write and understand a correct and accurate account of events. Thus, these are the preliminaries to the birth of the new science, *'Ilm Al-'Umran* and the theory of *'Asabiyyah*.

³⁹² Syed Farid Alatas, 'The Historical Sociology of Muslim Societies: Khaldūnian Applications', *International Sociology*, p 269 and M. Talbi, 'Ibn Khaldūn' in B. Lewis, V.L. Ménage, C.H. Pellat, et al. (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, pp 829-830

³⁹³ Ibid

³⁹⁴ Described by Alatas as 'inner meaning' (*bāṭin*), Syed Farid Alatas, 'A Khaldūnian Exemplar For a Historical Sociology for the South', *Current Sociology*, 54, 397,(2006) <http://csi.sageub.com/cgi/content/abstract/54/3/397>, (accessed October 24, 2007) and by Mahdi as internal data or a rational structure (*bāṭin*), Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History*, p 48

³⁹⁵ Ibid

³⁹⁶ Ibid

³⁹⁷ Ibid

3.3 IBN KHALDŪN'S THEORY OF 'AṢABIYYAH

3.3.1 Definition of 'Asabiyyah

Linguistically, the term 'Asabiyyah is from the word, 'asab', which means 'to bind'.³⁹⁸ Baali explained it as "...to bind an individual into a group (*asabatun, usbatun, or isabatun*)."³⁹⁹ *The Encyclopedia of Islam* defines 'Asabiyyah as originally meaning 'spirit of kinship' within the family or tribe, where "...the 'asaba are the male relations in the male line."⁴⁰⁰ Thus, *asabah* refers to the kinsfolk of a person on his father's side. These kinsfolk or relatives are known as 'asabah' for they toughen and protect the person and cause him or her to become stronger. To Simon, 'Asabiyyah, according to Simon, refers to "...the nature of the group' or 'groupdom."⁴⁰¹ Or in Baali's words, 'Asabiyyah signifies "...to a sociocultural bond that can be used to measure the strength of social groupings."⁴⁰²

The Arabic-English Lexicon gives a long definition of this term. 'Asabiyyah is defined as a quality or characteristic of a person who possesses 'asabiyyu, which are the characteristics of

³⁹⁸ Fuad Baali, 'Aṣabiyyah' in John L. Esposito, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Volume I, p 140

³⁹⁹ Fuad Baali, *Society, State and Urbanism: Ibn Khaldun's Sociological Thought*, p 43.

⁴⁰⁰ F. Gabrieli, 'Aṣabiyyah' in H.A.R. Gibb, J.H. Kramers, J. Schacht, et al. (eds) *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Volume I, A-B, p 681

⁴⁰¹ Heinrich Simon, *Ibn Khaldun's Science of Human Culture*, (trans) Fuad Baali, p 47.

⁴⁰² Fuad Baali, 'Aṣabiyyah' in John L. Esposito, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Volume I, p 140

a person in helping his fellows or people against hostility, or being angry and fanatical for the sake of his people or group and acting to defend them.⁴⁰³ It also refers to the action of a person who invites others to purposely help, join and associate with his group or people against those who are hostile to them whether they are being mistreated or are the offenders.⁴⁰⁴

Lisan al-Arab also gives a definition of *'Aṣabiyyah* similar to the above. *'Aṣabiyyah*, according to *Lisan al-Arab* means a request or invitation from a person to join him or her in helping his or her fellows, whether this group is the transgressor or is being mistreated.⁴⁰⁵ Referring to the Hadīth of The Prophet, *al-'asabiyyu* means someone who helps his fellows not to right matters but to transgress or offend.⁴⁰⁶ Such a person is angry for the sake of his fellows, protecting and defending one group, as mentioned in one of the Hadīth of The Prophet, “He is not of us who proclaims the cause of tribal partisanship; and he is not of us who fights in the cause of tribal partisanship; and he is not of us who dies in the cause of tribal partisanship.”⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰³ E.W. Lane, *Arabīc-English Lexicon* Volume Two, p 2059.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid

⁴⁰⁵ Muhammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab* Mujallad 1, p 202

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid

*'Aṣabiyyah*⁴⁰⁸ in general can be understood as "...man's supporting his people, to whom he belongs, whether they are right or wrong, oppressing or oppressed. The belonging to these people can be due to kith and kin, ethnicity, color, birth place, citizenship, school of thought, or a group of people with a common interest."⁴⁰⁹ In this sense, *'Aṣabiyyah* is linked to chauvinism, which means "a strong and unreasonable belief that your own country or group is better than others."⁴¹⁰ This kind of spirit arises due to one's feeling of being superior to others, whereas people from other groups are thought to be of lower rank and not as worthy of respect.⁴¹¹ It can occur in different circumstances, whether in family relationships or matters of descent (which is believed to be the strongest form of *'Aṣabiyyah*), the region where the person or group lives or the group or school of thought to which a group or person belongs. In all these situations, the sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* implies that someone of their group is superior and looks down on others. Thus, this sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* is condemned by Islam.

The term *'Aṣabiyyah* in Ibn Khaldūn's theory has appeared in many translations and interpretations by contemporary scholars. In sum, there is no accurate word in the English language for *'Aṣabiyyah* in Ibn Khaldūn's sense. As stated by Arnason and Stauth, "This is one of his most untranslatable terms and Western interpreters have differed widely in their views on its meaning."⁴¹² Scholars such as Baali, Simon and Dhaouadi are of the opinion that

⁴⁰⁸ The definition of *'Aṣabiyyah* here does not refer to the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* propounded by Ibn Khaldūn

⁴⁰⁹ *'Aṣabiyyah* as a disease' see http://www.islamview.org/khutab.htm/Tribalism%20part1_E.htm (accessed May 18, 2009)

⁴¹⁰ Sara Hawker (ed), *Little Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p 108

⁴¹¹ For *'Aṣabiyyah* as a disease, see http://www.islamview.org/khutab.htm/Tribalism%20part1_E.htm (accessed May 18, 2009)

⁴¹² Johann P. Arnason and George Stauth, 'Civilization and State Formation in the Islamic Context: Re-Reading Ibn Khaldun', *Thesis Eleven*, 76, (2004) see <http://the.sagepub.com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/content/76/1/29.full.pdf+html> (accessed December 27, 2011), p 33

what Ibn Khaldūn meant by the term is hard to define and translate, mainly because he himself gave no clear definition of it. Perhaps the term was quite prevalent in his time and he saw no need define it.⁴¹³

Hence, Simon, Baali and Rabī' advise using the term as it is in Arabic without translation, as this practice will preserve its meaning as used by Ibn Khaldūn. However, there are scholars who have attempted to translate the term by such phrases as 'group feeling', 'esprit de corps', 'social solidarity', 'group feeling' and 'group loyalty.'⁴¹⁴ Baali lists the translations of this term in the following: "The term '*aṣabiyah* has been translated as 'esprit de corps,' 'partisanship,' 'famille,' 'parti,' 'tribal consciousness,' 'blood relationship,' 'tribal spirit,' 'tribal loyalty,' 'vitality,' 'feeling of unity,' 'group adhesion,' 'groupdom,' 'sense of solidarity,' 'group mind', 'collective consciousness', 'group feeling', 'feeling of solidarity' and 'social solidarity'."⁴¹⁵

De Slane translates it as 'esprit de corps'⁴¹⁶, while Rosenthal interprets it as 'group feeling'⁴¹⁷, Enan, as 'vitality of state or dynasty'⁴¹⁸ and Issawi, as 'social solidarity'⁴¹⁹. However, Lacoste

⁴¹³ Fuad Baali, *Society, State and Urbanism : Ibn Khaldun's Sociological Thought*, p 43

⁴¹⁴ Muhammad Mahmoud Rabī'. *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldūn*, p 49 and Mahmoud Dhaouadi, 'Ibn Khaldūn: The Founding Father of Eastern Sociology', *International Sociology*, 5, 1990, <http://iss.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/5/3/319> (accessed May 19, 2009), p 325

⁴¹⁵ Fuad Baali, *Society, State and Urbanism : Ibn Khaldun's Sociological Thought*, pp 43-44.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid, p 44

⁴¹⁷ Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Vol 1, p lxxviii

⁴¹⁸ M.A. Enan, *Ibn Khaldun: His Life and Work*, p 114.

considers that some of these translations, for example, ‘patriotism’, ‘national awareness and ‘national feeling’ are incorrect.⁴²⁰ In his opinion, these suggested translations are incorrect and ‘anachronistic’ and also too general and too modern to be applied in the context of medieval North Africa when “...there were no real nations and tribal structures were dominant.”⁴²¹ Hence, some scholars incline to interpret the term from the sociological perspective, whereas others translate it from the political and military perspectives.⁴²² Therefore, it is apt to refer directly to Ibn Khaldūn’s work to get an accurate sense of the meaning which he intended.

3.3.2 Ibn Khaldūn’s interpretation of theory of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*

The theory of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ is derived from Ibn Khaldūn’s new science of history, ‘*Ilm Al-Umran*’, where the theory is the centre of this science. In describing and explaining the social conditions and changes among human beings, he analyzes the dissimilarities between rural and urban people, referring to the Bedouin or nomadic peoples and the sedentary peoples.

⁴¹⁹ Charles Issawi, *An Arab Philosophy of History: Selections from the Prolegomena of Ibn Khaldun of Tunis (1332-1406)*, p 10.

⁴²⁰ Yves Lacoste, *Ibn Khaldun: The Birth of History and The Past of the Third World*, London: Verso, 1984, p 101.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, p 101

⁴²² *Ibid.*, pp 100-101

According to Ibn Khaldūn, the Bedouins or nomadic people are those who have a strong sense of *‘Aṣabiyyah*, compared to the sedentary or town people. Bedouin life is simple and seeks only the basic requirements; therefore they are not associated with pleasure, indulgence and luxuries beyond what are necessary.⁴²³ They are also depicted as possessing good characteristics because they are nearer the first and most natural human conditions and their worldly affairs are associated with basic necessities, unlike urban dealings with desires and pleasure which are closer to evil and immorality.⁴²⁴ Moreover, nomadic people are braver than sedentary people, because the conditions of their life have forced them to set up defences against danger and not to hope for or depend on others to do this.⁴²⁵ Danger requires the Bedouin to possess strong *‘Aṣabiyyah* whereby they hold to closely-knit groups of common descent,⁴²⁶ in order to be able to live continuously in the desert. Due to this strong sense and the power and influence of their leaders and *shaykhs*, they can prevent bad qualities from taking root in the group. They become stronger and more feared by their enemies and obtain mutual support and help from their fellows on the basis that protecting and loving their kin is their priority.⁴²⁷

The sense of *‘Aṣabiyyah* is described by Ibn Khaldūn as the natural instinct for an individual to protect his blood relatives from being attacked or humiliated by outsiders. To the members of the group, it is shameful if one is incapable of safeguarding one’s fellows when they are so

⁴²³ Ibid., p 250

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 254

⁴²⁵ Ibid., pp 257-258

⁴²⁶ Ibid., p 263

⁴²⁷ Ibid., pp 262-263

treated.⁴²⁸ Consequently, this feeling leads to close contact and unity within the members of a group. In Ibn Khaldūn's words, "Compassion and affection for one's blood relations and relatives exist in human nature as something God put into the hearts of men. It makes for mutual support and aid and increases the fear felt by the enemy."⁴²⁹ He gives the example of the story of Yūsuf and his brothers, mentioned in the Qur'ān, sūrah 12 verse 14.⁴³⁰

They said: "If the wolf were to devour him while we are (so large) a party, then should we indeed (first) have perished ourselves!"⁴³¹

This verse is explained by Ibn Khaldūn to mean that it is unacceptable for a person to be hostile against his own kin or relatives, because he "...has his group feeling to support him."⁴³²

The sedentary or city people also have a sense of *'Aṣabiyyah*, but it is not as strong as among the Bedouin. This is because their life is more comfortable, more indulgent and luxurious than that of the Bedouin people; they exist not merely to obtain necessities, but other things beyond these. Therefore, they are portrayed as associated more with pleasures and inclined to blameworthy and evil qualities with less courage than the Bedouin people. As a result, they

⁴²⁸ Ibid., p 263

⁴²⁹ Ibid

⁴³⁰ Ibid

⁴³¹ *Al-Qur'ān*, 12:14

⁴³² Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Vol. 1, p 263

depend more on the authority of the state to protect their safety and their sense of common *'Aṣabiyyah* weakens.

This explanation shows the sense in which *'Aṣabiyyah* is required in the rise of a nation. Ibn Khaldūn explains that the establishment of a nation and a civilization begins with a primitive or nomadic life in the desert, moving afterwards to urban and sedentary living. In other words, Bedouin or nomadic society is seen as what precedes a sedentary life,⁴³³ and will develop into this. As he states, “Bedouins, thus, are the basis of and prior to, cities and sedentary people...Therefore, urbanization is found to be the goal of the Bedouin.”⁴³⁴ Hence, the initial establishment of a nation which began in the desert or a rural area demands a strong sense of *'Aṣabiyyah*, which is later strengthened by the element of religion once the nation or the civilization is established.

Inevitably, once the Bedouin are settled in the urban areas, form their government or dynasties and experience sedentary life, the sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* grows weaker. Sedentary urban life, as he sees it, reduces the strength of *'Aṣabiyyah*. This thus affects the people's military and civil strength in ruling as a government. As a result, they are prone to defeat and

⁴³³ Ibid., p 252

⁴³⁴ Ibid

conquest by any other group possessing stronger *'Aṣabiyyah*. The cycle of human societies then begins again. Alatas and Chapra name this the Khaldūnian cycle or theory.⁴³⁵

3.3.3 Elements of the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* (blood ties, religion and *'Mulk*')

Within the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*, the essential constituents are identified as blood ties, religion and *'Mulk*' (royal authority). The original spirit of *'Aṣabiyyah* arises from blood relationship. The sense of *'Aṣabiyyah*, a bond based on blood ties and kinship is viewed as the strongest element for a group. Rabī' explains that the sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* originating from blood ties as the most powerful, influential, steadfast, reliable and strongest feeling among all other sense of social solidarity.⁴³⁶ In Ibn Khaldūn's words, "...[Respect for] blood ties is something natural among men, with the rarest exceptions. It leads to affection for one's relations and blood relatives, [the feeling that] no harm ought to befall them nor any destruction come upon them."⁴³⁷ Hence, whether the blood relationship between the persons is close or distant, they remain helping and protecting their relatives simply because they are sharing the same blood relations and feeling guilty for helping their kin if they are treated unfairly.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁵ M. Umer Chapra, *Muslim Civilization: The Causes of Decline and the Need for Reform*, p 17, M. Umer Chapra, 'Socioeconomic and Political Dynamic in Ibn Khaldūn's Thought', pp 1-9, Syed Farid Alatas, 'The Historical Sociology of Muslim Societies: Khaldūnian Applications', pp 269-270

⁴³⁶ Muhammad Mahmoud Rabī', *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldūn*, p 50.

⁴³⁷ Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*, (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Vol. 1, p 264.

⁴³⁸ Ibid

The sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* can also extend to those who have no blood relationship but possess a common view from being allied (*wala'*) or sharing clientship (*hilf*).⁴³⁹ Though there is no blood relationship within the members of a group, the same feeling occurs once they are protecting and defending other team members from being oppressed or treated unjustly. They usually will also feel ashamed and embarrassed if they cannot help their neighbours or relatives, whether close or distant kin, from being humiliated or chastened.⁴⁴⁰ Thus, in these circumstances, the sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* leads to close contact and unity, as it is found among those who are related by blood. Enlarging on Ibn Khaldūn's exposition, Al-Jabri mentions that, "...the basis of *Al 'Aṣabiyya*, according to Ibn Khaldun, is broader than the blood ties that the members of the tribe share. Its binding force on each individual also derives from the tribe's common interests."⁴⁴¹ Similarly, Kayapinar emphasizes that, in spite of the unity of *nasab* (lineage) as a core of *'Aṣabiyyah*, lineage is believed as relative and not absolute or total.

The spirit of religion also plays a crucial role in binding the members of a group who possess the spirit of *'Aṣabiyyah*. This is described by Ibn Khaldūn as the elimination of jealousy and envy among the members of the group held by *'Aṣabiyyah*. As they have a common perception of religion, it allows them to work together, to the extent of being willing to die in achieving the objectives which they believe in. This condition does not occur within a group

⁴³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴⁴¹ M. Al-Jabri, *Al-Asabiyya and the State: Ibn Khaldun's Theoretical Perspectives in Arab-Islamic History* (in Arabic), Beirut: Dar Attalia, cited in Mahmoud Dhaouadi, 'Ibn Khaldūn: The Founding Father of Eastern Sociology', p 326.

unless its members are influenced by the elements of religion, for otherwise they will surrender to their opponents easily and have less desire to protect their own people.

Ibn Khaldūn also points out that the propagation of the Islamic teaching is not ‘perfect’ to be implemented without a sense of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’.⁴⁴² This activity will succeed only with the existence of the elements of religion and ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’.⁴⁴³ He explains that the religious laws would not have power without the sense of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ “...because they materialize only through group feeling...”⁴⁴⁴ Even Prophets were raised from noble tribes and families who have strong ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’. Thus, they demanded protection and support from their group members in carrying out the precepts of the divine message. On the contrary, God can always arrange matters as He chooses if He wants to. For example He could have sent a Chinese Prophet to the Arabs. Yet, what happened was that “...Allah does things in a way that is in line with the social circumstances, with the culture.”⁴⁴⁵ This is reflected in a Hadīth which says: “God ‘sent no Prophet who did not enjoy the protection of his people.’”⁴⁴⁶ Another version says “...who did not enjoy wealth among his people”⁴⁴⁷ This Hadīth explains that “...a prophet has *asabiyya* and influence which protect him from harm at the hands of

⁴⁴² Abdur Rahman Abu Zaid Waliyyu Din Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah Al-‘Allamat Ibn Khaldun Al-Musamma Diwan Al-Mubtada’ Wal Khabar Fi Tarikh Al-‘Arab Wal Barbar Wa Man ‘Asarahum Min Dhawi Al-Sha’ni Al-Akbar*, 2007, Beirut, Lubnan, Darul Fikr, p 170 and Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Volume 1, p 322. Here, Rosenthal translates the term ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ as ‘group feeling’.

⁴⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴⁴ Abdur Rahman Abu Zaid Waliyyu Din Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah Al-‘Allamat Ibn Khaldun*, p 213 and Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Volume 1, p 416.

⁴⁴⁵ Syed Farid Al-Attas, interviewed by the author, National University of Singapore, Singapore, September 7, 2009

⁴⁴⁶ Sahih Bukhari, cited in Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Volume 1, p 187

⁴⁴⁷ Abu ‘Abdallah Muhammad b. ‘Abdallah al-Hakim an-Nisaburi, 321-405 [933-1014], his Mustadrak ‘ala s-Sahihayn [of al-Bukhari and Muslim] (Hyderabad, 1334-42/1915-32), II, p 561, cited in Abdur Rahman Abu Zaid Waliyyu Din Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah Al-‘Allamat Ibn Khaldun*, p108 and Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Volume 1, p 187

unbelievers, until he has completed his mission and established the necessary religious organization.”⁴⁴⁸ Hence, even a Prophet who is endowed with miracles (*mu'jizat*) and directly protected and ‘supported’ by God, needs ‘*Aşabiyyah*’ in executing his religious mission. Therefore, an ordinary person indeed needs ‘*Aşabiyyah*’ for the same purpose. As stated by Ibn Khaldūn,

Religious propaganda cannot materialize without group feeling. This is because, as we have mentioned before, every mass (political) undertaking by necessity requires group feeling. This is indicated in the afore-mentioned tradition; ‘God sent no prophet who did not enjoy the protection of his people.’ If this was the case with the prophets, who are among human beings those likely to perform wonders, one would (expect it to apply) all the more so to others. One cannot expect them to be able to work the wonder of achieving superiority without group feeling.⁴⁴⁹

In other words, it is far better to advocate goodness and prevent evil in a group with the support of its members. Otherwise, if it is done alone and individually, the one who does it will perish. Therefore, ‘*Aşabiyyah*’ and religion are intertwined and complementary to each other though they are considered two different components.

⁴⁴⁸ Abdur Rahman Abu Zaid Waliyyu Din Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah Al-‘Allamat Ibn Khaldun*, p108, cited in Ali Çaksu, ‘Ideals and Realities: Ibn Khaldun’s Justification of *Asabiyya* and Political Power’, *Felsefe Dünyasi*, 46, (2007), p 110. In Rosenthal’s translation of *The Muqaddimah*, p 188, this statement is translated as, “That means that (such a man) has group feeling and influence which protect him from harm at the hands of unbelievers, until he has delivered the messages of his Lord and achieved the degree of complete perfection with respect to his religion and religious organization that God intended for him.”

⁴⁴⁹ Abdur Rahman Abu Zaid Waliyyu Din Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah Al-‘Allamat Ibn Khaldun*, p170 and Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Volume 1, p 322.

Moreover, as '*Mulk*' is the target of '*Aṣabiyyah*', religion also plays a role in attaining '*Mulk*'. It interacts with '*Aṣabiyyah*' by eliminating jealousy and envy within the group who possess '*Aṣabiyyah*', lets them come together and unite and leads them to concentrate on truth. As a result, it is viewed that states which have a wide power and 'large '*Mulk*'' usually rely on religion.⁴⁵⁰ Furthermore, Ibn Khaldūn remarks that the spirit of '*Aṣabiyyah*' possessed by the Bedouin Arabs was not diminished when they became Muslim, but even became stronger.⁴⁵¹ Citing Ibn Khaldūn, Kayapinar explains that, "Obeying religious laws, however, did not break the dynamism of these Bedouin Arabs because in their case, restraining and the feeling of submission came from inside rather than resulting from the oppressive policies of an external political authority."⁴⁵²

The spirit of '*Aṣabiyyah*' is closely associated with the element of power. Therefore it may be helpful to discuss leadership, kingship and '*Mulk*' (royal authority or mastery) in this context. '*Mulk*' is acknowledged by Ibn Khaldūn as the target of '*Aṣabiyyah*' and the prestige of a family (*bait*). He interprets it as the ability and qualities of a person exercising his power, so that he will be superior over the other members of his group and thus become their leader. He must be able to dominate his group and, "...have power and authority over them, so that no one of them will be able to attack another."⁴⁵³ To Ibn Khaldūn, there are differences between

⁴⁵⁰ Abdur Rahman Abu Zaid Waliyyu Din Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah Al-'Allamat Ibn Khaldun*, p 169 and Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Volume 1, p 319.

⁴⁵¹ M.Akif Kayapinar, 'Ibn Khaldun's Concept of *Assabiyya*: An Alternative Tool for Understanding Long-Term Politics?' p 395.

⁴⁵² Ibid. This statement is cited by Abdur Rahman Abu Zaid Waliyyu Din Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah Al-'Allamat Ibn Khaldun*, p 169 and Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Volume 1, p 319

⁴⁵³ Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Rosenthal, Franz, *An Introduction to History*, Vol. 1, p 92

the characteristics of 'Mulk' and leadership. Leadership, translated by Rosenthal as 'chieftainship' is the condition where the leader is being obeyed, yet has no full influence to force his followers to accept his ruling.⁴⁵⁴ Meanwhile, 'Mulk' is described as superiority and the followers are obliged to follow their leader's orders and judgement by force. This inevitably means having a sense of superiority over others to ensure that one's orders will be followed and one's leadership accepted. At the same time, a leader needs the support of his people and therefore the goals of the leader will be attained. This statement is supported by Ali, who maintained that a leader can hold his position only with the agreement of the people whom he leads. In addition, his power and the decisions he makes have to be influenced by his followers. Or perhaps, in other words, it is a shared influence.⁴⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the element of 'Mulk' has to begin by having a common sense of strong 'Aşabiyyah'. In another interpretation, 'Mulk' cannot be achieved except by having strong group feeling or 'Aşabiyyah' among the members of a group.⁴⁵⁶ Thus, 'Mulk' is the aim of a group which possesses strong 'Aşabiyyah'.

The dynamism of 'Aşabiyyah', according to Ibn Khaldūn and as explained by Alatas, lasts for four generations (once a 'Mulk' or kingship is achieved).⁴⁵⁷ Furthermore, Zaid Ahmad

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., p 284

⁴⁵⁵ Abbas J. Ali, *Islamic Perspectives on Management and Organization*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2005, p 134 and 137.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid

⁴⁵⁷ Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Volume. 1, p 279 and p 343, cited in Syed Farid Alatas, 'Ibn Khaldūn and Contemporary Sociology', *International Sociology*, Vol. 21 (6), November 2006, see http://www.arabphilosophers.com/English/discourse/eastwest/Knowledge/Ibn_Khaldun_and_Contemporary_%20Sociology.pdf (accessed October 24, 2007), p 785. In the page cited from *The Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldūn obviously does not mention that the duration of a dynasty is four generation. But he says twice that "...as a rule no dynasty lasts beyond the life (span) of three generation" (p 343) and "...that duration of the life of a dynasty

affirmed that Ibn Khaldūn gave each of these four generations different names. The first is “...as ‘experiencer’, the second as ‘follower,’ the third as ‘tradition keeper,’ and the fourth as ‘tradition loser.’”⁴⁵⁸

Ibn Khaldūn goes on to say that the life of a dynasty with strong ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ is not “...beyond the life (span) of three generation,”⁴⁵⁹ where each generation is equivalent to the life of an individual, approximately forty years.⁴⁶⁰ Hence, he propounds the theory that the average of all these three generations is around one hundred or one hundred and twenty years.⁴⁶¹ He clarifies that the first generation is strongly attached with “...desert qualities, desert toughness and desert savagery.”⁴⁶² The members are portrayed as strong, brave, ravenous, feared and submitted to by others and with a strong sense of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’.⁴⁶³ Subsequently, the condition of the second generation has changed “...from the desert attitude to sedentary culture, from privation to luxury and plenty, from a state in which everybody shared in the glory to one in which one man claims all the glory for himself while the others are too lazy to strive for (glory), and from proud superiority to humble subservience.”⁴⁶⁴ At this stage, the strength of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ is viewed as having been broken. The virtues and characteristic are maintained in this second generation because they still have contact with the first generation and had the experience of competence, striving and hardship in establishing a dynasty. Therefore, it is

does not as a rule extend beyond three generations.” (p 344) Only in page 345 he explains that there is a fourth generation in which the ‘prestige is diminished.

⁴⁵⁸ Zaid Ahmad, ‘Ibn Khaldun’s Approach in Civilizational Studies’, Massimo Campanini (ed), *Studies on Ibn Khaldūn*, Polimetrica: International Scientific Publisher, 2005, p 115

⁴⁵⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Volume. 1, p 343.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., pp 343-344.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., p 343 and 346

⁴⁶² Ibid., p 344.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid

their aim to preserve these characteristics, not to “...give all of it up at once, although a good deal of it may go.”⁴⁶⁵ Ibn Khaldūn further comments that this second generation is hoping to live in a similar way to earlier generations, “...or they live under the illusion that those conditions still exist.”⁴⁶⁶

Ibn Khaldūn goes on to say that the life of a dynasty with strong *‘Aṣabiyyah* is not “...beyond the life (span) of three generation,”⁴⁶⁷ where each generation is equivalent to the life of an individual, approximately forty years.⁴⁶⁸ Hence, he propounds the theory that the average of all these three generations is around one hundred or one hundred and twenty years.⁴⁶⁹ He clarifies that the first generation is strongly attached with “...desert qualities, desert toughness and desert savagery.”⁴⁷⁰ The members are portrayed as strong, brave, ravenous, feared and submitted to by others and with a strong sense of *‘Aṣabiyyah*.⁴⁷¹ Subsequently, the condition of the second generation has changed from “...the desert attitude to sedentary culture, from privation to luxury and plenty, from a state in which everybody shared in the glory to one in which one man claims all the glory for himself while the others are too lazy to strive for (glory) and from proud superiority to humble subservience.”⁴⁷² At this stage, the strength of *‘Aṣabiyyah* is viewed as having been broken. The virtues and characteristic are maintained in this second generation because they still have contact with the first generation and had the experience of competence, striving and hardship in establishing a dynasty. Therefore, it is

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., p 345

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Volume. 1, p 343.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., pp 343-344.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., p 343 and 346

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., p 344.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

⁴⁷² Ibid

their aim to preserve these characteristics, not to “...give [up] all of it at once, although a good deal of it may go.”⁴⁷³ Ibn Khaldūn further comments that this second generation is hoping to live in a similar way to earlier generations, “...or they live under the illusion that those conditions still exist.”⁴⁷⁴

Meanwhile, the condition of the third generation is completely different from that of the previous two. This generation has forgotten the toughness of desert life experienced by the first generation because its life is full of luxury, ease and prosperity. At this point, the sense of *‘Aṣabiyyah* has totally diminished, or in Ibn Khaldūn’s explanation, “Group feeling disappears completely.”⁴⁷⁵ This is because the members have become helpless and fully depend on the dynasty to protect them. Ibn Khaldūn described this situation as like “...women and children who need to be defended (by someone else)...For the most part, they are more cowardly than women upon their backs.”⁴⁷⁶ Ibn Khaldūn described the leader of such a group as having lost the ability and strength to protect it or to urge something for himself and to resist demands from his people. Though he may have helpers and supporters to support and sustain the dynasty, it is only for a while until the dynasty is ready to collapse and be demolished.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷³ Ibid., p 345

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

Here, Ibn Khaldūn summarizes that the three generations in the course of “...the dynasty grow senile and is worn out.”⁴⁷⁸ As a result, the dynasty is totally destroyed in the fourth generation. Or, in Ibn Khaldūn’s words, “...it is in the fourth generation that (ancestral) prestige is destroyed.”⁴⁷⁹ He further concludes that the life of a dynasty is like the life of an individual, starting from when “...it grows up and passes into an age of stagnation and thence into retrogression.”⁴⁸⁰

Meanwhile, on the basis of these explanations of Ibn Khaldūn, Alatas clarifies that the process of decline of the sense of *‘Aṣabiyyah* is formed in two ways. The first method is through the assimilation of a group to urban and sedentary life, which is associated with luxury and encourages laziness within the group members.⁴⁸¹ The second method is through the replacement of the sense of *‘Aṣabiyyah* by the tribal chieftain who is now the leader of a government if he excludes his tribesmen or group members from holding important positions within a government.⁴⁸² The action is taken due to his fear for his position and suspicion that power may be taken over by his own people. Hence, he obtains a complete control over his people, prevents them from sharing power and tends to rule with the help of other group members.⁴⁸³ This action leads to the destruction of the government and the sense of

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., p 345

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid. Ibn Khaldūn also explained a quite similar condition but applying to prestige which lasts at least four generations of one blood-line. See Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal, *An Introduction to History*, Volume I, Chapter II, pp 278-282

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., p 346

⁴⁸¹ Syed Farid Alatas, ‘A Khaldūnian Exemplar For a Historical Sociology for the South’, *Current Sociology*, 2006, 54, 397, see <http://csi.sageub.com/cgi/content/abstract/54/3/397> (accessed October 24, 2007), pp 401-402.

⁴⁸² Ibid

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

'*Aṣabiyyah* within his group, now that he no longer receives support from his people.

Rosenthal shares this opinion, remarking,

“In the second phase, in which the leader of the '*Aṣabiyyah* circle rises to the position of an autocrat, he destroys the '*Aṣabiyyah* precisely because he no longer needs it, i.e. he deprives his fellow combatants of their partnership in power and provides himself with an independent instrument of power, consisting of mercenaries and clients, which involves a very different character from the old '*Aṣabiyyah*...”⁴⁸⁴

In conclusion, the sense of '*Aṣabiyyah* according to Ibn Khaldūn plays a crucial factor in the rise and decline of Muslim governments throughout Islamic history, except for the early periods of the Muslim state, which are the period of the Prophet and the *Khulafa' al-Rashidin* (the four rightly guided Caliphs), known for its idealistic character.⁴⁸⁵ As Rosenthal affirms, “Early Muslim history, with its concept of a pure, unworldly type of state, represented by the first four caliphs, must be considered an exception to the law of '*aṣabîyyah* that governs the formation of states in general.”⁴⁸⁶ In other words, “...this particular case represents one of the rare interventions of the supernatural in human affairs”,⁴⁸⁷ whereas the 'law' of '*Aṣabiyyah* applies to all other Muslim governments in their establishment and decline.

⁴⁸⁴ Erwin Rosenthal, *Ibn Khaldūn Gedanken über den Staat, Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der mittelalterlichen Staatslehre*, Munich and Berlin, 1932, p 18, cited in Hellmut Ritter, 'Irrational Solidarity Groups: A Socio-Psychological Study in Connection with Ibn Khaldūn', *Oriens*, Vol 1 No.1 (Jun 1, 1948), see <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1579028> (accessed May 22, 2009), pp 3- 4.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Rosenthal, Franz, *An Introduction to History*, Vol. 1, p lxxx

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid

3.3.4 Theory of ‘*Aṣabiyyah* from the perspective of Islam

The term ‘*Aṣabiyyah* is mentioned both in the Qur‘ān and the Hadīth of the Prophet. Apparently, Al-Qur‘ān uses the terminology ‘*Aṣabiyyah* as ‘*usbah* to describe the great bond of a group, giving the general meaning of the term ‘*Aṣabiyyah*, whereas in the Hadīth, the Prophet clearly states the prohibition of Islam against Muslims who depend on ‘*Aṣabiyyah*.

In the Qur‘ān, the term ‘*Aṣabiyyah*, expressed as ‘‘*uṣbah*’ can be found in four different places, namely, in *sūrah* An-Nūr: 24: 11, *sūrah* Al-Qaṣaṣ:28: 26 and *sūrah* Yūsuf:12: 8 and 14, as follows:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُم بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّا اكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ

Those who brought forward the lie are **a body** among yourselves: think it not to be an evil to you: on the contrary it is good for you: to every man among them (will come the punishment) of the sin that he earned and to him who took on himself the lead among them will be a Penalty grievous.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁸ Al-Qur‘ān, 23: 11

إِنَّ قَارُونَ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَى فَبَغَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ وَآتَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْكُنُوزِ مَا إِنَّ مَفَاتِحَهُ لَتَنُوتُوا بِالْعِصْبَةِ أُولِيَ الْقُوَّةِ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ قَوْمُهُ لَا تَفْرَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِينَ

Qarūn was doubtless, of the people of Moses; but he acted insolently towards them: such were the treasures We had bestowed on him, that their very keys would have been a burden to **a body** of strong men: behold, his people said to him: "Exult not, for Allah loveth not those who exult (in riches)."⁴⁸⁹

إِذْ قَالُوا لِيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَىٰ أَبِينَا مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ أَبَانَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

They said: "Truly Joseph and his brother are loved more by our father than we: but we are a **goodly body**! Really our father is obviously in error."⁴⁹⁰

قَالُوا لَئِن أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّا إِذًا لَّخٰسِرُونَ

They said: "If the wolf were to devour him while we are **(so large) a party**, then should we indeed (first) have perished ourselves!"⁴⁹¹

In verse 11 of *sūrah* An-Nūr, the term ‘*uṣbah*’ describes a group of slanderers, not one or two⁴⁹² but probably from ten to forty people,⁴⁹³ who had created a rumour about the wife of

⁴⁸⁹ *Al-Qur‘ān*, 28: 76

⁴⁹⁰ *Al-Qur‘ān*, 12: 8

⁴⁹¹ *Al-Qur‘ān*, 12:14

the Prophet, A‘ishah, and spread it to the other Muslims in Madinah. They were ‘Abdullah bin Ubbay bin Salul, Zayd bin Rifa‘ah, Mistah ibn Uthatah, Hassan ibn Thabit and Hamnah bint Jahsh.⁴⁹⁴ Hence, the term in the verse shows that there were many of them, forming a strong group.

Meanwhile in *sūrah* Al-Qaṣaṣ, verse 76, the ‘*uṣbah*’ in this *sūrah* signifies a group of strong men who were required to carry the keys of Qarūn’s treasuries as there were many of them.⁴⁹⁵ Qarūn’s treasuries were so great that the keys had to be carried on sixty mules. Each key was for a different storeroom, made from leather and resembling a finger.⁴⁹⁶

The term ‘*uṣbah*’ found in verses 8 and 11 of *sūrah* Yūsuf indicates the strong character of Yūsuf’s stepbrothers. Because they were many, strong and grown-up, they believed that they deserved more attention and affection from Ya‘qūb than Yūsuf and his brother, which were still small and weak. At the same time, society in this era relied heavily on numbers of independent tribes which mainly consisted of their ancestors and progeny, including sons, grandsons, brothers and nephews. Hence, they were vital persons in preserving the security of

⁴⁹² Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged)*, Volume 7 (*Surah An-Nur to Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 50*), (abridged by Sheikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri, Riyadh: Darussalam Publishers and Distributors, 2000, p 33

⁴⁹³ Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Muhammad An-Nasafi, *Tafsir an-Nasafi (Mudrak al-Tanzil wa Haqa‘iq al-Ta‘wil)*, Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir, 1998, p 491.

⁴⁹⁴ Sayyid Abul Ala’ Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur‘ān*, Volume VI (*Surah 22-24*) (trans Zafar Ishaq Ansari), Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1998, p 207.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (abridged)*, Volume 7 (*surah An-Nūr to surah Al-Ahzab, verse 50*), (abridged by Sheikh Safiur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri, p 442

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid

their family. Therefore, Yūsuf's stepbrothers believed their father was senile because he loved Yūsuf and his brother more than he loved them.

Hence, the condemnation of *'Aṣabiyyah* in Islam is not obviously stated in the Qur'ān.

However, it is clearly uttered by the Prophet in the following Hadīth:

ليس منا من دعا إلى عصبية وليس منا من قاتل على عصبية وليس منا
من مات على عصبية

He is not of us (he) who proclaims the cause of tribal partisanship; and he is not of us (he) who fights in the cause of tribal partisanship; and he is not of us (he) who dies in the cause of tribal partisanship.⁴⁹⁷

The Prophet was then asked by one of his companions to explain the meaning of tribal partisanship (*'Aṣabiyyah*) and he replied,

أن تعين قومك على الظلم

“[It means] your helping your own people in an unjust cause.”⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁷ Abu Da'ūd, on the authority of Jubayr ibn Mut'im, cited in Muhammad Asad, *The Principles of State and Government in Islam*, Gibraltar: Dar Al-Andalus, 1961, p 32

⁴⁹⁸ On the authority of Wathilah ibn al-Asqa', cited in Muhammad Asad, *The Principles of State and Government in Islam*, p 32

This Hadīth shows that *‘Aṣabiyyah* was understood by the Prophet as helping one’s people in an unjust cause or action.⁴⁹⁹ According to Ibn Khaldūn in Rabī’⁵⁰⁰’s explanation, this kind of *‘Aṣabiyyah* or *‘Aṣabiyyah* of Jahilliyah (the pre-Islamic period) is “...an abhorred feeling and a condemned way of behavior.”⁵⁰⁰ He further explains, “It had its origin in the feeling of pride and vanity and the desire to belong to a powerful or noble tribe. These crude feelings and the evils they led to, were censured as being pagan in spirit and action.”⁵⁰¹ Hence, *‘Aṣabiyyah* in this respect can be understood as chauvinism, being biased or giving blind support to the members of one’s group for acting transgressively, with prejudice or for unjust reasons.

Another set of Hadīth which talk about the rejection of *‘Aṣabiyyah* are as follows:

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “Whosoever leaves off obedience and separates from the Jamaa’ah and dies, he dies a death of jaahiliyyah. Whoever fights under the banner of the blind, becoming angry for ‘asabiyyah (partisanship and party spirit), or calling to ‘asabiyyah, or assisting ‘asabiyyah, then dies, he dies a death of jaahiliyyah.”⁵⁰²

And it is related by Imām al-Bukharī in his Saḥīḥ, that a young man from the Muhājirs and a young man from the Ansār quarrelled. So the Muhājir said: “O Muhājirs! (meaning: rally to my help)” And the Ansār said: “O Ansār”” So the Prophet

⁴⁹⁹ Yves Lacoste, *Ibn Khaldūn: The Birth of History and The Past of the Third World*, p 103.

⁵⁰⁰ Muhammad Mahmoud Rabī’. *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldūn*, p 67

⁵⁰¹ Ibid

⁵⁰² Related by Muslim in his Saḥīḥ (6/21), from Abu Hurayrah R.A. , cited in Abdul ‘Azeez Baaz, ‘Evils of Nationalism’, <http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Articles/politics/nation.html> , Nov 5, 2004, (accessed Jan 7, 2012)

(PBUH) heard this and said: “Is it with the call of jahiliyyah that you are calling out and I am present amongst you!”⁵⁰³

However, according to the Hadīth of the Prophet above, as Asad explains, the “...love of one’s own people as such cannot be described as ‘tribal partisanship’ unless it leads to doing wrong to other groups.”⁵⁰⁴ Moreover, Muslims are urged to love their brother as they love themselves and to help them whether they are being wronged or doing wrong.⁵⁰⁵ Likewise, Al-Nawawi stated that it is not perceived as *‘Aṣabiyyah* condemned by Islam if a person loves his people and his group or family. Thus, his testimony will be accepted in the court if he becomes a witness to his people and friends and is not rejected.⁵⁰⁶ In this respect, Islam, on the one hand, forbids Muslims to do wrong or to help other people on the basis of evil, transgression or being biased. Muslims are discouraged from uniting solely on the basis of race, complexion or physical attributes. On the other hand, Islam does not oppose its followers if they want to help other people, including members of their own group or from a similar background in virtue and goodness, or equally to help their universal brothers including non-Muslims.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰³ Imaām al-Bukhari in his Saḥīḥ (8/137), cited in Abdul ‘Azeez Baaz, ‘Evils of Nationalism’

⁵⁰⁴ Muhammad Asad, *The Principles of State and Government in Islam*, p 32.

⁵⁰⁵ This is based on the saying of the Prophet which means, “The Faithful are to one another like [parts of] a building, each part strengthening the others.” And “The Apostle of God said: ‘Help your brother, be he a wrongdoer or wronged.’ Thereupon a man exclaimed: ‘O Apostle of God! I may help him if he is wronged; but how could I [be expected to] help a wrongdoer?’” The Prophet answered: ‘You must prevent him from doing wrong: that will be your help to him.’” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim, on the authority of Anas, cited in Muhammad Asad, *The Principles of State and Government in Islam*, pp 31 and 33

⁵⁰⁶ Zaid Ahmad, ‘Ibn Khaldūn’s Approach in Civilisational Studies’ in Massimo Campanini (ed), *Studies on Ibn Khaldūn*, p 115.

⁵⁰⁷ Refer to *Al-Qur’ān*, 5:2.

In Islam, there is a wider concept of relationship among Muslim than a bond built on a blood relationship or a similar background and ancestry. This concept of brotherhood, a relationship between Muslims is founded on the basis of faith and respect.⁵⁰⁸ It is a rapport “...between the Muslims [which] transcends all racial and tribal barriers and it is upheld by their common faith in Allah (swt), making it stronger than any other type of relationship, even blood relationships.”⁵⁰⁹ As mentioned in the Qur’ānic verse,

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers: And fear Allah that ye may receive Mercy.⁵¹⁰

Further, we read:

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

And hold fast, all together by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you) and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; for ye were enemies and

⁵⁰⁸ Siddiq Buckley, ‘The Concept of Brotherhood in Islam’, Dec 23, 2010, see <http://islamweb.us/the-concept-of-brotherhood-in-islam.html> (accessed January 11, 2012)

⁵⁰⁹ ‘The Bonds of Brotherhood’, *Al-Islami.com*, see <http://al-islami.com/islam/unity/brotherhood.php> (accessed January 11, 2012)

⁵¹⁰ *Al-Qur’ān*, 49: 10

He joined your hearts in love so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of fire and He saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make his signs clear to you: that ye may be guided.⁵¹¹

Based on this concept, all Muslims belong to the same religion, are committed to obeying the same ultimate reality and no one is superior to any other except those who are pious and closer to God. They are encouraged to help others on the basis of goodness and piety and to fight those who are against the religion, notwithstanding the complexion of their skin, their language, ethnic background or tribe. As stated in the Qur‘ān,

وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ
وَالتَّعَدَاوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

But when ye are clear of the Sacred Precincts and of pilgrim garb, ye may hunt and let not the hatred of some people in (once) shutting you out of the Sacred Mosque lead you to transgression (and hostility on your part). Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancour: fear Allah: for Allah is strict in punishment.⁵¹²

⁵¹¹ *Al-Qur‘ān*, 3:103

⁵¹² *Al-Qur‘ān*, 5: 2

The concept of brotherhood in Islam not only requires Muslims to help their brothers, but to love them exactly as they love themselves. Hence, it is seen as the highest level of love (which is based on faith), when due to this love, we want someone else to have the same good things that we have.⁵¹³ The Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said: “You will not enter paradise until you believe and you will not believe until you love one another.”⁵¹⁴ He also said, “You will not be a believer until you love for your brother what you love for yourself.”⁵¹⁵

According to Jaffary, the concepts of brotherhood and equality are the basis of the concept of *Ummah* in Islam. In Jaffary’s words, “The *umma* in Islam promotes the concept of brotherhood, which is very important and a fundamental teaching. Everybody will be treated equally before God, regardless of their race, colour, or physical attributes. But the important character to be determined by God is *taqwa*, ‘God consciousness.’”⁵¹⁶ As mentioned in one of the Qur’ānic verses;

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ
 أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

⁵¹³ ‘The Bonds of Brotherhood’, Al-Islami.com, see <http://al-islami.com/islam/unity/brotherhood.php> (accessed January 11, 2012)

⁵¹⁴ Sahih Muslim, Book 001 (The Book of Faith, Kitab al-Iman), Hadith 0096, cited in Abdul Hamid Siddiqui, *Translation of Sahih Muslim*, see http://www.iium.edu.my/deed/hadith/muslim/001_smt.html (accessed December 1, 2012)

⁵¹⁵ Al-Bukhari and Muslim, on authority of Abu Hamzah Ans bin Malik, cited in Jamal Ahmed Badi, *Commentaries on Imam Nawawi’s Forty Hadith*, see <http://fortyhadith.iium.edu.my/hadith13.htm> (accessed November 30, 2012)

⁵¹⁶ Awang, Jaffary, *The Notion of Ummah in Islam: The Response of Malay Muslim Intellectuals in Malaysia*, , A Thesis Submitted to the University of Birmingham, for the Degree of PhD, Birmingham, UK, March 2000, p 63

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).⁵¹⁷

It is also mentioned in one of the sayings of the Prophet (PBUH),

“Indeed there is no excellence for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab, nor a white person over a black one, nor a black person over a white one, except through taqwa (piety and obedience to Allah).”⁵¹⁸

The concept of *Ummah* introduced during the time of the Prophet replaced the concept of tribal loyalty which existed among the Arabs during the period of ignorance (*Jahilliyyah*). It became the distinguishing mark of an individual’s identity in society, superior to the tribal loyalty that they used to enjoy before. Once a person has embraced Islam, his or her life is no longer dominated by the influence of his or her tribe and race. His or her life is now fully established on the basis of the oneness of Allah and the prophethood of Muhammad. Ahsan has described this in detail (below),

⁵¹⁷ *Al-Qur’ān*, 49: 13

⁵¹⁸ Sahih, related by Ahmad (5/411) and it was authenticated by Ibn Taymiyyah in *Kitāb al-Iqtidā* (p.69), cited in Abdul ‘Azeez Baaz, ‘Evils of Nationalism’

“An individual, after accepting Islam, would no longer be expected to sacrifice his life and his belongings to the honour, dignity and security of his tribe; he was no longer ruled by tribal law and customs. Instead, his life is now dominated by the idea of the unity of Allah and the prophethood of Muhammad. He now had a new set of values and laws by which to conduct his life; Muslims were now called upon to live beyond a predetermined tribal identity. In fact, the newly-established *Ummah* stood on its own merit and gained recognition throughout the Madinan area.”⁵¹⁹

Interestingly, Islam does not ignore differences in race, language or region as such, but regards every Muslim as a member of the same family. Ahsan affirms this, thus: “...the *Ummah* did not abolish tribal identity; it only changed the hierarchy of an individual’s identities in society. In essence, the tribal identity of the individual was of secondary importance to an *Ummah* identity.”⁵²⁰ In addition, Watt notes that, “...the Islamic community has a strong sense of brotherhood and in this respect continues the solidarity of the Arabian tribe.”⁵²¹ This accords to the Qur’ānic verse, *sūrah* 49, verse 13, cited above.

According to Ibn Kathir, this verse explains that Allah has created humankind from a single person, Adam, and from him He has created his mate, Hawwa. From their offspring, He created nations consisting of tribes. According to Ibn Kathir’s explanation, nations are referred to as non-Arab while tribes are referred to as Arabs.⁵²² Hence, all humankind share the same

⁵¹⁹ Abdullah al-Ahsan, *Ummah or Nation? Identity Crisis in Contemporary Muslim Society*, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1992, p 3.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ W. M. Watt, *Islamic Political Thought*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968, p 97.

⁵²² Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, see <http://tafsir.com/default.asp?sid=49&tid=49918>, (accessed August 31, 2010).

honour and are "...equal in their humanity..."⁵²³ There is no preference between people in Islam except those who have taqwa. In Ibn Kathir's view, the term 'taqwa' in this verse is contrasted with inherited rank: "...you earn honour with Allah the Exalted on account of Taqwa, not family lineage..."⁵²⁴

Hence, Rabī' contends that, to see whether the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* is complementary to or conflicting with the Islamic point of view, it should be judged on the principle of its purposes or goal.⁵²⁵ *'Aṣabiyyah* refers to "...the affection a man feels for a brother or neighbour when one of them is treated unjustly or killed,"⁵²⁶ intended for religious purposes or is "...carried out in compliance with a religious or a justified secular aim..."⁵²⁷ It is not forbidden in Islam, but desirable and acceptable. This sense of *'Aṣabiyyah*, is offered as a constructive, thought it is positive and instils moral concept.⁵²⁸ However, *'Aṣabiyyah* referring to "...the blind and prejudiced loyalty to one's own group...[leading] to the favouring of one's own group, irrespective of whether it is right or wrong and promotes inequities, mutual hatred and conflict,"⁵²⁹ is in opposition to the teaching of the Islam and is banned by the Prophet. Hence, it is agreed by most scholars of Ibn Khaldūn that he uses the term in the first sense. Therefore, it can be concluded that the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* perceived by Ibn Khaldūn is positive in

⁵²³ Ibid

⁵²⁴ Ibid

⁵²⁵ Rabī', p 68

⁵²⁶ Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*. (trans) Franz Rosenthal. *An Introduction to History*, p lxxix

⁵²⁷ Muhammad Mahmoud Rabī'. *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldūn*, p 68

⁵²⁸ Ibid

⁵²⁹ M. Umer Chapra, 'Socioeconomic and Political Dynamic in Ibn Khaldūn's Thought', *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol. 16, No.4, Winter 1999, see http://i-epistemology.net/attachments/641_V16N4%20Winter%201999%20-%20Chapra%20-%20Socioeconomic%20and%20Political%20Dynamics%20in%20Ibn%20Khalduns%20Thought.pdf (accessed December 11, 2009), p 4

intent and accords with the Islamic point of view. In other words, the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* is mutually complementary and not opposed to Islamic principles, i.e., the concept of *Ummah* and brotherhood in Islam.

3.3.5 Feasibility of the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* in the modern period and critiques of Khaldūnian thought

The theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* by Ibn Khaldūn was based on his analysis of the condition of Muslim governments in the conditions of the 14th century. However, contemporary scholars such as Lacoste, Alatas, Kayapinar, Chapra, Pasha and Nduka take the positive view that there is a 'future' for this theory and persist in discussing and developing the Khaldūnian theory within the modern context, comparing it also to modern theory.⁵³⁰

Becker and Barnes are amongst contemporary scholars of sociology who consider the impact of Ibn Khaldūn's ideas on Europe, which is one of the examples of "...intercivilizational

⁵³⁰ Syed Farid Alatas, 'Ibn Khaldūn and Contemporary Sociology', *International Sociology*, Vol. 21 (6), November 2006; see http://www.arabphilosophers.com/English/discourse/eastwest/Knowledge/Ibn_Khaldun_and_Contemporary_%20Sociology.pdf (accessed October 24, 2007), p 787

encounters in sociology.”⁵³¹ They acknowledge “...the ‘modern aspect’ of Ibn Khaldūn’s work without interpreting him out of context,”⁵³² and recognize that his works and ideas are enduring and universal. Moreover, the significance of Ibn Khaldūn’s works is perceived by Lacoste, too, as universal, although it mainly takes account of the context of North Africa.⁵³³ To him, there is a relationship between the past and present situation, where the work of the past has contemporary significance and can be incorporated into an active intellectual movement, as long as we understand the seriousness of our current problems.⁵³⁴ He goes on to say:

“The construction of the past is therefore not an end itself. It is a matter of *contemporary* interest and importance....Exploring the thought of Ibn Khaldūn does not mean straying into medieval orientalism, plunging into the distant past of an exotic country or complacently entering into a seemingly academic debate. It does not mean turning our backs on the modern world. It is, rather, a means of [considering] contemporary problems.”⁵³⁵

Therefore, Lacoste chooses to analyze Ibn Khaldūn’s works and thought, because they approach contemporary concerns, “...that developed in later nineteenth century Europe...”⁵³⁶ and are of greater interest than those of other early historians.⁵³⁷

⁵³¹ Ibid

⁵³² Ibid

⁵³³ Yves Lacoste, Ibn Khaldūn: *The Birth of History and The Past of the Third World*, p 5

⁵³⁴ Ibid., p 2

⁵³⁵ Ibid

⁵³⁶ Ibid., p 6

⁵³⁷ Ibid

Consequently, the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* and the works of Khaldūn are studied and reflected upon in seeking to resolve the current problems of Muslim communities, which are generally difficult and present internal and external challenges. The decline of Muslim governments in the past, of being divided into different countries and ruled by the colonists in the 'drama of the nation state', consequently brought degradation to Muslims in almost all aspects of life, including economic and moral and also in academic, intellectual and scientific activity. This, together with such natural disasters as famine and flood made it hard to re-establish the Islamic civilization of the past.

It is seen that, apart from Muslims' ceasing to proclaim the truth of Islamic teaching, the lack of strong bonds among the members of the Muslim community, which perhaps can be called the sense of *'Aṣabiyyah*, is a vital factor in the current crisis within the Muslim community. As Pasha describes it, "The crisis of Muslim society encompasses a number of factors, including the loss of 'asabiya; economic degeneration; political corruption, schisms and state decline; and the enervation of a culture that is unable to renew itself."⁵³⁸ In this respect, Akbar Ahmed believes that Ibn Khaldūn's theory of historical cycles, including the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* began to lose validity within Muslim societies in the middle of the 20th century after they had achieved independence from the European colonial powers.⁵³⁹ The tribal and rural groups no longer possess *'Aṣabiyyah*, which has resulted in the loss of Muslim strength and social cohesion. The factors which have contributed to the loss of strong social cohesion or *'Aṣabiyyah* among Muslims include,

⁵³⁸ Ibid

⁵³⁹ Akbar Ahmed, 'Ibn Khaldun's Understanding of Civilization and the Dilemmas of Islam and the West Today', p 31

“...the massive urbanization, dramatic demographic changes, a population explosion, large-scale migration to the West, the gap between rich and poor which is growing ominously wide, the widespread corruption and mismanagement of rulers, the rampant materialism coupled with the low premium on scholarship, the crisis of identity... [this] process of breakdown is taking place when a large percentage of the population in the Muslim world is young, dangerously illiterate, mostly jobless and therefore easily mobilized for radical change.”⁵⁴⁰

Chapra too analyzes the Khaldūnian model in responding to these issues. He considers that the decline of Islamic civilization is not a ‘straight-line’ occurrence, but a long process which began in the past and reached the lowest point of its activity and achievement in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century.⁵⁴¹ Using Khaldūnian theory, he discerns that there are some essential interrelated elements in a viable state, namely, the strength of the sovereign (*al-‘Mulk’*), Shari‘ah, the people (*al-nās*), wealth (*al-māl*), development (*al-‘imarah*), justice (*al-‘adl*) and the criterion (*al-mizān*).⁵⁴² The close connections between these elements may be explained as follows:

1. “The strength of the sovereign (*al-mulk*) does not materialize except through the implementation of the Shari‘ah...;
2. The Shari‘ah cannot be implemented except by the sovereign (*al-mulk*);
3. The sovereign cannot gain strength except through the people (*al-nās*);
4. The people cannot be sustained except by wealth (*al-māl*);
5. Wealth cannot be acquired except through development (*al-‘imarah*);
6. Development cannot be attained except through justice (*al-‘adl*);

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid

⁵⁴¹ M. Umer Chapra, *Muslim Civilization: The Causes of Decline and the Need for Reform*, p 3.

⁵⁴² Ibid., p 17

7. Justice is the criterion (*al-mizān*) by which God will evaluate mankind and
8. The sovereign is charged with the responsibility of actualizing justice.”⁵⁴³

Each of these elements affects the others, while at the same time being affected by the others. Hence, the absence of one of these elements will contribute to the decline of a civilization, for it will break the chain and in practical terms signal its decay.⁵⁴⁴ Based on this model, the element of *‘Aṣabiyyah* as a dependent variable lies along the chain of the people (*al-nās*), justice (*al-‘adl*) and the sovereign (*al-mulk*) or the state. Human beings are at the centre of this model, for, according to Ibn Khaldūn, the despair or comfort of the people reflects the rise or decline of a civilization.⁵⁴⁵ Thus, people require the help and cooperation of other people because they naturally prefer to live together, not alone, and require others to supply their basic necessities and protect them from danger, being unable to do these things by themselves.⁵⁴⁶ This desire is recognized by Ibn Khaldūn as the sense of *‘Aṣabiyyah*. The sense of *‘Aṣabiyyah* will be formed and get stronger if justice exists within the group or community. As Chapra explains, “It develops and gets strengthened if there is justice (j) to ensure the well-being of all through the fulfilment of mutual obligations and an equitable sharing of the fruits of development (W and g).”⁵⁴⁷ Otherwise, the absence of justice will create dissatisfaction and displeasure and will weaken the sense of social solidarity or *‘Aṣabiyyah*,

⁵⁴³ Ibid. See appendix III for a diagram of the model.

⁵⁴⁴ For further detailed explanation of the model, see M. Umer Chapra, *Future of Islamic economics: an Islamic Perspective*, pp 17-27

⁵⁴⁵ M. Umer Chapra, *Muslim Civilization: The Causes of Decline and the Need for Reform*, p 19.

⁵⁴⁶ M. Umer Chapra, ‘Socioeconomic and Political Dynamic in Ibn Khaldūn’s Thought’, *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol. 16, No.4, Winter 1999, see http://i-epistemology.net/attachments/641_V16N4%20Winter%201999%20-%20Chapra%20-%20Socioeconomic%20and%20Political%20Dynamics%20in%20Ibn%20Khalduns%20Thought.pdf (accessed December 11, 2009), p 4

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid (according to the model introduced, ‘j’ represents justice, ‘W,’ wealth or stock of resources and ‘g’, development).

resulting in conflict among the group members. This conflict disturbs the development of a nation or civilization. In other words, Chapra goes on, “This will in turn not only adversely affect their motive to work but also sap their efficiency, innovativeness, entrepreneurship, drive and other good qualities, leading ultimately to the society’s disintegration and decline...”⁵⁴⁸

Hence, a strong or weak sense *‘Aṣabiyyah* within the context of the Muslim community relies on the conduct of the political authority, whether they are acting justly or unjustly and are implementing the teaching and values of Islam in their rulings. That is to say, if Islamic teaching and values are practised by the political authority, all aspects of human life including solidarity or *‘Aṣabiyyah* will be strengthened and will be flourished.⁵⁴⁹ Consequently, if there is a break in solidarity between the government and the people, a society will find it difficult to sustain its progress. In Chapra’s words, “Such a crack tends to generate conflict and lack of cooperation and vitiates the climate for development.”⁵⁵⁰ Therefore, *‘Aṣabiyyah* or solidarity is inseparable in the development of a community, “...to enable Fiqh to develop in step with the changing need of society.”⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid

⁵⁴⁹ M. Umer Chapra, *Muslim Civilization: The Causes of Decline and the Need for Reform*, p 38

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., p 133

⁵⁵¹ Ibid. There are a number of studies which also discuss the Khaldūnian theory and the theory of *‘Aṣabiyyah* in relation to the contemporary situation, such as Arno Tausch and Almas Heshmati, *Asabiyya: Re-interpreting Value Change in Globalized Societies*, Johann P. Arnason and George Stauth, ‘Civilization and State Formation in the Islamic Context: Re-Reading Ibn Khaldun’, Seifudein Adem, ‘Decolonizing Modernity Ibn-Khaldun and Modern Historiography’ and Syed Farid Alatas, ‘A Khaldunian Perspective on the Dynamic of Asiatic Societies.’

Yet, Chapra's effort in introducing Khaldūnian thought in new theoretical framework is also been criticised by Choudhury and Silvia. The function relationship introduced by Chapra is $G = f(S, N, W, g \text{ and } j)$, where G representing the government variables, N signifies population, W denotes wealth, S as Sharī'ah, g as a stage of development and j means social justice.⁵⁵² Yet, Choudhury and Silvia question what is the element of internal relationship that bond between these variables? Thus, as Sharī'ah (S) influences other variables (Government, population, wealth, stage of development and social justice or G, N, W, g, and j) and vice versa (other variables influence Sharī'ah), intrinsic there should be a common factor that that lies among these variables to give effect on the circular or round relations.⁵⁵³ Hence, unity of knowledge is recognized by Choudhury and Silvia as central and common factor to this relation, where the relations would not be able to sustain without it.⁵⁵⁴ Furthermore, Qur'ān and Sunnah as well as *'urf* and *'adah* are the must core for Sharī'ah, which based on Chapra's model, it only act as marginal or outlying part of Sharī'ah.⁵⁵⁵

In this respect, Sharī'ah is highlighted by Choudhury and Silvia as a core in unity of knowledge throughout the dynamic of human society circle, which to them is absent or less emphasizes in Khaldūnian thought. Ibn Khaldūn is depicted incline to sociological analysis of historical changes than the Islamic ones. Perhaps, Ibn Khaldūn is not only emphasizes on Sharī'ah as the core element in discussing the philosophy of history, but also stresses on other

⁵⁵² Masudul Alam Choudhury and Bayu Silvia, 'A Critique of Ibn Khaldun's Causality Concept', JKAU: Islamic Econ. Vol. 21, No. 1 (2008/1429), see http://www.kau.edu.sa/files/320/researches/51087_21221.pdf (accessed January 12, 2012), p 51

⁵⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., p 52

aspect, differs to Choudhury who is more concerned on the Sharī‘ah and its elements in discussing the issue. Both points of views could be stated as important and crucial. Choudhury and Silvia points of views thus could be accomplishment to Khaldūnian thought.

Moreover, Choudhury and Silvia argued that Ibn Khaldūn is silent on Qur‘ānic law or principles of philosophy of history in explaining the cycle of civilization among its establishment and decline.⁵⁵⁶ He does not explain on how the dynamic or active historical cycle that he had emphasized, able to return and reflect to divine laws, i.e Sharī‘ah laws and its principles when the world is seeking for material and advanced technologies?⁵⁵⁷ Thus, he seems devoted to sociological analysis of social changes more than Sharī‘ah as science of cultural when discussing the situation of North Africa during his time.⁵⁵⁸ To Choudhury and Silvia, this standpoint is against to the principle of unity of knowledge and continuous model of *Tawhidi* worldview.⁵⁵⁹

Furthermore, according to Baali, commenters or authors on works of Ibn Khaldūn could be divided into four groups, first are those who acknowledge and compliment his work and thinking, second groups are those who totally criticised and proclaimed that his works not only not contributing to world of knowledge but also brought curiosity, delusion and

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., p 50

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid

misconception on the historical process.⁵⁶⁰ Meanwhile, the third one is the neutral group who make no comments on Ibn Khaldūn's work and writings, thus leave to the readers or public to judge them by themselves. Finally, are those who benefit from Ibn Khaldūn's work by developing and initiating new invention and fresh and different theoretical framework based on Ibn Khaldūn's thought.⁵⁶¹ A further group may be added here: scholars who attack him by claiming that he was not Islamic enough and for making use of 'value free-sociology' or 'value-neutrality' in his work and thought.⁵⁶² Thus, Ibn Khaldūn is regarded as a Muslim but not an Islamic social scientist; as someone who is not striving to highlight principles of behaviour from his new science for the sake of a just order in Islam.⁵⁶³

Toynbee is among of those who criticised and argue on the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*. To him, Ibn Khaldūn is incapable to picture the urban dwellers as also holding *'Aṣabiyyah*, as the theory explained and described by Ibn Khaldūn seems is monopolized or controlled largely by nomadic.⁵⁶⁴ Furthermore, it is doubtful that *'Aṣabiyyah* is the crucial element for the nomadic to be more developed and competent to live in the desert than other groups, as to Toynbee, this situation and the theory of rise and fall described by Ibn Khaldūn applied only in five governments throughout history, i.e., Amorites, Chaldeans, Mongols, Ottomans and seventh-century Arabs.⁵⁶⁵ Thus, from his point of views, civilization is the reason or cause to

⁵⁶⁰ Fuad Baali, *Society, State and Urbanism: Ibn Khaldūn 's Sociological Thought*, p ix

⁵⁶¹ Ibid

⁵⁶² Akbar Ahmed, *Discovering Islam, Making Sense of Muslim History and Society*, London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 1988, p 101 and Illyas Ba-Yunus and Farid Ahmad, *Islamic Sociology: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Hodder and Stoughton, The Islamic Academy, 1985, p 25.

⁵⁶³ Illyas Ba-Yunus and Farid Ahmad, *Islamic Sociology: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Hodder and Stoughton, The Islamic Academy, 1985, p 25.

⁵⁶⁴ Robert Irwan, 'Toynbee and Ibn Khaldūn', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 33, Number 3, (July 1997), p 468

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid

the creation of history and its decline due to the people themselves, rather than the nomadic group depicted as the element to the establishment and destruction of civilizations.⁵⁶⁶

Though it is Toynbee's right and standpoint to argue on the theory, there are answers to his argument and criticism. To Irwin, Toynbee arguments are neither correct nor fair.⁵⁶⁷ In this respect, Ibn Khaldūn neither considers that the sense of '*Aṣabiyyah*' is monopolized by nomadic, nor the establishment and decline of government or dynasties exclusively due to the strength and weakness of nomadic sense of '*Aṣabiyyah*'.⁵⁶⁸ Thus, he highlighted that the history of Mamluk is one of the example of government excluded from this theory in their cycle of civilization.⁵⁶⁹

Overall, then, it can be concluded that the Khaldūnian theory and his theory of '*Aṣabiyyah*' have a place in the modern context. In other words, it is a theory which was not only valid in the past, but is relevant to the modern and perhaps to future conditions, although more thorough studies are perhaps required before it can be applied to the modern context, as suggested by Pasha⁵⁷⁰ and Akbar Ahmed.⁵⁷¹ Yet, great scholar like Ibn Khaldun is also unavoidable to be criticised. Every scholar has his or her opinions on certain issue and aspect

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., pp 469-470

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid., p 472

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid

⁵⁷⁰ Mustapha Kamal Pasha, 'Ibn Khaldun and world order', pp 65-66

⁵⁷¹ Akbar Ahmed, 'Ibn Khaldun's Understanding of Civilization and the Dilemmas of Islam and the West Today', p 43

and will agree and disagree to each other. Yet, their dispute should not be seen or taken negatively, but should be viewed and considered in positive perception that might enhance certain issue and aspect, including their criticism and critique on Khaldūnian thought.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has given answers to several issues highlighted at the beginning of the chapter. The first is Ibn Khaldun's personal experience of being involved in political intrigue and witnessing the stagnation of the Muslim governments in the 14th century, which made him curious to find the reason behind this situation and which ultimately led him to write the *Muqaddimah* and propound the theories of *Al-'Umrān* and *'Aṣabiyyah*. Second, the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* agrees to the concept *Ummah* and brotherhood in Islam. The sense of *'Aṣabiyyah*, according to this theory, is a natural spirit of social solidarity and cohesiveness which is required for the development of a group or nation. According to Zaid Ahmad, *'Aṣabiyyah* as meant by Ibn Khaldūn "...is one of the central basics that determined the development of human society."⁵⁷²

Third, the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* has potential and deserves to be reviewed in a modern framework. Despite the criticism and objections to the use of the Khaldūnian model and the

⁵⁷² Zaid Ahmad, 'Ibn Khaldūn's Approach in Civilisational Studies', p 114

theory within this context,⁵⁷³ scholars such as Alatas, Dhaouadi and Chapra are positive about its applicability and think that it may be followed in encountering the dilemmas and malaises of the Muslim community today. The applicability of the theory in the context of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

⁵⁷³ Chapra discusses the objections to the use of the Khaldūnian theory in the modern context. For details, see M. Umer Chapra, *Muslim Civilization: The Causes of Decline and the Need for Reform*, pp 12-14

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY OF FIELD WORK RESEARCH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the methodology of the present research, particularly as regards fieldwork. The purpose of undertaking fieldwork research in this study is to achieve the third underlying objective, which is to investigate the perceptions of respondents regarding the problems and challenges faced by the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia, mainly in the aspects of economics, politics, social affairs, education and integration. The task is crucial because without it the researcher cannot access the respondents' perceptions of the aspects mentioned from their primary sources. Hence, their views, perceptions and suggestions will be examined, analyzed and discussed to see what bearing they have on the relevance in applying Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* to the current situation for the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia.

To start with, this chapter discusses the background of the University of Malaya as the locale of the research sample, comprising its historical background, its mission and vision, faculties,

courses offered and its students in brief. Next, the methodology of the research is discussed, namely, its research instrument, which uses triangulation between its quantitative and qualitative data approaches and its research design, i.e. that of a case study. This chapter also focuses on the procedure in conducting field work research, including the drafting of research questions, the issue of validity and reliability, sampling procedures, a pilot case study and the process of collecting and analyzing the data. Finally, the problems and limitations encountered during the fieldwork research are described.

4.2 THE BACKGROUND TO THE LOCALE OF THE RESEARCH: THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA

There are nearly 20 public universities in Malaysia, of which the University of Malaya is the oldest. Currently, it is among the top 200 universities of the world, with a ranking of 180 (out of 230 in the data).⁵⁷⁴ It is situated in Lembah Pantai, southwest of Kuala Lumpur (the capital city of Malaysia), on 750 acres of land (309 hectare).⁵⁷⁵ Overall, there are 13,617 local and 865 international undergraduate students, 5,826 local and 2,098 international postgraduate students coming from 78 countries.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷⁴Times Higher Education Q-S World University Ranking 2009, see <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/Rankings2009-Top200.html> (accessed February 6, 2010)

⁵⁷⁵ History of UM, see http://www.um.edu.my/discover_um/history_of_um.php?intPrefLangID=1& (accessed February 6, 2010)

⁵⁷⁶ UM Fact Sheet http://www.um.edu.my/discover_um/um_fact_sheet.php?intPrefLangID=1&

4.2.1 Historical background of the University of Malaya

The University of Malaya has an interesting historical background. It began when a medical school, known as The Straits and Federated Malay States Government Medical School was established in Singapore on 3 July 1905.⁵⁷⁷ Subsequently, it changed its name twice, once on 18 November 1913 to the King Edward VII Medical School and next to the King Edward VII College of Medicine in 1921.⁵⁷⁸ Later in 1929, a school of art and social science known as Raffles College was established as part of the King Edward VII College of Medicine.⁵⁷⁹ The union of King Edward VII College of Medicine and the Raffles College on 4 April 1949 later formed a university which was named the University of Malaya.⁵⁸⁰ Due to its rapid development in its first ten years, it set up autonomous divisions in two different places, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, in 1951. In 1960, by a decision of the governments of Malaya and Singapore, it upgraded the status of these divisions to national universities. Consequently, on 1st January 1962, the University of Malaya emerged as an independent university, the first in Malaysia, to replace the Kuala Lumpur division, while the University of Singapore was formed from the Singapore division and is nowadays recognized as the National University of Singapore (NUS).⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁷ J.S. Cheah, T.M. Ho and B.Y. NG, 'The First Graduates in 1910', *Annals Academy of Medicine Singapore*, July 2005, Vol 34, No 6, see <http://www.annals.edu.sg/pdf/34VolNo6200506/V34N6p19C.pdf> (accessed February 16, 2012), p 19C

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid

⁵⁷⁹ One of the sources mentioned that it was established in 1928, see, History of UM, http://www.um.edu.my/discover_um/history_of_um.php?intPrefLangID=1& (accessed February 6, 2010)

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid

⁵⁸¹ History of UM, *University of Malaya Official Website*, see http://www.um.edu.my/discover_um/history_of_um.php?intPrefLangID=1& (accessed February 6, 2010)

4.2.2 Mission, Vision, Quality Policy and Educational Goals

To ensure that the university remains as a renowned academic institution in Malaysia, it has underlined its mission and vision. This mission is, “to advance knowledge and learning through quality research and education for the nation and humanity.”⁵⁸² This matches its current position as “...the foremost and premier Research University (RU) in Malaysia” in many disciplines including the arts, sciences and humanities.⁵⁸³ Meanwhile, its vision is “...to be an internationally renowned institution of higher education in research, innovation, publication and teaching.”⁵⁸⁴ The university’s motto is, “Knowledge is the source of progress” (*Ilmu Punca Kejayaan*). Currently its motto is, “To be the leader in research and innovation”, which is intended to achieve the aspirations of its mission and vision.⁵⁸⁵

The university also places emphasis on a policy of quality to provide the best ‘services’ to its ‘customers’, i.e. the students. It states that, “ The University of Malaya intends to undertake teaching and learning, conduct research and service of quality, generate and advance knowledge through continuous improvement for the benefit of all customers, in particular the

⁵⁸² Mission/Vision, *University of Malaya Official Website*, see <http://www.um.edu.my/mainpage.php?module=Maklumat&kategori=51&id=195&papar=1> (accessed February 6, 2010)

⁵⁸³ VC’s office ; Welcome Message, see http://www.um.edu.my/discover_um/vc_office/welcome_message.php?intPrefLangID=1& (accessed February 7, 2010)

⁵⁸⁴ Mission/Vision, *University of Malaya Official Website*, see <http://www.um.edu.my/mainpage.php?module=Maklumat&kategori=51&id=195&papar=1> (accessed February 6, 2010)

⁵⁸⁵ *University of Malaya Official Website*, see <http://www.um.edu.my/> (accessed February 7, 2010)

students of the University of Malaya.”⁵⁸⁶ Therefore, the university’s goals and expectations for its graduates, listed in the Educational Goals of the University of Malaya, are that it expects that its graduates “...will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and skills in their field of study, appropriate research and professional practices, and the processes of critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving.
2. Use effective methods including contemporary technology to manage information, to achieve diverse professional goals aligned with professional standards and make decisions based on appropriate data and information.
3. Engage in continuous self-improvement and professional growth, support the professional development of others, and display positive leadership and professional behaviours and disposition for effective practice.
4. Communicate effectively with other professionals, and the community, and project a coherent vision of social responsibilities.

⁵⁸⁶ ‘Discover UM’, *University of Malaya Official Website*, see http://www.um.edu.my/discover_um/mission_vision.php?intPrefLangID=1& (accessed February 7, 2010)

5. Appreciate and continue to be guided by the university's core values of integrity, respect, academic freedom, open-mindedness, accountability, professionalism, meritocracy, teamwork, creativity and social responsibility.⁵⁸⁷

The current Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ghauth Jasmon, has expressed similar expectations for the graduates of the University of Malaya, and hopes that they will be able "...to develop leadership qualities and become global citizens."⁵⁸⁸

4.2.3 Faculties and Courses

There are 12 faculties, 2 academies, 5 centres and 6 institutes offering a number of courses in all disciplines, not only at the tertiary level (for undergraduates and postgraduates), but also at the certificate and diploma level, known as executive learning. Most of the faculties, academies and centres offer courses for both undergraduates and postgraduates, while the institutes mainly offer postgraduate courses. The faculties comprise the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, the Faculty of Business and Accountancy, the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, the Faculty of Dentistry, the Faculty of Economics and Administration, the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Engineering, the Faculty of

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸⁸ 'VC's office ; Welcome Message', *University Malaya Official Website*, see http://www.um.edu.my/discover_um/vc_office/welcome_message.php?intPrefLangID=1& (accessed February 7, 2010)

Language and Linguistics, the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Built Environment. The academies and centres comprise the Academy of Malay Studies and the Academy of Islamic Studies, the Cultural Centre, Sport Centre, the Centre for Foundation Studies, Centre for Civilizational Dialogue, University Malaya Centre for Continuing Education.⁵⁸⁹

The institutes which offer courses for postgraduate programmes are the Asia-Europe Institute, Institute of Principalship Studies and the International Institute of Public Policy and Management (INPUMA). The other institutes, which mainly focus on research and administration, are the Institute of Research Management and Monitoring, Institute of Graduate School and Institute of China Studies. In addition, the certificate and diploma programmes are conducted by the University Malaya Centre for Continuing Education (UMCCed), these are discussed next in more detail.

⁵⁸⁹ Office Directory, *University Malaya Official Website*, see <http://www.um.edu.my/mainpage.php?module=Maklumat&kategori=51&id=285&papar=1> (accessed February 7, 2010)

4.2.4 The University Malaya Centre for Continuing Education (UMCCed)

Apart from its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, the University of Malaya also offers to the public certificate and diploma programmes, known as executive learning, managed by the University Malaya Centre for Continuing Education (UMCCed). Detail of UMCCed is discussed here because parts of respondents of fieldwork research are students of the programmes organized by this centre. The centre was set up in response to the need of members of the public to enhance their professional competence and knowledge by quality education and training. By establishing this centre, also, it is hoped to fulfil the Malaysia government's vision for 2020 of developing a knowledge society and producing skilled human capital in the mission to become a knowledge driven-economy (k-economy). Furthermore, the university believes that education is a lifelong process, not exclusive to students going through the normal education process. Hence, this programme allows adults, including working people, to pursue studies at a higher education level so as to enhance their performances at work.

In fulfilling this mission, the centre underlines its vision and objectives. Its vision is for UMCCed "to be a renowned centre of excellence for continuing education programmes in the country,"⁵⁹⁰ which is aligned with the aim of the University of Malaya to be one of the significant contributors in developing a knowledge-based society. Meanwhile, its mission is,

⁵⁹⁰ 'UMCCed in brief', see <http://www.umcced.edu.my/Intro.html> (accessed February 10, 2012)

“To provide learning and training opportunities to the working public in order to upgrade their knowledge and skills towards the development of human capital and the nation.”⁵⁹¹

It was established in 1998, on the University of Malaya City Campus, Jalan Ismail, which is at the heart of Kuala Lumpur City centre, in Block A of the former Public Services Department complex. It has a wide variety of facilities, including seminar and discussion rooms, computer facilities, a library, auditorium, a dining room and sport and recreation facilities. The centre offers a number of multi-disciplinary courses on different programmes. The certificate programme currently offers certificates in Sharī‘ah, Usūluddin, and Islamic Financial Planning, a part-time bachelor’s degree programme in Business Administration (External), coaching programmes, short courses and special training specifically in early childhood education. The diploma programmes, known as the executive and professional diploma programmes, offer a large number of courses, for example in business and business management, human resources, counselling, information technology, management, Islamic studies and early childhood education.⁵⁹² Since all these courses are intended for working or retired people, they are offered on part-time basis. Its students learn not only from lectures and class presentations but also from practical training to fulfil the centre’s aim of developing skills and knowledge for careers and professions. Nearly 14,000 students have successfully completed courses since the centre was opened in 1998.⁵⁹³

⁵⁹¹ Ibid

⁵⁹² Executive and Professional Diploma Programmes, see <http://www.umcced.edu.my/EXECDIP.html> (accessed February 10, 2010)

⁵⁹³ ‘UMCCed in brief’, see <http://www.umcced.edu.my/Intro.html> (accessed February 10, 2012)

4.3 METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

4.3.1 The Research Approaches

Basically, there are two main approaches in social science research, qualitative and quantitative. It is possible to combine both approaches in the same study and if one set of data is used to check the other. The technique is known as triangulation. Qualitative research and quantitative research have different but complementary characteristics.⁵⁹⁴ The differences could be viewed in terms of research design and the ways of collecting and analyzing data. According to Bryman, quantitative research is mainly associated with social surveys and experimental investigation, while qualitative research is more related to participant observation and unstructured, in-depth interviewing.⁵⁹⁵

Quantitative research is empirical or experimental research of which the data are primarily represented in the form of numbers.⁵⁹⁶ The quantitative method emphasizes quantification in collecting and analyzing data.⁵⁹⁷ It is an approach and a way of thinking which involves a

⁵⁹⁴ W.Lawrance Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, Boston: Pearson Education, 2003, p 139

⁵⁹⁵ Alan Bryman, *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*, London: Routledge, 1988, p1

⁵⁹⁶ Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, London: Sage Publications, 1998, p 4

⁵⁹⁷ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p 4

collection of data including numerical data.⁵⁹⁸ Furthermore, quantitative research tests theories and concepts.⁵⁹⁹ Its process is initially based on certain theories, hence the design of the hypothesis is developed and the data collected through a social survey, experiments or structured observation and then verified on the basis of a developed hypothesis in order to reject or verify its “causal connection.”⁶⁰⁰ Researchers using quantitative research are held to be distant from their subject because their aim is to view the nature of reality objectively without any relation between the researchers and their subject. Using the several methods of quantitative research, researchers have no direct contact at all with their subjects.⁶⁰¹ Furthermore, quantitative research “...conceptualizes the world in terms of variables which can be measured and relations between variables.” Thus it differs from qualitative research which analyzes cases and processes, instead of variables.⁶⁰²

For this reason, qualitative research stresses words or non-numerical forms rather than quantification in analyzing and collecting data. As described by Bryman, qualitative research is “...an approach to the study of the social world which seeks to describe and analyze the culture and behaviour of humans and their group from the point of view of those being studied.”⁶⁰³ Hence, qualitative researchers will be involved directly in their research and interact openly with their subjects as they need to have the same standpoint as that of the

⁵⁹⁸ Keith F. Punch, *Developing Effective Research Proposal*, London: Sage Publications, 2000 p 4

⁵⁹⁹ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, p 287

⁶⁰⁰ Alan Bryman, *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. p 18

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., p 95

⁶⁰² Keith F. Punch, *Developing Effective Research Proposal*, p 4

⁶⁰³ Alan Bryman, *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*, p 46

research participants.⁶⁰⁴ As the aim is to measure perceptions, understanding and behaviour, qualitative researchers have a tendency to look at the nature of reality as something subjective, which encourages them to get closer to their research participants.⁶⁰⁵

In sum, both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research have different ways of thinking, methods of approaching and conceptualizing the study of social reality and the designs and methods employed in presenting their kind of thinking and of collecting data.⁶⁰⁶

The table below summarises these differences.

Table 4.1 Differences between quantitative and qualitative research

Quantitative	Qualitative
Numbers	Words
Point of view of researcher	Points of view of participants
Researcher distant	Researcher close
Theory testing	Theory emergent
Static	Process
Structured	Unstructured
Generalization	Contextual understanding
Hard, reliable data	Rich, deep data
Macro	Micro
Behaviour	Meaning
Artificial settings	Natural settings

(from Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, p 287)

⁶⁰⁴ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, p 2

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., p 96

⁶⁰⁶ Keith F. Punch, *Developing Effective Research Proposal*, p 4

With these approaches in social science research a third becomes possible, triangulation. This can be understood as looking at something from a different perspective and new angles rather than viewing it from only one.⁶⁰⁷ This implies that more than one type of method can be used to conduct research and more than one kind of source or data can yield evidence.⁶⁰⁸ According to Denzin, a study is recognized as triangulation when “...multiple observers, theoretical perspectives, sources of data and methodologies” are combined in one investigation.⁶⁰⁹ Consequently, using the combination of different methodologies in research helps to enhance the strength of both and reduce their weaknesses. However, the researcher needs to be clear about which parts of the research methodology need to be combined and what types of methodology should be used. If these are ambiguous, it might be difficult to collect and analyse the data.⁶¹⁰

There are four kinds of triangulations, namely triangulation of measures, observers, theory and methods.⁶¹¹ Triangulation of measures occurs when researchers use multiple measures of the same phenomenon or situation to view all kinds of aspects and perspectives.⁶¹² Meanwhile, triangulation of observers means having multiple observers or researchers observing or conducting interviews. This approach is likely to enhance the findings because it reduces the limitations of having only a single observer, such as a limited perspective,

⁶⁰⁷ W.Lawrance Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, pp 137-138

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p 131

⁶⁰⁹ N.K Denzin., *The Research Act in Sociology*, Chicago: Aldine, 1970, p 310

⁶¹⁰ Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. London: Sage Publication, 1988, p 246

⁶¹¹ W.Lawrance Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p 138

⁶¹² *Ibid*

background and set of social characteristics of the object or matter studied.⁶¹³ Another type of triangulation is triangulation of theory, where the researcher applies more than one theoretical position or theoretical perspective in planning research or in interpreting data, for example examining data from both conflict and exchange theory.⁶¹⁴ The last kind of triangulation is triangulation of methods, for example, using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and mixing the data so that one is checked by the other. This can be done in several ways, by using the methods one after the other or using both together, for instance, in conducting open-ended interviews, followed by a quantitative survey questionnaire to obtain more comprehensive and convincing results or findings.⁶¹⁵

Primarily because of this, this study takes the triangulation approach, applying both qualitative and quantitative methods throughout. The qualitative approach is seen in the semi-structured interviews, as further knowledge from the respondents from the research sample is sought of the theory of *'Aşabiyyah* and their perceptions regarding the current problems and challenges encountered by the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia. Furthermore, the views of interviewees among Malaysian academicians and prominent figures were also sought on related topics and in gauging the possibility of applying the theory of *'Aşabiyyah* in this context. This is in accordance with the principle of qualitative research which is to understand and measure the perceptions of the research participants in the specified issues and to get closer to them in obtaining the data needed. Meanwhile, the quantitative method was used

⁶¹³ Ibid and Alan Bryman, *Triangulation*, see <http://www.referenceworld.com/sage/socialscience/triangulation.pdf> (accessed March 9, 2012), p 2

⁶¹⁴ Ibid

⁶¹⁵ Ibid, p 139

when a questionnaire was distributed to respondents from a sample of students of the University of Malaya in order to elicit similar information. This method was chosen because it is quicker and cheaper to administer when the respondents are many and widespread.

4.3.2 Case study research

One of the objectives of this research is to study in detail the problems and challenges faced by the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia today, including economic, educational, political and social concerns (notably integration). It seeks to study events in these categories and the process involved tackling 'how' and 'why' questions. Therefore, a case study is seen as an appropriate research design to apply in this study. This becomes clear when the design is examined in more detail.

Case study research is a study of a single case or small number of cases which investigates at a certain period of time and records the results at the end.⁶¹⁶ It is an in-depth, intensive and

⁶¹⁶ Beverly R. Dixon, Gary D. Bouma and B.J. Atkinson, *A Handbook of Social Science Research*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, p 110 and Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p 150.

detailed study, using all kinds of appropriate methods.⁶¹⁷ The general objective of case study research, according to Punch, is “...to develop as full an understanding of the case as possible.”⁶¹⁸ Meanwhile, its aim is to seek description, i.e., what had happened to the focus or subject⁶¹⁹ and to study it “...in its natural setting, recognizing its complexity and its context.”⁶²⁰ Hence, a case study employs a holistic approach, which means an attempt to preserve the social context of its study, connecting the different sections of the case with the whole, and to understand and maintain the wholeness or completeness, unity and integrity of the case.⁶²¹ Consequently, it raises questions on the boundaries and in describing the characteristics of a case.⁶²² In studying the case, usually there are boundaries which are not clearly manifest between a contemporary phenomenon and its context.⁶²³ These boundaries thus, need to be clear, precisely to identify what things are to be studied and what are not, within the case itself.⁶²⁴

A case or ‘site’ may be defined as a phenomenon or incident of something which is happening in a bounded context whose events, processes and outcomes are being studied.⁶²⁵ Hence, a variety of things can be the subject of a case study. It could be a case study of an individual,

⁶¹⁷ Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p 150, George Payne and Judy Payne, *Key Concepts in Social Research*, London: Sage Publications, 2004, p 31, Bob Matthews and Liz Ross, *Research Methods: A Practical Guide for the Social Sciences*, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2010, p 128.

⁶¹⁸ Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p 150

⁶¹⁹ Gary D. Bouma and G.B.J. Atkinson, *A Handbook of Social Science Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p 110

⁶²⁰ Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p 150

⁶²¹ Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p 150.

⁶²² W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods*, p 33.

⁶²³ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1984, p 23

⁶²⁴ Bob Matthews and Liz Ross, *Research Methods: A Practical Guide for the Social Sciences*, p 128

⁶²⁵ Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods*, London: Sage Publications, 1984, p 28 and Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p 152

an organization, a situation, a small group, a community, a nation or a country.⁶²⁶ It could also be a study on a decision, a policy, a process, a certain incident or event, a movement, a geographical unit or some other possibility⁶²⁷ and its results could be used to test scientific or other abstract theories or models for practical use.⁶²⁸

There are several kinds of case study research. According to Yin, case study research can be divided into single and multiple case designs.⁶²⁹ Within the single-case design, there are ‘critical’, ‘unique’ or ‘extreme’ and ‘revelatory’ cases. A critical case is applied in testing or challenging a specified hypothesis or well-formulated theory.⁶³⁰ Hence a case is chosen “...on the ground that will allow a better understanding of the circumstances in which the hypothesis will or will not hold,”⁶³¹ or whether the theory is connected to the evidence or it is more relevant to provide an alternative way of clarifying the case.⁶³² A critical case could also refer to certain changes which allow a researcher to study further what has occurred as a result of the research.⁶³³

⁶²⁶ Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p 152

⁶²⁷ Ibid., W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods*, Boston: Pearson Education, 2003, p 33, Bob Matthews and Liz Ross, *Research Methods: A Practical Guide for the Social Sciences*, p 128.

Hence, these characteristics are the main features of a case study. Punch concludes that there are four main characteristics of this type of research design; first, it has boundaries or is a ‘bounded system’, second, it is a case of something, third, it sustains the wholeness, unity and integrity of the subject and fourth it uses multiple sources of data and data collection methods (Punch, 1998: 153)

⁶²⁸ Martyn Shuttleworth, ‘Case Study Research Design’, *Experiment-Resources.Com*, 2008, see <http://www.experiment-resources.com/case-study-research-design.html> (accessed February 9, 2012)

⁶²⁹ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, pp 42-50

⁶³⁰ Ibid, p 42 and Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p 48

⁶³¹ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p 48.

⁶³² Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, pp 42-43

⁶³³ Bob Matthews and Liz Ross, *Research Methods: A Practical Guide for the Social Sciences*, p 128

Meanwhile, an extreme or unique case is a type usually found in clinical studies. It concentrates on a certain group or situation that is seen to be different from most others and focuses on its uniqueness or rareness.⁶³⁴ Hence, it is chosen at the level of the researcher's interests, for example, a clinical study of an unusual case to shed light on what is normal such as "...studying the brain-damaged to explore the psychology of memory."⁶³⁵ Third, revelatory cases give the researcher a chance to "...observe and analyze a phenomenon previously inaccessible to scientific investigation."⁶³⁶ Hence, this kind of case study creates new ideas and provides fresh access to the research topic.⁶³⁷

Furthermore, there is the multiple case study which is also referred to as the comparative or collective case study.⁶³⁸ It usually focuses from within and through cases and is extended from a single case study to the study of several other cases, to learn further regarding the phenomenon, population or general condition of the cases.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁴ Ibid

⁶³⁵ Geoff Payne and Judy Payne, *Key Concepts in Social Research*, London: Sage Publications, 2004, p 33

⁶³⁶ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, p 43

⁶³⁷ Geoff Payne and Judy Payne, *Key Concepts in Social Research*, p 33 and Bob Matthews and Liz Ross, *Research Methods: A Practical Guide for the Social Sciences*, p 128. Apart from these types of case study, Bob Matthews and Liz Ross add two more kinds which are the representative or typical case and the longitudinal case. According to them, representative or typical cases, as opposed to unique cases, are perceived as representative and similar to many other cases (on the basis of 'everyday' and ordinary cases) and selected for this reason. Longitudinal cases involve many case studies and can be carried out in "... successive studies over period of time". (Matthews and Ross, 2010: 128). Meanwhile, Stake classified types of case study as the intrinsic case study, the instrumental case study and the collective case study. For details, see Bob Matthews and Liz Ross, *Research Methods: A Practical Guide for the Social Sciences*, p 128 and Robert E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995, pp 3-7

⁶³⁸ Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p 152

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

The above definitions suggest that a critical case study design is the most appropriate to be employed in the present research. Here, the purpose of using a critical case study is to explore the possibility of applying the theory of *'Aşabiyyah* within the context of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia. This should test the theory and challenge it to fit in the context of this community by studying in detail the background of this community, its present problems and challenges in the aspects stated in the research objective, via library and fieldwork research, which will be discussed further in section 4.8 of this chapter, below.

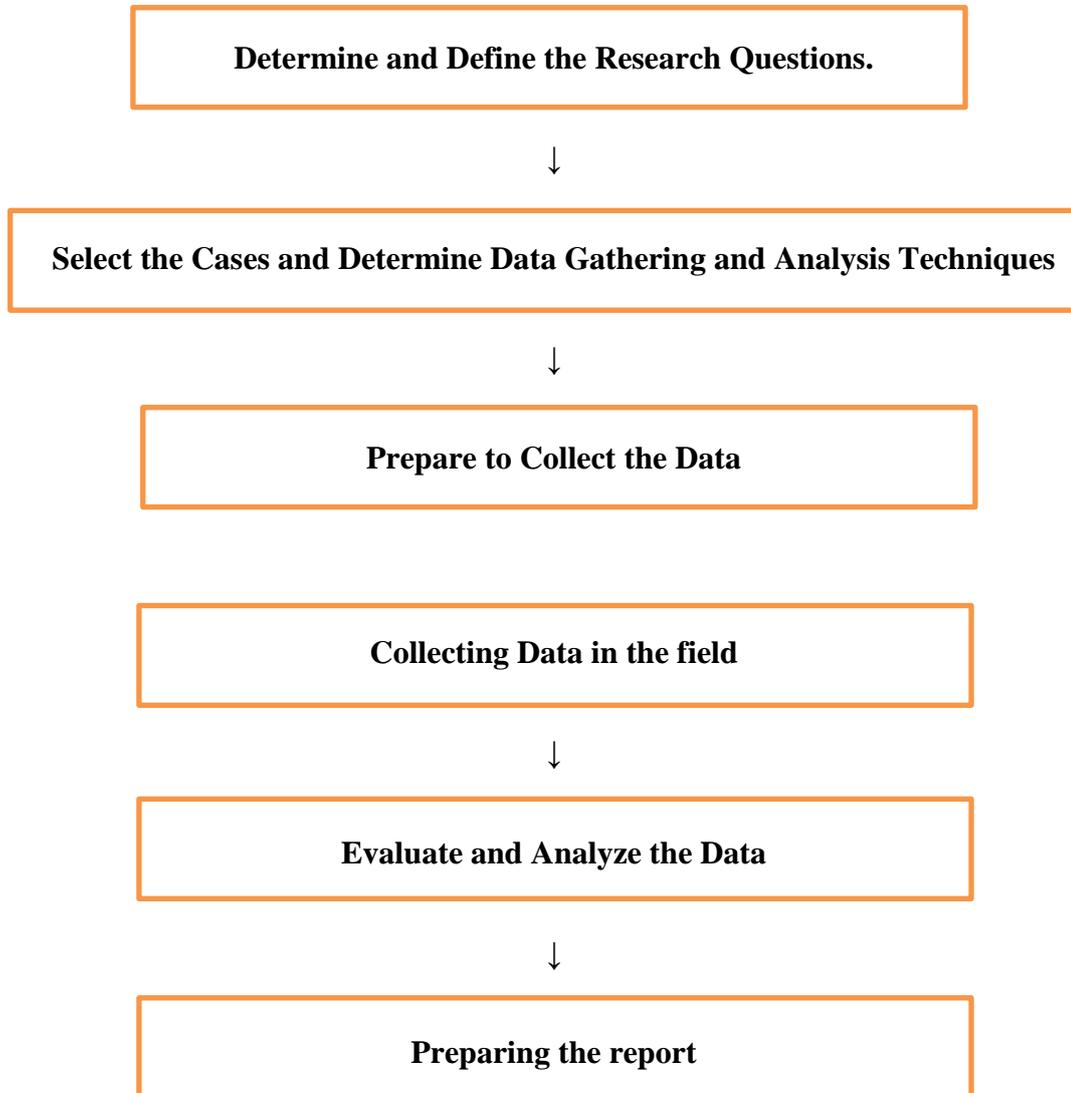
4.3.3 Process of Case Study Research

There are several steps within a case study process. Soy suggests six.⁶⁴⁰ The first is to decide on and define the research questions. Second comes selecting the cases and deciding which techniques of data gathering and analysis are to be used. Third is preparing to collect the data, fourth collecting them, fifth is analyzing and evaluating the data, and the last is preparing a report of the research.⁶⁴¹ The steps of the process in relation to the present research are discussed further in sections 4.4 to 4.9 of this chapter. The sequence of this process is shown in the flow chart below.

⁶⁴⁰ Sue Soy, 'The Case Study as a Research Method', *Uses and Users of Information -- LIS 391D.1 -- Spring 1997*, December 12, 2006, see <http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/1391d1b.htm> (accessed February 14, 2012)

⁶⁴¹ Ibid

Figure 4.1 The process of case study research



Cited in Sue Soy, 'The Case Study as a Research Method', *Uses and Users of Information -- LIS 391D.1 -- Spring 1997*, December 12, 2006, see <http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/1391d1b.htm> (accessed February 14, 2012)

4.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The opening step of a case study process is to have a strong research focus by formulating research questions on the problem or condition to be studied and deciding the purpose of the study.⁶⁴² Developing research questions is viewed as the crucial part of a research project.⁶⁴³ To ignore them could result in unfocused and poor research as well as ambiguous data collection.⁶⁴⁴ As explained by Bryman, research questions are vital as they must be taken into account when choosing the research methods, i.e. the ways to answer these questions and how to obtain the information needed,⁶⁴⁵ whether searching the literature, choosing the research design or describing and analyzing the data. Asking the right questions protects researchers from going off the track and being distracted by unnecessary things.⁶⁴⁶ Hence, research questions have to be clear, which means understandable and not vague; researchable, which indicates they are capable of being developed into the research design and are connected with existing theory and research, so long as the topic to be studied is found in the existing literature. In addition, it shows that the research to be conducted is likely to make a contribution and impact on academic knowledge and understanding.⁶⁴⁷ The research questions are also linked or related to each other to develop the argument of the research. They also need to be moderate, not too broad but also not so narrow as to limit the scope of the research

⁶⁴² Ibid

⁶⁴³ Ibid

⁶⁴⁴ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, p 31

⁶⁴⁵ Bill Gillham, *Case Study Research Methods*, London: Continuum, 2000, p 15

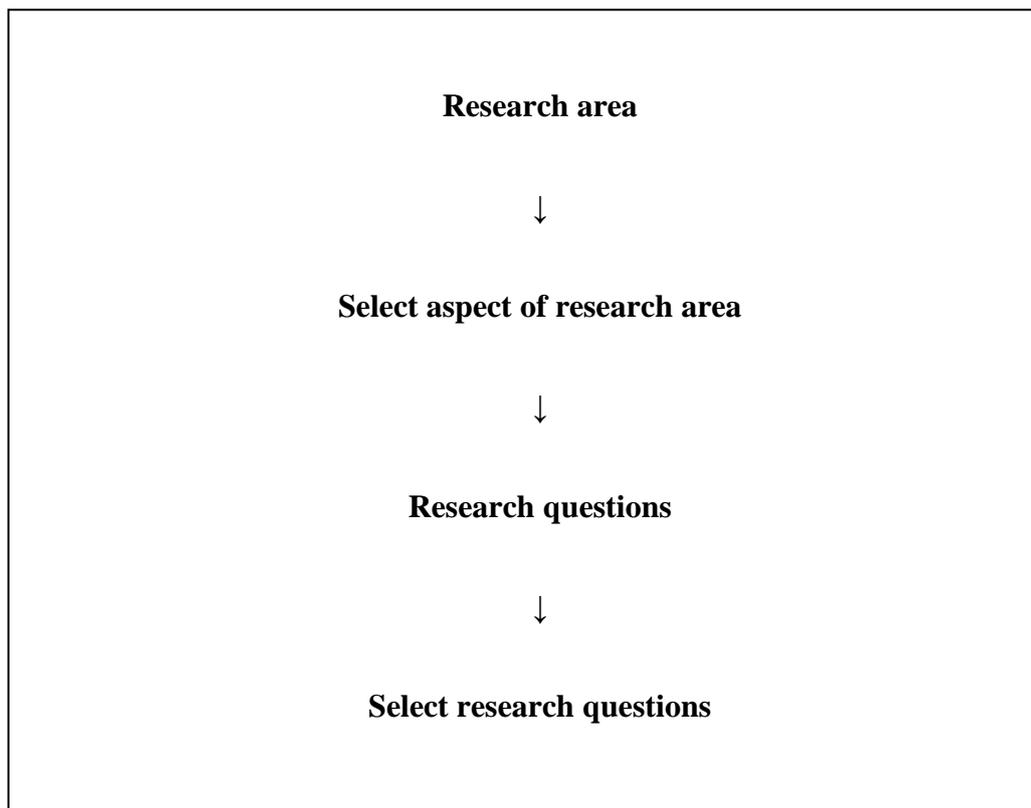
⁶⁴⁶ Ibid

⁶⁴⁷ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, p 33

and the significance of conducting it. Last, the research questions should also be worth answering and able to contribute to knowledge.⁶⁴⁸

Below are the steps in drafting and selecting the research questions in a research project,

Figure 4.2 Steps in drafting and selecting research questions



(from Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, p 32)

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

The research questions in a case study are mainly those which ask “how” and “why”,⁶⁴⁹ as it deals more with process or with “...operational links that need to be traced over time...”⁶⁵⁰, rather than on prevalence or frequencies.⁶⁵¹ In other words, the answers to “how” and “why” questions give the reasons behind certain cases or situations, not merely describing the outcomes of these. For example, a case study is required to identify the reasons for the occurrence of riots, it does not ask who was involved or how much damage was done, for these questions could be answered by conducting a survey or examining business accounts.⁶⁵² Developing the right research questions will allow researchers to reach their research aim and enable them to use the research context or setting fully in answering them,⁶⁵³ to some extent the literature review helps to formulate them.⁶⁵⁴ However, to Gillham, this should be done in parallel with acquiring to know and understand the case to be studied in its context.⁶⁵⁵ But if the questions are chosen independently of the literature, researchers might lose themselves in irrelevant materials and all the resulting research questions and aims from these materials would have to be abandoned once the live case came into focus.⁶⁵⁶ Hence, the source of the research questions lie in a balance between the literature and the specific case(s). For the present research, five research questions were chosen which reflected its research objectives. Basically, these research questions looked at the meaning and interpretation of Ibn Khaldūn’s theory of *‘Aṣabiyyah*, studying the problems and challenges faced by the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia and exploring whether the theory could be implemented in the

⁶⁴⁹ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, p 17

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid, p 18

⁶⁵¹ Ibid. Yin describes in further detail the process of establishing the research questions within a case study research. See Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, pp 17-19

⁶⁵² Ibid

⁶⁵³ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁴ Sue Soy, ‘The Case Study as a Research Method’, *Uses and Users of Information -- LIS 391D.1 -- Spring 1997*, December 12, 2006, see <http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/l391d1b.htm> (accessed February 14, 2012)

⁶⁵⁵ Bill Gillham, *Case Study Research Methods*, p 15

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid

modern context, in particular in the context of this community; if so, how could it be practised? These research questions can be found in Chapter 1 (1.5).⁶⁵⁷

4.5 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Sampling is essential when conducting fieldwork research, for only a part of the whole population can be studied and it must represent its larger group. It is impossible for a researcher to collect data from the whole population, and as mentioned by Miles and Huberman “...you cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything.”⁶⁵⁸ Hence, sampling reduces the time, money and energy needed to investigate the whole population.⁶⁵⁹ However, the disadvantage of sampling is that a researcher is sometimes only predicting or estimating the characteristics of the population, instead of its facts, and this may later cause errors in the data.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁷ For details, see Chapter 1, p 11 of this thesis.

⁶⁵⁸ M.B. Miles, and A.M Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 1994, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, p 27, cited in Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research*, p 105.

⁶⁵⁹ Gary D. Bouma and G.B.J Atkinson, *A Handbook of Social Science Research*, p 139

⁶⁶⁰ Ranjit Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by-step Guide for Beginners*, 1996, London: Sage Publications, p 148.

Therefore, the sampling frame is crucial in the sampling process, as a sample technically is selected from a sampling frame, not from the whole population.⁶⁶¹ The sampling frame may be defined as an objective list of all the units of the population from which researchers could select a sample.⁶⁶² It is preferable for the sampling frame to contain a complete recent list of those who are within the population targeted for the research. An example of the sampling frame could be a sample selected from the list of residential houses in a specific area provided by the local government or register of voters.⁶⁶³

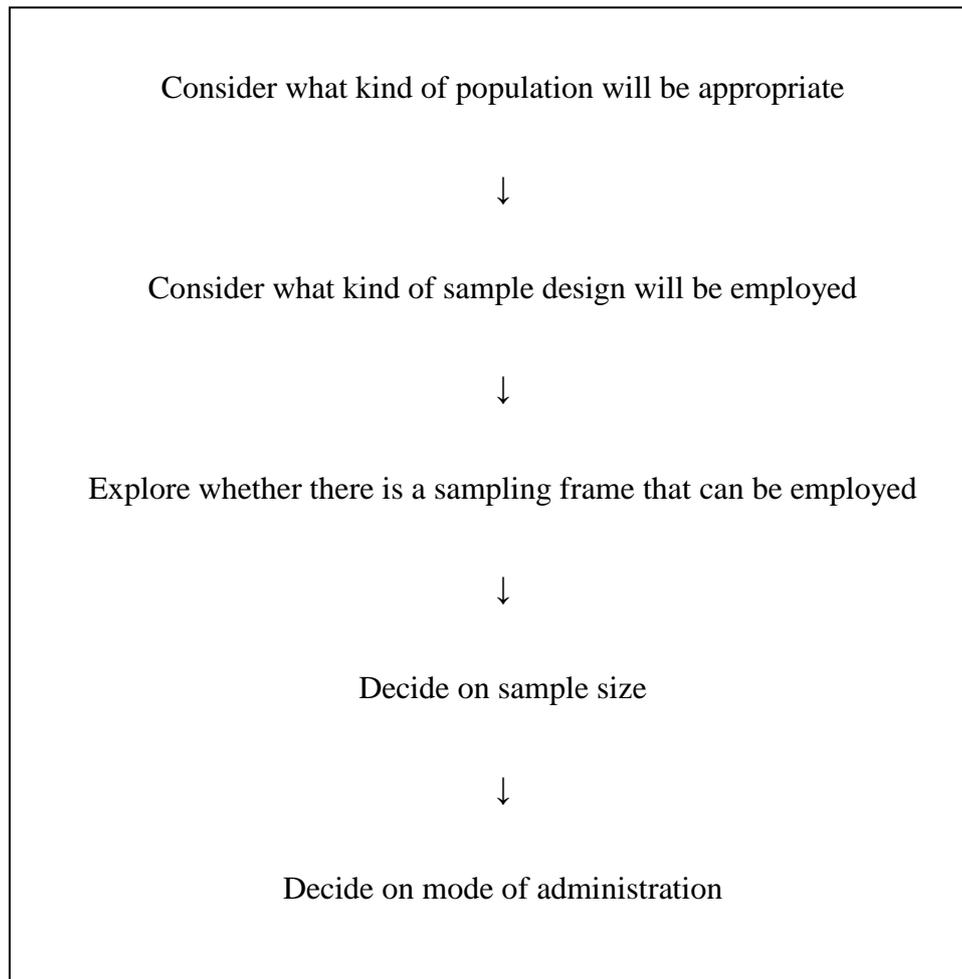
There are several steps in the sampling process or procedure, mainly for those who are conducting fieldwork research. Below are some of the steps in social research, those which involve the steps in selecting a sample.

⁶⁶¹ Adlina Ab Halim, *A Study of the students' perceptions of the impact of globalisation on Islamic Values in Malaysia : With Special Reference to the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM)*, 2005, p 151

⁶⁶² Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects*, Maidenhead: Open University Press, 1998, p 17 and Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, p 87

⁶⁶³ Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects*, p 17

Figure 4.3 Steps in selecting a sample



(from Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, p 85)

There are two main kinds of sampling, random or probability sampling and non-random or non-probability sampling. Random sampling is more convincing and accurate than non-random sampling in presenting the whole population, but it is limited to the chosen sample and is not appropriate for extended generalization.⁶⁶⁴ Thus, in random sampling there is an

⁶⁶⁴ Gary D. Bouma and G.B.J Atkinson, *A Handbook of Social Science Research*, p140

equal chance for each member of a population to be selected, unlike non-random sampling where certain people have a better chance to be selected than others.⁶⁶⁵ In addition, most random sampling is quite difficult to conduct, yet its findings are more credible and strong. This can lessen the influence of any bias in any part of the research as well as enhancing the group represented in the findings. However, non-random sampling is convenient, demands little effort and is practical for a variety of studies, but limited to the sample being studied.⁶⁶⁶

Non-probability sampling, specifically, judgmental or purposive sampling, is chosen as the appropriate type of sampling for this study. Basically, purposive or judgmental sampling can be understood as selecting the best group or people to be studied or as a sample based on the researcher's own judgment or perception,⁶⁶⁷ or on certain criteria or elements required by the researcher.⁶⁶⁸ Hence, this kind of sampling is perceived as suitable for use in three situations. The first is selecting a unique case which is particularly informative, for example, popular women's magazines in studying magazines which contain a cultural theme to be studied via content analysis.⁶⁶⁹ The second is selecting members or target respondents in a certain or specific population who are not easily reached, for example, prostitutes or drug addicts.⁶⁷⁰ The third is recognizing specific cases for detailed and in-depth study, the aim of which is to

⁶⁶⁵ D.A. De Vaus, *Surveys in Social Research*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1986, p 52.

⁶⁶⁶ Gary D. Bouma and G.B.J Atkinson, *A Handbook of Social Science Research*, p144

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid, p 143

⁶⁶⁸ Francis C. Dane, *Research Methods*, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1990, p 303

⁶⁶⁹ W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, p 213

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid. Neuman explained further on this example. For further information, see W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, p 213

obtain a deeper understanding of one type of case but not to generalize the result of the study to a larger population.⁶⁷¹

The purposive or judgmental sampling employed in this research is categorised as the third kind of sampling, which aims to gain a deeper understanding of certain respondents targeted on the issues addressed, in this case, the respondents' understanding of the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* and their perceptions of the political, educational, economic and social problems and challenges (including integration) of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia. Thus, groups of students from the University of Malaya were chosen as a sample. The rationale for choosing them was that they were concentrated in one particular place but had come from various backgrounds and from different levels of society. The diversity of background enables the research to tap into a wide range of resource that would have been impossible otherwise. To be specific, they were undergraduates who were studying Islamic and Asian Civilization (*Tamadun Islam dan Tamadun Asia or TITAS*) when the field work was proceeding. This is a compulsory subject for all undergraduate students⁶⁷² and is usually taken in their first year. There are also diploma students on the Sharī'ah and Usūluddin programmes as part of the sample. The significance of choosing these respondents as a research sample is that the subjects they were learning related to the research topic and questionnaires distributed. In addition, although the respondents were numerous, they were easy to access, as being together

⁶⁷¹ Ibid

⁶⁷² When the questionnaires were being distributed, the respondents were mainly students of the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, the Faculty of Dentistry, the Academy of Malay Studies and the Academy of Islamic Studies, students from other faculties took the subject in the following term (the second term of 2009/10). These students sat for lectures on Islamic and Asian Civilization or TITAS subject according to faculty. Hence, they were reached by the researcher according to the timetable scheduled and were grouped according to faculty.

in one particular venue according to faculty⁶⁷³ and the programme⁶⁷⁴ being followed as lectures on related subjects were being delivered.

4.6 PILOT CASE STUDY

A pilot case study must be conducted as a final task in preparing for data collection before a case study researcher goes into the field.⁶⁷⁵ This is done by selecting a pilot site and method to be used in gathering the data, deliberately to identify possible problems which might occur in the field and solve them beforehand.⁶⁷⁶ Furthermore, a pilot helps to refine the plan for data collection.⁶⁷⁷ According to Yin, a pilot case study is different from a pre-test, being more formative or developmental and thus able to assist researchers in developing their research, whereas the purpose of a pre-test is to ensure that the questions drafted, e.g. those in the questionnaires, are well-defined and respondents' interpretation of them is clear.⁶⁷⁸ In other words, a pre-test is intended to execute the data collection plan in the field or in the final test

⁶⁷³ This refers to the respondents among the undergraduate students.

⁶⁷⁴ This refers to the respondents who were diploma students of Sharī'ah and Usūluddin.

⁶⁷⁵ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Method*, p 74

⁶⁷⁶ Sue Soy, 'The Case Study as a Research Method', *Uses and Users of Information -- LIS 391D.1 -- Spring 1997*, December 12, 2006, see <http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/1391d1b.htm> (accessed February 14, 2012)

⁶⁷⁷ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Method*, p 74

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid., p 56 and Geoff Payne and Judy Payne, *Key Concepts in Social Research*, p 220

run as authentically as possible.⁶⁷⁹ In addition, convenience, accessibility and closeness of location are among the factors in choosing the circumstances of the pilot study.⁶⁸⁰

In this study, the piloting was undertaken by 20 students who were attending an executive learning programme at the University Putra Malaysia. They were mature students who were attending a lecture on the subject of ethnic relationships, which was very closely related to the contents of the questionnaires and the research topic. The questionnaire was distributed to the students with the help of the lecturer. In the course of the pilot study, the researcher discovered that there were questions which were somewhat vague and could not be understood by the respondents, based on the result of Cronbach's alpha of piloting the questionnaires which was fairly low. In addition, typographical mistakes were found in the questionnaires. To increase the grade of Cronbach's alpha of the piloting result, the researcher removed several vague questions which had a low Cronbach's alpha result. The mistakes were also corrected and only the remaining questions were used in the main study. The comments by respondents on the questionnaires regarding, for instance, its format were also taken into consideration by the researcher in improving it. The final draft of the questionnaires was then ready to be distributed in the field.

⁶⁷⁹ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Method*, p 74

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid.

4.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Reliability and validity are crucial to a social research project, though they are hardly ever discussed in depth in qualitative research. Reliability refers to the consistency, dependability or steadiness of the findings.⁶⁸¹ Reliability in social research allows readers to be confident that the method employed in gathering the data could be repeated without creating different results.⁶⁸² Validity is about truthfulness and “...the way a researcher conceptualized the idea in a conceptual definition, and a measure.”⁶⁸³ In other words, it concerns how ‘right’ and truthful the result would be on a repeated test⁶⁸⁴ and how well an idea about the practical world could fit it in practice.⁶⁸⁵

In a case study, researchers need to be sure of the research design and whether it is well-formed or not, to safeguard its construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability.⁶⁸⁶ In other words, these four aspects test the quality of the design of a case

⁶⁸¹ W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, p 178.

⁶⁸² Geoff Payne and Judy Payne, *Key Concepts in Social Research*, p 196

⁶⁸³ W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, p 179.

⁶⁸⁴ Geoff Payne and Judy Payne, *Key Concepts in Social Research*, p 196

⁶⁸⁵ W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, p 179.

⁶⁸⁶ Sue Soy, ‘The Case Study as a Research Method’, *Uses and Users of Information -- LIS 391D.1 -- Spring 1997*, December 12, 2006, see <http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/1391d1b.htm> (accessed February 14, 2012)

study.⁶⁸⁷ These aspects, affirmed by Yin, are more complex than the normal validity and reliability employed in other research designs such as survey research.⁶⁸⁸

The construct validity of a case study research is to ensure that a researcher uses the right or “...correct operational measures for the concept being studied.”⁶⁸⁹ Researchers need to choose specific types of change to concentrate on in their study. Subsequently, they need to select and demonstrate that the type of measure selected reflects the particular changes found earlier.⁶⁹⁰ For example, a researcher may propose to study the rise of crime in a neighbourhood. Thus, police-reported crime might be used in this study. The use of this report needs to be justified as a proper measure of crime.⁶⁹¹ To achieve construct validity, then, multiple measures, i.e. multiple sources of evidence are consulted in obtaining the data.⁶⁹²

Meanwhile, internal validity mainly refers to explanatory or causal studies, where certain situations are directed to other situations, e.g. “...event x led to event y.”⁶⁹³ Hence, a chain of evidence “...forward and backward” must be formed.⁶⁹⁴ Furthermore, in reaching conclusions internal validity is regarded as widening the case under scrutiny to broader

⁶⁸⁷ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Method*, p 35

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., p 36

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., p 37

⁶⁹¹ Ibid

⁶⁹² Robert K. Yin, *Applications of Case Study Research*, Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993, p 39

⁶⁹³ Robert K. Yin, , *Case Study Research: Design and Method*, p 38

⁶⁹⁴ Sue Soy, ‘The Case Study as a Research Method’, *Uses and Users of Information -- LIS 391D.1 -- Spring 1997*, December 12, 2006, see <http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/1391d1b.htm> (accessed February 14, 2012)

problems.⁶⁹⁵ Although they draw initial conclusions or inferences from certain events or cases, for example, conclusions based on interviews or documentary evidence, researchers need to ask whether such conclusions are correct and the evidence gathered is convergent, so as to ensure that their study covers wider problems too. This can be done by bringing up varied evidence from a number of different sources.⁶⁹⁶ However, internal validity is primarily applied to causal, exploratory and experimental research.⁶⁹⁷

External validity allows a study to be generalized beyond the present case study. Though some criticise the result of a case study research for not being generalizable, Punch, on the contrary, disagrees and believes that it can be, if the purpose of the study and the methods of the data being analyzed, via conceptualizing and developing propositions, are suitable.⁶⁹⁸ If these two approaches can be taken, the results of a case study can be generalized and may be relevant to other studies.⁶⁹⁹ If the study can be applied to difference places or people and the processes of a case study remain the same, yet result in similar findings, the study is perceived as strong in its external validity.⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁵ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Method*, p 38

⁶⁹⁶ Sue Soy, 'The Case Study as a Research Method', *Uses and Users of Information -- LIS 391D.1 -- Spring 1997*, December 12, 2006, see <http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/1391d1b.htm> (accessed February 14, 2012)

⁶⁹⁷ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Method*, p 38 and W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, p 187

⁶⁹⁸ Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research : Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p 154

⁶⁹⁹ For details regarding conceptualization and developing propositions, see Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p 154.

⁷⁰⁰ Sue Soy, 'The Case Study as a Research Method', *Uses and Users of Information -- LIS 391D.1 -- Spring 1997*, December 12, 2006, see <http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/1391d1b.htm> (accessed February 14, 2012)

Last comes reliability, which means that a study is stable, accurate and precise in terms of its measurements.⁷⁰¹ Hence, a good and excellent case study design marks out a study which has good documentation and will produce similar results even when the processes are repeated several times.⁷⁰² Establishing a case study database and the use of a proper case study protocol is the way to achieve reliability in case studies.⁷⁰³

Hence, this study is mainly concerned to safeguard reliability and construct validity. To achieve the latter, a suggestion by Yin is followed of providing documentation throughout the research process, i.e. a research data base. A well-organized and systematic data base is required to handle multiple sources of evidence so as to classify, organize, store and retrieve data for analysis⁷⁰⁴ by creating a data storage system. The database may include a raw database or evidentiary base and the report of the researcher regarding the research, which can take the form of an article or book or personal diary or log which contains the essential information for the field research, including telephone numbers, a calendar and observation notes.⁷⁰⁵ According to Yin, there are four types of component of case study data bases, namely, case study notes, documents, tabular materials and narratives.⁷⁰⁶ Case study notes, for example, can be handwritten, typed or recorded on audiotapes in an organized, categorized

⁷⁰¹ Sue Soy, 'The Case Study as a Research Method', *Uses and Users of Information -- LIS 391D.1 -- Spring 1997*, December 12, 2006, see <http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/1391d1b.htm> (accessed February 14, 2012)

⁷⁰² Ibid

⁷⁰³ Robert K. Yin, *Applications of Case Study Research*, p 40

⁷⁰⁴ Sue Soy, 'The Case Study as a Research Method', *Uses and Users of Information -- LIS 391D.1 -- Spring 1997*, December 12, 2006, see <http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/1391d1b.htm> (accessed February 14, 2012)

⁷⁰⁵ Robert E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, London: Sage Publications, 1995, p 55.

⁷⁰⁶ For a detailed description of these components, see Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, pp 92-96

and complete manner to be easily accessible later.⁷⁰⁷ Thus, this research provided an initial report mainly of the field work process of data collection. The whole process of the research was later produced in thesis form.

In order to protect construct validity, the present research employed multiple sources by using multiple research methods in collecting the data. This was done by distributing a questionnaires consisting of closed-ended questions to obtain quantitative data, and open-ended questions in the questionnaires coupled with semi-structured interviews to obtain qualitative data. Questionnaires are distributed in order to get responses from a large number of respondents, whereas qualitative semi-structured interviews seek to approach closer to the research participants and gain in-depth data. These approaches reflect Yin's advice to apply multiple sources of evidence to develop lines of inquiry which join together. This helps to strengthen the validity of the research and makes its findings more persuasive and accurate than relying on one source only.⁷⁰⁸ Furthermore, it supports the theory or issue studied⁷⁰⁹ and allows researchers "...to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and observational issues."⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁷ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, p 93 and Robert E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, p 55

⁷⁰⁸ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Method*, p 91

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid, p 91

⁷¹⁰ Ibid

4.8 THE PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION

In social research methodology, several methods or approaches count as research methods or techniques for collecting data.⁷¹¹ Hence, it is not unusual for researchers to combine them, for to do so raises the quality of the research and helps researchers to view things from different perspectives.⁷¹²

The two kinds of data to be collected are primary and secondary. Primary data are data gathered from primary sources or ‘first-hand information’, which is usually obtained from the empirical study or field work. Several kinds of research methods can be used to collect primary data, such as self-completion questionnaires, structured interviews, focus groups and participant observation. Data can also be collected from secondary sources, encompassing books, articles, journals, magazines, and periodicals, as well as records of organizations such as programmes of their activities or annual reports. A study which specifically uses secondary sources is known as secondary research.⁷¹³

⁷¹¹ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, p 27

⁷¹² Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects*, p 84.

⁷¹³ David W. Stewart and M.A. Kamins, *Secondary Research: Information Sources and Methods*, London: Sage Publications.

In this study, both primary and secondary data were collected and many methods or combinations of methods were applied in the collection of primary data. Collecting secondary sources involves gathering evidence from materials such as books, journals, articles, online journals and electronic sources (CDs) regarding the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*, the historical account of the Malacca Sultanate in the 15th century and the background of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia. Some of the core materials examined involve ancient literature, such as *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires: An Account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan, written in Malacca and India in 1512-1515* and *The Book of Francisco Rodrigues, rutter: of a voyage in the Red Sea, nautical rules, almanac and maps, written and drawn in the east before 1515* and the text of *Tarikh Ibn Khaldūn Al-Musamma Kitāb al-'Ibar Wa Diwan Mubtada' wal Khabar fi Ayyām al-Arabi Wal Ajam wal Barbar, wa man Asarahum min zawi al-Sulṭān al-Akbar*.

(تاريخ ابن خلدون المسمى كتاب العبر وديوان المبتدأ والخبر في أيام العرب والعجم والبربر ومن عاصرهم من ذوي السلطان الأكبر).

To gather primary material, two kinds of approach were taken, i.e. semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The purpose of gathering primary sources was to get first-hand information from respondents and key persons regarding their perceptions of the research task and their perception of the current situation of their community. The detailed procedure employed in the interviews and administering the questionnaires are discussed below in sections 4.8.1 and 4.8.2

4.8.1 The Questionnaires

Questionnaires are a common research method in survey research. They are also appropriately employed in a case study to obtain multiple sources of data via multiple methods. Questionnaires are used when interviews or observations cannot cover the population to be studied. Sending post-questionnaires to respondents is far less expensive and more time-saving and allows for a larger sample than holding structured interviews.⁷¹⁴ However, constructing a questionnaire is believed to be one of the most delicate and vital research activities.⁷¹⁵ Moreover, it is inclined to be a ‘one-off’, which means that it should be conducted properly the first time,⁷¹⁶ as the same respondents are understandably not keen to respond to a similar questionnaires twice.⁷¹⁷

The procedure for administering questionnaires or questionnaires research can be divided into three phases, drafting, pre-testing and distributing. In drafting a questionnaire, one of the crucial parts is to ensure the right questions are being asked in order to obtain useful information⁷¹⁸ and also to elicit a valid and reliable measure of what needs to be described.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁴ Roger Sapsford, *Survey Research*, London: Sage, 1999, p 109

⁷¹⁵ Robert A. Peterson, *Constructing Effective Questionnaires*, 2000, Thousand Oaks : Sage Publications Inc, p 13

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p 90

⁷¹⁷ Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects*, p 89.

⁷¹⁸ Robert A. Peterson, *Constructing Effective Questionnaires*, p 13

⁷¹⁹ W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, p 268 and Floyd J. Fowler, ‘Design and Evaluation of Survey Questions’, in Leonard Bickman and Debra J. Rog (eds), *Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*, 1998, Thousand Oaks : Sage Publications, p 344

In addition, a good survey question is a question that does not confuse and is adapted to the respondents' perspective.⁷²⁰ The first step in constructing good questions is to decide what the research has to measure, which involves defining the research objectives.⁷²¹ Second, the questions must be designed and tested beforehand in pretesting or pilot-testing.

To define the research objective means to "...define the kind of information that is needed."⁷²² Hence, the initial step is to look at and understand what information about the research problems requires a questionnaire to be constructed. Next, the questions for the questionnaires are developed and constructed from the research questions. In addition, it is crucial to ensure which sorts of variable need to be measured, i.e., dependent, independent and intervening dependents, as well as background measures.⁷²³ Once these variables have been identified for measurement, the questions for the questionnaires can be constructed. Furthermore, the format for presenting the questions in the questionnaires has to be considered. Questions have two kinds of format, open-ended and close-ended. Open-ended questions allow the respondents to answer in any way they want, without restriction or rules, closed-ended questions restrict the respondents to responses which have already been offered (e.g. multiple-choice).⁷²⁴

⁷²⁰ W. Lawrance Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, p 268.

⁷²¹ Floyd J. Fowler, *Survey Research Methods*, Second Edition, 1993, Newbury Park: Sage Publications, p 94.

⁷²² Floyd J. Fowler, "Design and Evaluation of Survey Questions", p 345

⁷²³ The 'cause' of a variable is known as the independent variable, whereas the 'effect' of the variable is called the dependent variable. In between, there is the intervening variable, that is, an independent variable having an effect on the dependent variable. For example, the income of an individual is affected by the education which he or she obtained. In turn, because of educational background, the job of the individual is intervened by or dominates their income. Therefore, job is an intervening variable in income. For details, see D.A De Vaus, *Surveys in Social Research*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1986, p 28

⁷²⁴ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, p 145

Collecting data in the field via questionnaires was also undertaken in this research on purpose to investigate the perceptions of a large number of respondents on the issues stated in the research objectives. Hence, a similar process to the one mentioned above was carried out in drafting the questionnaires of the present research. The research objectives were reviewed and variables to be measured were identified, namely the variables of the respondents, including gender, age, place of origin and educational level. Among the research objectives, the main one to be achieved was to investigate the perceptions of respondents regarding the stated subject of the research.⁷²⁵

The questionnaires designed for this study had three parts. The first part (Section A) concerned the respondents' background, including age, gender and educational level and was in the form of closed-ended questions. A similar format was used in section B, where questions about the theory of *'Aşabiyyah* and difficulties and challenges of the Muslim society in general were asked. In the last section, both closed-ended and open-ended questions covered the same subjects but in the Malaysian context.

Since the respondents of the questionnaires were mostly Malays, the researcher had to translate the questionnaires from English into the Malay language. The first draft of the questionnaires, constructed in English, was reviewed thoroughly by the supervisor. For the

⁷²⁵ See the objectives of this research, p 9 above.

Malay version, the questionnaires was reviewed by a senior lecturer of the University Putra Malaysia, Dr. Adlina Ab Halim,⁷²⁶ who had experience in conducting survey research and was familiar with sociological fieldwork. The format, language, structure and coding of the questionnaires were amended after this review. The final draft of the questionnaires in the Malay version was then ready to be pre-tested in the pilot study.

In the field, the questionnaires were given to the respondents of the sample, as mentioned in section 4.6.⁷²⁷ The researcher did not choose postal questionnaires or online questionnaires as the risk of not getting a response in either case was high. In addition, it was more appropriate to distribute the questionnaires directly to the respondents, since the researcher was in the field. Permission to distribute the questionnaires to the undergraduate students was obtained in advance from the lecturers in the subject of Islamic and Asian Civilization. However, most of lecturers in this subject⁷²⁸ preferred to distribute the questionnaires to the respondents themselves, probably because they disliked being interrupted by outsiders during their lectures. In distributing the questionnaires to the diploma students, permission was first asked from the moderator of the diploma programme of the course of Sharī‘ah and Usūluddin. Interestingly, the researcher was advised by the moderator to ask further permission before she could distribute the questionnaires during the class time of the programme (before the lectures began). This is because most of the lecturers in the diploma programme of Sharī‘ah

⁷²⁶ Dr. Adlina Ab Halim is a senior lecturer in the Department of Government and Civilization Studies, Faculty of Human Ecology, University Putra Malaysia. She did her PhD at the University of Birmingham, UK. Her thesis title was, *A Study of students' perceptions of the impact of globalisation on Islamic Values in Malaysia: With Special Reference to the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM)*, 2005.

⁷²⁷ See section 4.5 of this thesis, p 168

⁷²⁸ Many lecturers teach this subject, to cope with the number of students who take the subject every term and the different faculties from which they came.

and Usūluddin dislike being distracted or burdened by any extra task apart from teaching. Hence, permission was sought before the class begun and fortunately none of these lecturers objected to the researcher's request. Before distributing the questionnaires, the researcher introduced herself and briefly described the purpose of the research. Then she left the questionnaires to be filled in by the respondents and collected them at the end of the classes/lectures, not wanting to disturb the lecture by waiting in the classroom. Initially, 500 questionnaires have been distributed, and eventually 375 questionnaires were received from the undergraduate students and diploma students altogether.

4.8.2 Interviews

Interviewing is one of the major methods of data collection employed in qualitative research. It can be defined as a "...any person-to-person interaction between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind..."⁷²⁹ To Denscombe and Silverman, interviews concern a set of assumptions and understandings about a situation which are not related to casual or informal conversation.⁷³⁰ The interview method is applied to seek further information and in-depth insights from respondents regarding the issues or topic being studied. It seeks answers to 'why' questions, rather than 'how many' or 'how often' which are usually asked in

⁷²⁹ M. Ranjit Kumar, *Research Methodology : A Step-By Step Guide for Beginners*, p 109

⁷³⁰ Martyn Denscombe, *Interviews, accounts and ethnographic research on teachers*, in M. Hammersley (ed) *The Ethnography for Schooling: Methodological Issues*, Driffield:Nafferton Books, 1983 and David Silverman, *Qualitative Methodology and Sociology: Describing the social world*, 1985, Aldershot: Gower, cited in Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects*, p 109

questionnaires.⁷³¹ There are three kinds of interview, namely structured, unstructured and semi-structured.⁷³² Punch explains that their classification is based on several features including “...the degree structure in the interview, how deep the interview tries to go, and the degree to which the interview is standardized across different respondents and situations.”⁷³³

Hence, semi-structured interviews were chosen as a method of collecting data in this research. The reason for employing this method was to get a deeper perception from respondents regarding the problems and challenges confronted by the Malay Muslims in Malaysia as well as learning what their understanding of the theory of *‘Aşabiyyah* was. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with distinguished Malaysian academicians and prominent figures from local universities and leaders of non-government movements, who had in-depth knowledge and wide experience of the issues on such topics.

Conducting an interview might look simple and it does not involve much technical equipment and preparation, yet it is not easy.⁷³⁴ Therefore, good organization and preparation are needed to ensure that it will go as planned and to avoid any unwanted mistakes, e.g. malfunctioning

⁷³¹ Matt Stroh, “Qualitative Interviewing”, cited in Dawn Burton (ed), *Research Training for Social Scientist: A Handbook for Postgraduate Researcher*, 2000, London: Sage Publications, p 198.

⁷³² As Punch notes, other terms are used for these kinds of interview, such as standardized, semi-standardized and non-standardized (Feilding, 1996 :135-153). Furthermore, Patton (1980) lists types of interview such as the informal conversational interview, the general interview guide approach and the standardized open-ended interview. See Keith F Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p 175).

⁷³³ Keith F Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p 175

⁷³⁴ Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects*, p 109

recording equipment or delays. It is essential to contact the people to be interviewed beforehand to arrange appointments at times which suit them. Throughout this fieldwork, the process of conducting semi-structured interviews with the Malaysian academicians and prominent figures went well, although a few problems remained for the researcher. These included several interviewees who turned out to be unavailable for the agreed time and date and some who could not be contacted. Therefore, the researcher had to start with those who confirmed their appointments. In other words, some of these were arranged before the field work began and a few more were set up afterwards.

The interviewees were contacted via email. In the first place, 6 out of 10 responded and agreed to be interviewed on the dates and times suggested by the researcher. Subsequently, the researcher posted them a formal confirmation along with a reference letter from the supervisor and a copy of the interview questions to give them a chance to think about what their answers should be. Nearer the date of the interview, each of them was contacted, as a reminder and re-confirmation of the session. Meanwhile, once the field work started, the researcher made contact by telephone with those who did not reply to the first email and provided them with the formal and reference letters and list of interview questions before the interview sessions began. Overall, the researcher managed to conduct interviews with 9 out of 16 suggested scholars. The scholars who were interviewed were Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, Mr Yusri Mohamad, Tan Sri Professor Mohammad Kamal Hassan, Professor Abdullahil Ahsan, Associate Professor Dr. Zaid Ahmad, Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty, Associate Professor Syed Farid Alatas, Ustaz (Dr.) Muhammad Uthman El-Muhammady and

Professor Datin Dr. Azizan Baharuddin. These people were chosen to be interviewed because they are well-experienced and possess a deep knowledge of the issues addressed in this research.⁷³⁵

One interview session per day was set up, because more might not have allowed the session to run smoothly and extend as long as necessary. All the interviews were conducted at the interviewees' offices as these were more convenient and official than their home. The researcher arrived at the agreed venue at least 30 minutes early to make sure that the session started on time. Before it began, the researcher briefly introduced herself and her research topic, together with her purpose in conducting the interviews. She asked permission to record the interviews and fortunately met with no objection. The researcher also jotted down important points in a notebook as a backup to the voice recording. Generally, the interviews yielded much of the information being sought.

Semi-structured interviews were also given by interviewees selected from the respondents to the questionnaires. In the last part of the questionnaires, the respondents were asked whether they were interested in being interviewed. If they answered positively, they were asked to provide details and contact numbers. Only those who provided these details were telephoned by the researcher. Subsequently, appointments were set up on agreed dates and times and at

⁷³⁵ For biographical details of these scholars, see Appendix V.

venues convenient for the interviewees. Most of the sessions took place on the University of Malaya campus, including the student residential halls, cafeteria, faculties and library. Overall, 10 interviews were set up, involving 9 interviews with undergraduate students and one with a diploma programme student.

In the session, the researcher introduced herself and briefly described her research and her purpose in conducting the interviews. The interviewees were also asked for their permission to record the conversations for research purposes and all agreed to this. To make sure the conversation went smoothly, they were given a copy of interview questions. The conversations were mostly recorded and important points were also written by the researcher in a notebook. Overall, the sessions went smoothly and obtained good responses from the interviewees.

4.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis takes place when the data which have been collected are interpreted and analyzed. According to Marshall, data analysis is “...the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data.”⁷³⁶ These data need to be analyzed because they remain meaningless, unreliable and mere impressions if they are left without undergoing the process of analysis.⁷³⁷

In social science research, there are two types of data analysis, quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data analysis concerns numbers and its data are usually described as statistics.⁷³⁸ The data which have been collected are interpreted numerically since the purpose is to examine the pattern or relationship of the data. This process is based on specific and standardized sets of data analysis techniques.⁷³⁹ The numbers obtained from this analysis process represent the revealed features of social life, which quantitative researchers believe can be measured in figures.⁷⁴⁰

⁷³⁶Catherine Marshall, *Designing Qualitative Research*, Second Edition, Thousand Oak, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995, p 111

⁷³⁷Margaret Stacey, *Methods of Social Research*, Oxford : Pergamon Press, 1969, p 108

⁷³⁸Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Science Research*, p 112

⁷³⁹W. Lawrance Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, p 439

⁷⁴⁰Ibid., p 440

Qualitative data analysis is, however, not as explicit as quantitative data analysis given the complexity of studying social life. Therefore, there are various approaches and perspectives regarding the analysis of qualitative data.⁷⁴¹ While there is no specific method for analyzing qualitative data, the two most frequent approaches applied by social science researchers are analytic induction and grounded theory.⁷⁴²

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis are applied in this study since it is based on the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data analysis is used in analyzing the data gathered from the closed-ended questions in the questionnaires, while the data gained through interviews and open-ended questions from questionnaires are analyzed according to qualitative data analysis. The procedure in analyzing these data will be discussed in the following sub-sections, sections 4.9.1 and 4.9.2

⁷⁴¹ Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Social Science Research*, p 199

⁷⁴² Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, p 399

Analytic induction can be defined as the systematic or organized approach of studying similarities between cases in developing certain ideas or concepts (Punch, 1998: 12-13). In another definition, it is an approach in analyzing data by studying the evidence or collection of data which challenges or disproves the ideas or concepts developed by a researcher in the initial stage of research, either focusing on negative cases or exceptions, until cases not consistent with the hypothetical explanation of a phenomenon (earlier developed ideas or concepts) are no longer found (Bryman: 2004: 400 and Punch, 1998: 202). Hence, incidents or cases will be studied and compared. Consequently similarities and differences will be established purposely to define the categories and concepts which initially have been developed (Punch, 1998: 202). For further explanation regarding the process of analytic induction, see Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, pp 400-401.

Grounded theory refers to a research approach or strategy where a theory is generated or developed from the data that have been gathered systematically and analyzed in the research process. (Bryman, 2004: 401 and Punch, 1998: 163) The aim of grounded theory analysis is to develop a theory from the data by explaining what is dominant in the data (Punch, 1998:201) Apart from these two approaches, there are other approaches in analyzing qualitative data, including narratives and meaning analysis, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, discourse analysis, semiotics and documentary and textual analysis (Punch, 1998: 221-232).

4.9.1 Questionnaires

The answers to the questionnaires distributed during the fieldwork research were analyzed by using quantitative and qualitative approaches. This is because sections A and B of the questionnaires were made up of closed-ended questions, which require numerical data analysis, whereas section C included open-ended questions the answers to which were analyzed by qualitative analysis, i.e. content analysis. Quantitative analysis seeks to analyze the variables of the respondents. There are three main kinds of variable analysis, the univariate (one variable) method of analysis, bivariate (two variables) method and the multivariate approach (three or more variables).⁷⁴³ The quantitative analysis of this study used the univariate approach to describe the characteristics of respondents, such as age, gender, place of origin, as well results in percentages of respondents' knowledge of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* and their perceptions of the problem and challenges of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia.

Overall, around 500 questionnaires were distributed and around 375 questionnaires returned to the researcher. After sorting and skimming the questionnaires, only 350 were found suitable for coding and analysis via SPSS software version 17.0. To proceed in analyzing the

⁷⁴³ D.A. de Vaus, *Surveys in Social Research*, p 97.

data, the researcher followed the statistical steps⁷⁴⁴ and chose an appropriate statistical test for the data obtained. Initially, a master code data of the questionnaires was created and stored in SPSS software. Next, the data obtained were keyed into the database. The questionnaires had been pre-coded with the answers scale to allow the data to be stored directly in the database via the computer. These data came from the respondents' responses in sections A and B of the questionnaires. Due to the large number of questionnaires, the process of entering the data into the SPSS programme was followed by the researcher with the help of trained postgraduate students with expertise in the field of statistics. In analysing the data, the focus is mainly on the descriptive and mean of the data, as the focus is more on explanation from respondents on the issues addressed. These descriptive analyses are presented in tables which can be found in Chapter 5.

Meanwhile, section C of the questionnaires was analyzed via qualitative data analysis. Initially, the answers given by the respondents to the questionnaires were read, skimmed and rewritten in tabular form using Microsoft Word, to make it more systematic and easier to identify the main themes in the data. Hence, this kind of 'system of recording' was done with a help of a postgraduate student, as mentioned above. Once all the data were in systematic order, the researcher identified certain words or themes which appeared frequently and examined how frequently these came up in answering the questions. As the process involved a large number of data to be analyzed, the researcher used QSR Nvivo, which is much quicker

⁷⁴⁴ For further detail, see Martyn Descombe, *The Good Research Guide : For Small-Scale Social Research Projects*, pp 180-204 and D.A. de Vaus, *Surveys in Social Research*, pp 187-206

than a manual process and gives better results. Thus, these results from open-ended questions are presented in Chapter 5.

4.9.2 Interviews

The interview transcripts from this research were analyzed qualitatively, as a more appropriate method for words than numbers, besides seeking descriptions rather than numerical analysis. Here, a content analysis approach was used for analyzing the qualitative data obtained from the interviews. 19 semi-structured interviews were transcribed and the transcriptions in Malay were translated into English. This manual process consumed much time. The translation was checked by a professional English advisor. The words of the transcriptions naturally, again, demanded the technique of content analysis, specifically the data from the semi-structured interviews of respondents from the research sample. A similar process in analyzing the answers to the open-ended questions was used in analyzing the interview data. The researcher again made use of QSR Nvivo software version 8 for this purpose.

QSR Nvivo software package is described as a ‘new generation’ qualitative method of data analysis created by NUD*ST, which is inclusive and relatively easy to learn.⁷⁴⁵ In this research, the translated interview data were saved in soft copy, saved in ‘text-only format (.txt)’ or ‘rich text format (.rtf)’. Thus, once a ‘project’ (or a file) is created in Nvivo software, these data were imported to this file and a code, known as ‘nodes’ in the software was created, which allowed the frequency of the themes in the data to be examined. The whole process of analyzing via this software substantially reduced the time that would have been needed for analyzing the data manually. Thus, it allowed a more efficient, systematic and organized process in analyzing the data. The results based on Nvivo analysis of this research are found in Chapter 5, section 5.3 below.

4.10 PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS DURING THE FIELDWORK RESEARCH

In conducting fieldwork research, a researcher is likely to face problems and limitations whether minor or major one, however well the work was planned and organized beforehand. The present researcher was no exception.

⁷⁴⁵ Social Science Data and Software, Stanford University, *Using Nvivo for Qualitative Data Analysis*, February 2008, see http://www.stanford.edu/group/ssds/cgi-bin/drupal/files/Guides/software_docs_usingnvivo.pdf (accessed March 21, 2012)

With regard to the semi-structured interviews with Malaysian academics and prominent figures, initially 7 interviewees out of 16 could not be contacted or were unavailable to be interviewed for this research purpose. Some of them did not respond to the email sent to them. Probably due to the demands of their work they had missed the email. In addition, one of the interviews that had been set up had to be postponed due to the health problems of the interviewee. At first, the researcher wanted to reschedule the interview, but the limitations of time made it impossible and it was cancelled. The suggested interviewees who could not be interviewed were Royal Professor Ungku Aziz, Professor Ghazali Basri, Emeritus Datuk Dr. Osman Bakar, Professor Dato' Mohamad Abu Bakar, Professor Tan Sri Khoo Khay Kim, Associate Professor Kamar Oniah and Dr. Adlina Ab Halim. The session went ahead with the 9 interviewees who had agreed and were available to give interviews. Although the researcher's target was not met, from her point of view, the knowledge and wide experience of the remaining interviewees were sufficient, significant and worth looking into. In addition, from her point of view, it was prudent to plan to interview more people than could actually accept because, the reality is that, the difficulties in contacting them or the demands of their work might make some unavailable in the event.

Meanwhile, the semi-structured interviews with the respondents to the questionnaires proceeded, although at first it was difficult to contact the interviewees. To begin with, the researcher contacted nearly 20 potential interviewees who had agreed to take part. However, some of them turned down the invitation for such reasons as not being on campus at the time suggested or needing to prepare for an imminent exam. Eventually, the researcher managed to

conduct 10 interviews. Most of these went as planned, with the exception of one who did not give any active response or feed-back in answer to questions, apart from short answers. Although the researcher raised 'probe' questions to get her feed-back, this was not of much help. However, the researcher had to be satisfied and take notes on the responses and answers given in the session.

With regard to distributing the questionnaires, initially the researcher did not achieve the target number of respondents and only 200 questionnaires were returned. To remedy this problem, the researcher asked the related lecturers (on the subject of Islamic and Asian Civilization) to distribute another 100 questionnaires to their students. Eventually, the researcher managed to get 375 student responses altogether.

The questionnaires to the diploma students of Sharī'ah and Usūluddin were distributed solely by the researcher. It took two weeks to distribute the questionnaires to three out of six classes each day, because each lecture began at the same time and the distribution could be made only just before the lecture began. She had to rush to three different places to distribute these questionnaires. Therefore, the remaining three classes or groups of respondents were given their questionnaires in the following week. Hence, it is suggested that future researchers in a similar situation should have a helper or co-researcher.

4.11 CONCLUSION

To conclude, this chapter discusses the methodology and the fieldwork of this research as well as the background of the locale of the research. Its purpose has been to give a clear view regarding the whole of the research process from planning, to collecting and then analyzing the data obtained. This research employed case study research as its design and triangulation in collecting and analysing the data. Furthermore, purposive sampling is chosen as kind of sampling for this research. From the fieldwork research, the researcher learned that to obtain good research, a good plan and clear aims and objectives. A researcher needs to be prepared for any unexpected problems that may occur during the data collection, however well it has been planned and organized in advance. The next chapter discusses the analysis and findings from the data.

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY PRESENTATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings from the fieldwork conducted for this thesis. These focus on two main points, the respondents' knowledge of the theory of '*Aşabiyyah* and their perceptions of the current Malay Muslim community mainly from the standpoints of economics, politics, social trends, religion, education and integration. These data were obtained via semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed questions. Below, the descriptions of the respondents are initially presented, followed by the presentation of the data mentioned above. Relevant charts, diagrams, tables and graphs are included to illustrate the data.

5.2 DESCRIPTIONS AND BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS

The description of this research sample covers two populations, the second within the first. The sample for the questionnaire was chosen first and the sample for the interviews was chosen from it. The following sub-chapters describe the demographic characteristics of both these samples.

5.2.1 Sample for Questionnaire

The sample for the questionnaire consisted of 350 respondents, 300 being undergraduate students from four different faculties and academies of the University of Malaya, namely, the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, the Faculty of Dentistry, the Academy of Malay Studies and the Academy of Islamic Studies. The remaining 50 respondents were diploma students of Shari'ah and Usuluddin.

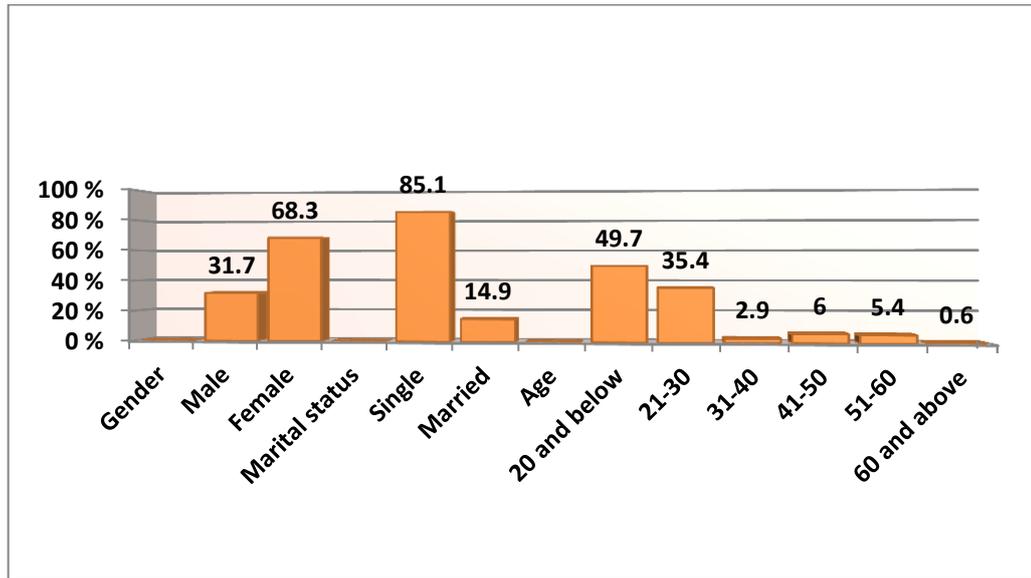
Roughly 68.3% of the respondents were female, leaving a percentage of 31.7% of male respondents. Most of this population were single (85.1%) while 14.9 % were married. Furthermore, the highest percentage of respondents (49.7%), were 20 years old or below, whereas the smallest percentage (0.6%) were 60 years old or above. The varied data in this respect signify that respondents are from a wide range of ages and both single and married.

Being mostly single and around the age of 20 is a likely demographic result for an undergraduate population, who reached the university after completing their Malaysian Education Certificate (MCE) or Malaysian Higher School Certificate which are the equivalent of British GCSEs/‘O’ Levels and Advanced/‘A’ Levels in the UK’s education system. Furthermore, the variable background of the respondents reflected the diverse background of the Malaysian population in general. The data stated are presented in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 Respondents’ background according to gender, marital status and age

No.	Variable Label	Number of respondents	%	Cumulative Percentage
A1	Gender			
	Male	111	31.7	31.7
	Female	239	68.3	100
A2	Marital status			
	Single	298	85.1	85.1
	Married	52	14.9	100
A3	Age			
	20 and below	174	49.7	49.7
	21-30	124	35.4	85.1
	31-40	10	2.9	88.0
	41-50	21	6.0	94.0
	51-60	19	5.4	99.4
	60 and above	2	0.6	100.0

Figure 5.1 Respondents' background according to gender, marital status and age



In addition, 90% of the respondents were Malays, the remainder being composed of 2.9 % Chinese, 3.1% Indians and 4% other, including Punjabis and natives of Sabah and Sarawak (that is, Dusun, Bidayuh and Iban). Further, 92.3% of the respondents were Muslims, 2.3 % Buddhist, 3.1% Hindus, 2.0% Christians and 0.3% adherents of other religions.⁷⁴⁶ Although this research concerned the Malay Muslim community, responses from the non-Malays and non-Muslim respondents were also considered among the data, in order to contribute a perspective on the questions from the ‘non-members’ of the Malay Muslim community.

⁷⁴⁶ This respondent who marked ‘other’ as his or her religion did not specify which this was, perhaps because he or she had no religious belief or because his or her religion was uncommon or unrecognized in the Malaysian context. It is also possible to assume that he or she just did not want to identify his or her religious affiliation.

Figure 5.2 Respondents according to ethnic background

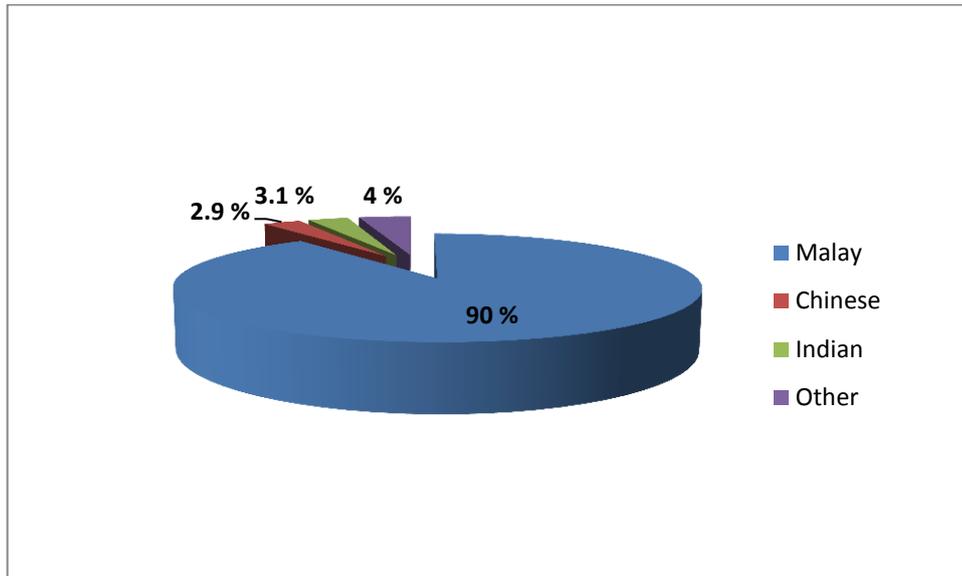
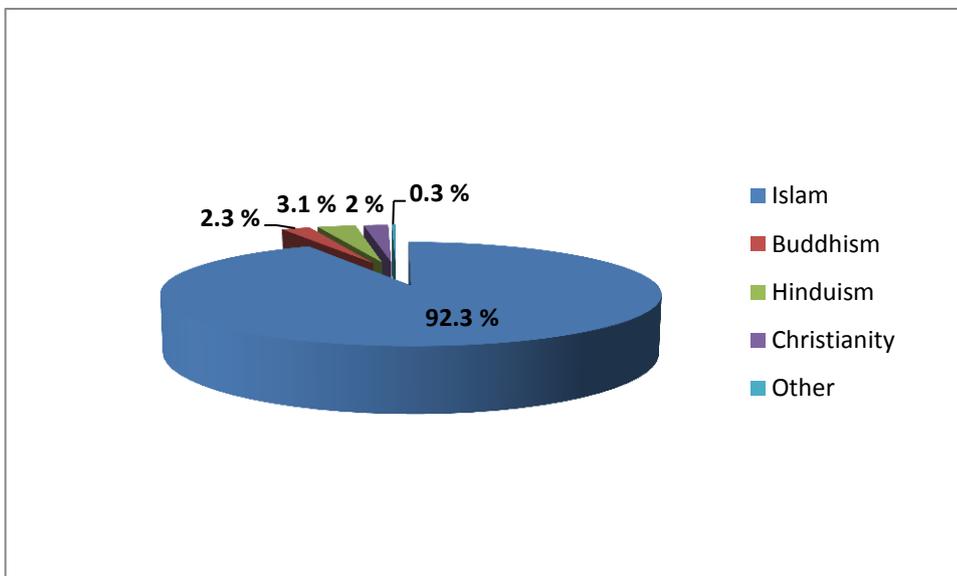


Figure 5.3 Respondents' background according to religion

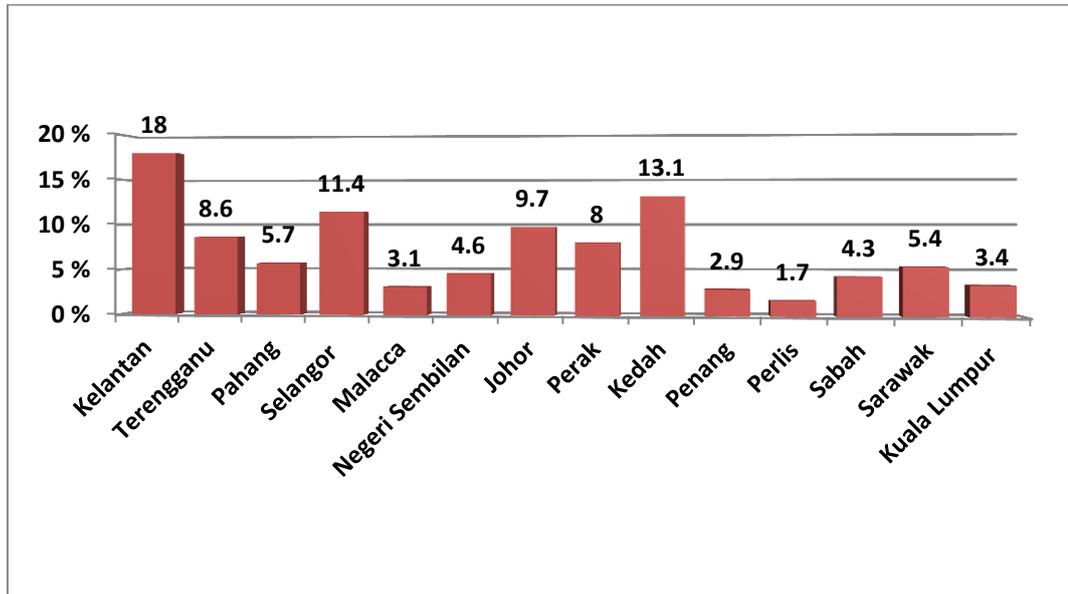


Respondents were also found to have come from different states all over Malaysia. As shown in Table 5.2 and Figure 5.4 below, the largest group of respondents, 18%, came from Kelantan, followed by 13.1% from Kedah and 11.4% from Selangor. Meanwhile, the respondents from Perlis, Penang and Malacca formed some of the smallest groups of respondent in the sample, namely, Perlis (1.7%), Penang (2.9%) and Malacca (3.1%). In general, these data show that the respondents were from diverse backgrounds.

Table 5.2 Respondents' states of origin

No.	Variable Label	Number of respondents	%
A4	State of origin		
	Kelantan	63	18.0
	Terengganu	30	8.6
	Pahang	20	5.7
	Selangor	40	11.4
	Malacca	11	3.1
	Negeri Sembilan	16	4.6
	Johor	34	9.7
	Perak	28	8.0
	Kedah	46	13.1
	Penang	10	2.9
	Perlis	6	1.7
	Sabah	15	4.3
	Sarawak	19	5.4
	Federal territories of Kuala Lumpur	12	3.4

Figure 5.4 Respondents' background according to their states of origin



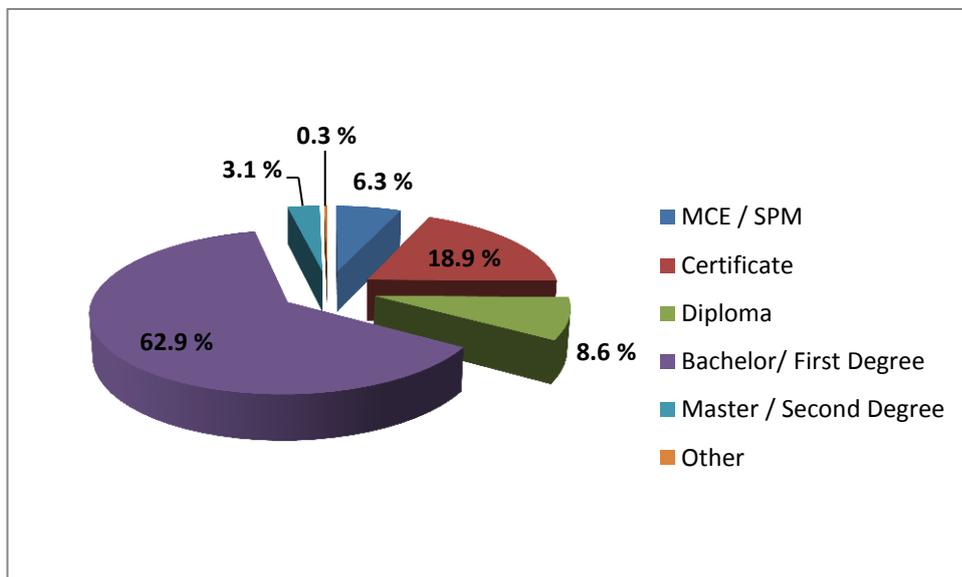
Furthermore, the educational background of the respondents was similarly varied. Around 62.9% of them had bachelors' or first degrees, with the smallest percentage, 0.3%, possessing other qualifications (apart from a Master's degree and a Malaysian Certificate of Education), identified as the Malaysian Higher School Certificate.⁷⁴⁷

Moreover, the respondents were doing several different jobs. Although most of them were students (84.0%), among the remainder were representatives of other professions such as lecturers (0.3%), clerks (0.9%), administrators (0.9%) and 14.0% who did other jobs, including businessmen, soldiers, housewives, teachers, medical practitioners, engineers and pensioners. Predictably, the most respondents were studying full time at the university where

⁷⁴⁷Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM) or the Malaysian Higher School Certificate is equivalent to a British Advanced / 'A' Levels certificate in the British education system.

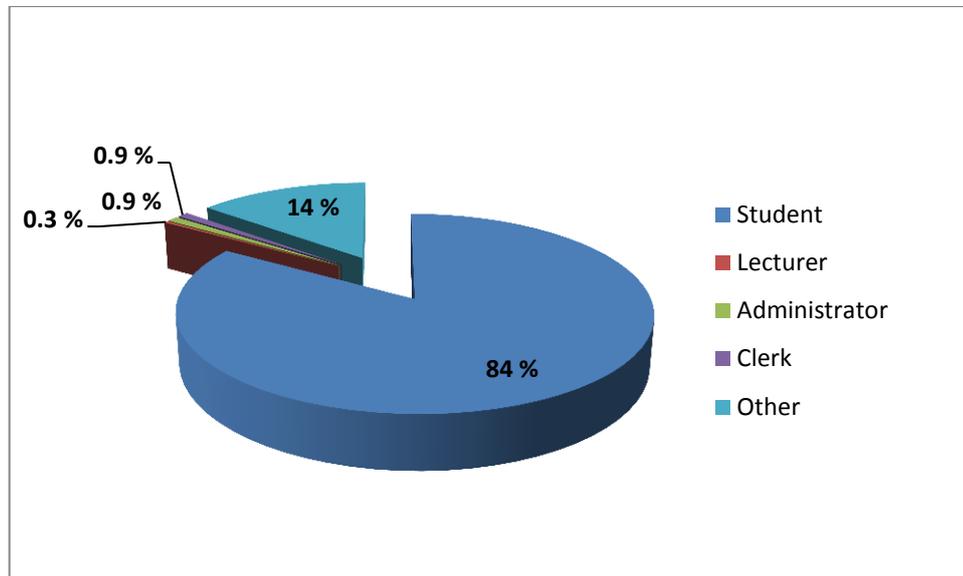
the sample was chosen.⁷⁴⁸ The other respondents with different professions were studying for a diploma, most of them mature or senior students who had enrolled on part-time courses. The variables in the respondents' backgrounds of education and profession are presented in the following figure.

Figure 5.5 Respondents' Educational Background



⁷⁴⁸ Undergraduate students at the University of Malaya are on the whole full-time students who are pursuing their study after completing Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE) or Malaysian Higher School Certificate to qualify for entry to the university.

Figure 5.6 Respondents' background according to profession



5.2.2 Sample for interview

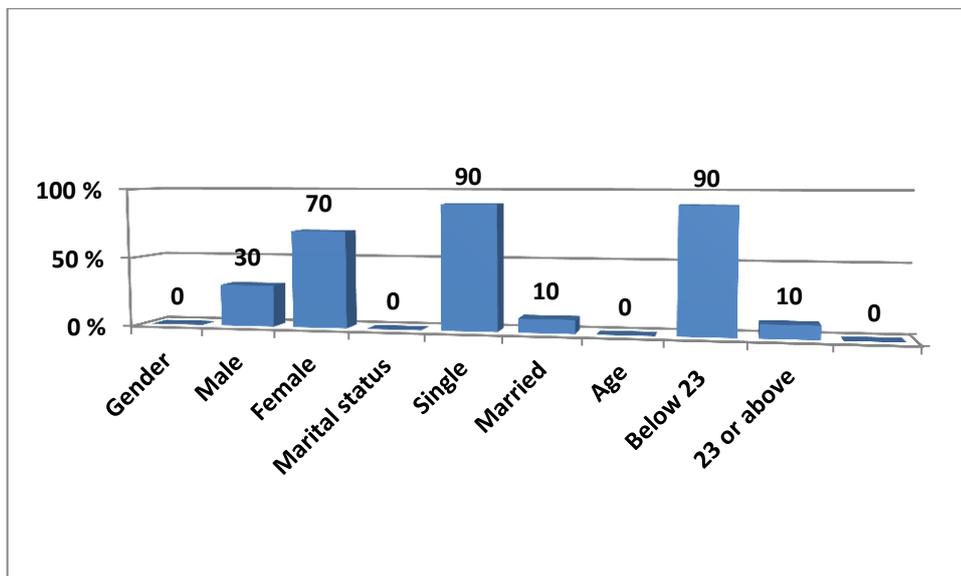
Regarding the sample for the semi-structured interviews, 10 interviewees were selected from the respondents to the questionnaire, 7 of them being female and 3 of them male. Of these 10, 9 were single and one married. Only one respondent was older than 23. Moreover, the interviewees represented several faculties, two came from the Faculty of Dentistry, three from the Academy of Malay Studies, two from the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, one from the Faculty of Science and two from the Academy of Islamic Studies. Although most were young and unmarried, their different courses indicate the diversity of their background of respondent

and indirectly may point to their perceptions of the topic discussed. The information on the variables of the respondents are presented below.

Table 5.3 Interviewees’ background according to gender, marital status and age

No.	Variable Label	Number of respondents	%	Cumulative percentage
A1	Gender			
	Male	3	30	30
	Female	7	70	100
A2	Marital status			
	Single	9	90	90
	Married	1	10	100
A3	Age			
	Below 23	9	90	90
	23 or above	1	10	100

Figure 5.7 Interviewees’ background according to gender, marital status and age



5.3 RESPONDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF THE THEORY OF 'AŞABIYYAH

5.3.1 Questionnaire

In this section, three closed-ended questions were asked concerning the theory of '*Aşabiyyah*' (B1, B2, B3). The options for the respondents in answering the questions were Yes (Y), No (N) and Not Sure (NS). Having analysed the data, we present the results of frequencies, percentages and means of respondents' knowledge in this aspect. Furthermore, the respondents' knowledge regarding the theory of '*Aşabiyyah*' is clarified by examining the mean of each aspect concerning the theory, based on the succeeding level of measurement,

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| a) <1.00 | - little or no knowledge |
| b) 1.00 < 3.00 | - average knowledge |
| c) >3.00 | - good or great knowledge |

Hence, according to the scale provided for this section, the measurement of mean will follow as underlined above, i.e., Yes (Y) stands for 'good or great knowledge', 'Not Sure (NS) for 'average knowledge' and No (N) stands for 'little or no knowledge'.

As presented in Table 5.5 below, the data indicate that a large percentage of respondents (76.9%) have some knowledge of the general concept of '*Aşabiyyah*', while 6.0% have no knowledge about it and 17.6% are not sure. Moreover, half of the respondents (50%)

perceived that the concept of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ contrasted with the concept of brotherhood in Islam, while 28% were not sure and 21.4% disagreed, or in other words, the respondents perceived the concept of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ to be in accordance with and not contrasting with the concept of brotherhood in Islam. Respondent were also asked how familiar they were with the Muslim scholar, Ibn Khaldūn. Answers indicated that most of them (76.3%) had some knowledge of him, whereas 14.6% were not sure and 8.9% had no knowledge of him.

Table 5.4 Respondents’ knowledge regarding the theory of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’

		Percentages		
		%	%	%
		Frequencies		
		N	N	N
No.	Variables	Y	NS	N
B1	Do you know the meaning/definition of ‘ <i>Aṣabiyyah</i> ’?	76.9 269	17.1 60	6.0 21
B2	Do you think the concept of ‘ <i>Aṣabiyyah</i> ’ is opposed to the concept of brotherhood in Islam?	50.0 175	28.6 100	21.4 75
B3	Do you know who Ibn Khaldūn is?	76.3 267	14.6 52	8.9 31

Regarding the mean level of knowledge, by and large the respondents possessed average knowledge in terms of the definition of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ (2.59) and of the scholar Ibn Khaldūn (2.61). The participants’ responses were also average as regards their views on the contradictions between the concept of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ and the concept of brotherhood in Islam

(2.21). This shows that the respondents had an average knowledge of Ibn Khaldūn and of the general concept of *Aṣabiyyah* and its relationship with the Islamic concept of brotherhood.

5.3.2 Interviews

The interviews allowed further explanation to be sought from the respondents regarding their knowledge and understanding of the theory of *Aṣabiyyah*. Initially, interviewees were asked what they knew of the meaning of the term *Aṣabiyyah* in general. They generally defined *Aṣabiyyah* as a ‘sense or high sense of belonging’, ‘spirit of groupism’, ‘extreme tribal spirit’, ‘partisanship’ and ‘racism’. For instance, as stated by **Respondent 5**,

“... ‘Aṣabiyyah is a high sense of belonging, which means there is a sense of us feeling better or greater than other people. Therefore, we do not need to be friendly or mix with those who do not possess the same notions as we do. That’s how I understand ‘Aṣabiyyah.’”

It is also expressed as ‘being obsessed’ or ‘fanaticism’, which could lead to distortion in particular if a group or community were committing an offence, as mentioned by **Respondent 1**,

“... ‘Aṣabiyyah concerns racism in ourselves, our strong attachment to our own groups. For example, if we are too obsessed or fanatical over a particular organization, we will view them as always right in all kinds of situations, although we know that they may make mistakes.’”

Furthermore, interviewees were also asked how they perceived the term *'Aşabiyyah* in general, whether negative or positive, and the reasons for their answers. Hence, 3 out of 10 interviewees perceived that *'Aşabiyyah* is more associated with a negative than a positive sense. However, 6 respondents perceived that *'Aşabiyyah* could apply to both positive and negative senses. They judged *'Aşabiyyah* to be meaningful and useful in protecting someone's own religion, culture and identity from any external elements, in helping members of one's own group and in ensuring that one's group and group members were better in all respects than other groups. **Respondent 10** expresses it thus,

“To me, it is both of them (positive and negative sense). Meaning that, in terms of the positive sense (of 'Aşabiyyah), people are keen to ensure that, for example, if they come from a particular group...their group is the best, the most brilliant and in all sort of ways superior. That's in terms of the positive sense. Again, regarding everything that is required by their group [members], they will...have no problem to contribute or to be involved in anything [that needs their support]. To make sure that their group will emerge as the best in every way.”

However, the sense becomes negative once people become too fanatical, when they protect other members of their group even though they are wrongdoers or attached to their own group to accept any contrary opinion and cannot get to know or get along with anyone else apart from its members. **Respondent 1** went on to say,

“Negatively, if we are too fanatical, we become unable to accept opinions from other people. Thus, we wouldn't interact with any other people. We would just hang out with our own group. Once we are on the 'outside', we no longer get along with other people.”

The sense is also seen as negative if it is brought to the point of racial conflict and war, as occurred in the past. In addition, the sense is one which offers no help in terms of establishing unity, since for this purpose tolerance is required among different groups and races. For example, in the words of **Respondent 8**,

“In my opinion, we have to look at certain aspects of ‘Aṣabiyyah. In terms of protecting a certain group’s identity and culture it is positive, as its culture can be preserved without being mixed with [or influenced by] other external cultures. However, if it refers to unity, I think it is negative because we need to be tolerant. The element of culture needs to be put aside in order to live in a unified community.”

Overall, ‘Aṣabiyyah from the respondents’ perspective was more associated with negative than positive elements, although some of them thought that it could be used in good and beneficial ways.

Furthermore, interviewees were also asked what they knew about Ibn Khaldūn’s theory of ‘Aṣabiyyah. However, most of them either knew little about it or knew but had forgotten the details of the theory. Only two of the respondents expressed a general view and understanding of the theory. For example, **Respondent 3** affirmed that Ibn Khaldūn’s theory of ‘Aṣabiyyah was political in its intent,

“‘Aṣabiyyah according to Ibn Khaldūn is positive. It is about nation building”

Meanwhile, **Respondent 8** judged that the theory was different from the general understanding of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’:

*“I think it is different from the current sense of *Aṣabiyyah*, which is normally viewed as negative. Only since the arrival of Islam have we avoided ‘*Aṣabiyyah*. So, I think it [the theory of ‘*Aṣabiyyah* introduced by Ibn Khaldūn] is contrary to ‘*Aṣabiyyah* in practice. Which means that it [should be interpreted] ... in a positive sense.”*

The theory is also judged to be upholding the religion. For instance, as stated by **Respondent 9**,

*“I also do not know much about Ibn Khaldūn’s theory, but I think he’s stressing there is a need of ‘*Aṣabiyyah* in upholding religion. For example, if another religion is attacking our religion, we need to have ‘*Aṣabiyyah* within our religion. Yet in other aspects of life, we can interact with another religion.”*

Generally, the theory of ‘*Aṣabiyyah*’ as propounded by Ibn Khaldūn was not well-known among the ten respondents, whether they did not know anything about it, or had little knowledge of its theory. However, this should not surprise us, for it is a profound subject which is more familiar to those who study some related area in depth.

5.4 RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF THE MALAY MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN MALAYSIA

5.4.1 Questionnaire (Closed-ended questions)

In this section, section C of the questionnaire, there were 14 closed-ended questions, intended to elicit respondents' perceptions on the Malay Muslim community from various standpoints. The discussion of this section below, include the results of the percentages and frequencies. The Likert scale provided for respondents' answers to these questions had five points: 'Very Good' (VG), 'Good' (G), 'Average' (A), 'Not Good' (NG) and 'Not at all Good' (NAG).

First, the respondents' perceptions were sought regarding the economic and political achievement of the Malay Muslim community. Most of the respondents considered the achievement of the community in both areas to have been 'average', at 55.7% and 45.4% respectively, as shown in Table 5.6 below. Only a small percentage of respondents regarded the community as very good in economic attainment (1.1%), while 3.7% of respondents, the lowest percentages of answers to these questions, believed that the community was doing very badly in terms of political achievement. Those who decided that the community were not yet

performing well in economic terms but doing slightly better in the political area formed a somewhat larger group.

Table 5.5 Respondents' perception of the economic and political achievement of the Malay Muslim community

		Percentages				
		%	%	%	%	%
		Frequencies				
No.	Questions	VG	G	A	NG	NAG
	What is your perception of the Malay Muslims in Malaysia from the point of view of :					
C1	Economic achievements?	1.1	23.7	55.7	16.9	2.6
		4	83	195	59	9
C2	Political achievements?	4.6	28.6	45.4	17.7	3.7
		16	100	159	62	13

Furthermore, based on Table 5.7 below, the most popular response to the questionnaire was that the community was 'average' in its academic achievements and intellectuality (47.1% and 50.9% respectively). Only a small percentage of respondents regarded the community as not very good in these areas (1.4% and 2.0%). This suggests that although the community did not excel in academic and intellectual areas, they were, according to the sample, doing reasonably well.

Table 5.6 Respondents' perception of the academic achievement and intellectuality of the Malay Muslim community

		Percentages				
		%	%	%	%	%
No.	Questions	Frequencies				
		N	N	N	N	N
		VG	G	A	NG	NAG
	What is your perception of the Malay Muslims in Malaysia from the point of view of view of:					
C3	Academic achievements?	4.6	37.4	47.1	9.4	1.4
		16	131	165	33	5
C4	Intellectuality?	2.0	34.9	50.9	10.3	2.0
		7	122	178	36	7

In terms of religion, three questions were highlighted, which concern the Malay Muslim understanding and practising of Islamic teaching in full, as well as the moral attitude and behaviour of the community. Most of the respondents (44.3%, 48.3% and 47.7%) perceived that the community were 'average' in these three aspects and only a small percentage of them (1.7%, 0.3% and 1.1%) held the view that the community was in a 'very good' state regarding these aspects of the religious life. This indicates that, in the opinion of the respondents, the Malay Muslim community were not outstanding in terms of religious zeal, yet they were not in the worst position. Table 5.7 below presents the findings.

Table 5.7 Respondents' perceptions regarding the religious affairs of the Malay Muslim community

		Percentages				
		%	%	%	%	%
No.	Questions	Frequencies				
		N	N	N	N	N
		VG	G	A	NG	NAG
	What is your perception of the Malay Muslims in Malaysia from the point of view of :					
C5	Understanding Islamic teachings?	1.7 6	20.9 73	44.3 155	28.9 101	4.3 15
C6	Fully practising Islamic teachings?	0.9 3	13.7 48	48.3 169	28.6 100	8.6 30
C7	Morality and behaviour?	1.1 4	14.9 52	47.7 167	28.9 101	7.4 26

Furthermore, the respondents were questioned on their perception of the occurrence of social problems and crimes within the community: were these problems well in hand or out of control? In addition, the respondents were asked how they perceived the controlled exposure to entertainment within the community. The results show that a fairly high percentage of respondents (36.9% and 37.4% respectively) perceived that the control within the community of social problems and entertainment was 'not good' and that the control of the rate of crime was 'average'. Correspondingly, only a small percentage of respondents (0.9%, 1.1% and 0.9% respectively) thought that the community succeeded excellently in controlling these crucial matters. Hence, it may be concluded that the social affairs of the Malay Muslim community, including such issues as restraining the exposure to entertainment, are in a crucial and unpleasant condition, as the respondents see them.

**Table 5.8 Respondents' perceptions regarding the social affairs
of the Malay Muslim community**

		Percentages				
		%	%	%	%	%
		Frequencies				
No.	Questions	VG	G	A	NG	NAG
	What is your perception of the Malay Muslims in Malaysia from the point of view of :					
C8	Controlling social problems?	0.9 3	7.7 27	32.3 113	36.9 129	22.0 77
C9	Controlling entertainment?	1.1 4	7.1 25	30.0 105	37.4 131	24.3 85
C10	Controlling the crime rate?	0.9 3	14.9 52	42.3 148	31.4 110	10.6 37

Finally, in terms of the unity and integration of the Malay Muslim community, most of the respondents took the view that the community was 'average' in terms of the spirit of mutual help, the strength of the unity and solidarity and the sensitivity of the surrounding community and its response to current issues (46.3%, 48.9%, 49.1%, 48.9%,), as shown in Table 5.10 below. Thus, only a small percentage of them perceived that the community was doing very badly in the areas (2.0%, 2.3%, 2.6 and 3.4%). These results then, suggest that the community, as judged by these members of it, are not in bad condition in matters of unity and integration, but are doing their best to improve.

Table 5.9 Respondents' perceptions regarding the unity and integration of the Malay Muslim community

		Percentages				
		%	%	%	%	%
No.	Questions	Frequencies				
		N	N	N	N	N
		VG	G	A	NG	NAG
	What is your perception of the Malay Muslims in Malaysia from the point of view of :					
C11	The spirit of mutual help?	5.7 20	25.1 88	46.3 162	20.9 73	2.0 7
C12	Strength of unity and solidarity?	4.6 16	24.9 87	48.9 171	19.4 68	2.3 8
C13	The sensitivity of the surrounding community?	3.1 11	20.9 73	49.1 172	24.3 85	2.6 9
C14	Level of response to current issues?	4.3 15	27.4 96	48.9 171	16.0 56	3.4 12

5.4.2 Open-ended questions

Basically, two questions were open-ended, to allow respondents to describe their perceptions of the main problems, with their factors, encountered by the Malay Muslim community in the country. The questions were asked deliberately to gather many people's responses on these matters. From the analysis conducted. 8 themes were identified as the main problems for the respondents, which are issues concerning individual attitudes, society, religion, the economy, society, politics and external problems and challenges.

The problem most often highlighted by respondents as confronting the Malay Muslim community concerned individual attitudes. This could be defined as internal problems of the community, which are related to attitudes such as being selfish, lazy, easily influenced, not sensitive to current issues and surroundings and other negative attitudes. Some of the examples given by respondents included, 'Lazy about reading, learning and seeking for knowledge', 'Not working hard', 'Individualism,' 'Easily influenced by negative cultures, bad things, the mass media and surroundings', 'Less concerned with issues relating to the community, current issues and issues of religion (Islam)', 'Less concerned with their own Muslim brothers and members of the community' and negative attitudes, such as 'Envy', 'Unpunctuality', 'Not being open-minded', 'Individualistic', 'Undisciplined', 'Prejudiced against each other', 'Pretending to look clever', 'Predisposed to see weaknesses in others' and 'Difficult to leave behind the traditions although they are proved to be damaging, i.e. rejecting all changes'.

Furthermore, matters concerning religion are perceived as the second most often cited problem by many respondents. Answers referred to a lack of religious education and knowledge, lack of understanding, appreciating and practising religious teachings and misunderstandings about religion or religious teachings. The feedback received from respondents included such examples as 'Lack of religious education from parents', 'Failure to adopt or apply Islam', 'Not understanding the true teachings of Islam', 'Not knowing religious issues in depth', 'Not fully practising Islamic law', 'Not understanding the true

concept of Islam', 'Trying to legalize the illegal', 'Disputing within religion', 'Not concerned or too little concerned about religion'.

Meanwhile, respondents also stressed problems in the economy, politics, society and the external challenges faced by the Malay community. To be specific, the problems which were highlighted relate more to weakness in the economy, political extremism, social and moral problems, problems with entertainment, a lack of unity in the community, the influence of Western culture, weakness on the part of the authorities and problems of crime and corruption. Some of the comments from respondents about the economy included 'Economically weak', 'Poverty', 'Most people have a limited income', 'Not controlling the economy,' and 'Weak in socio-economic terms'. For other aspects, the participants answered, for example, there were responses such that, 'Political differences influence our daily life within the community and within religion', '[There is] disunity as a result of politics', 'More concern with political ideologies than unity or consolidation', 'Social problems among Muslim teenagers', 'Moral degradation among teenagers', 'much too much emphasis on entertainment', 'Fighting and quarrelling with one another', 'Easily influenced by the negative values of Western cultures', 'There are leaders who more concerned with position than their responsibilities', 'Leaders of the country who are engaged in corruption' and 'Rampant crime rates'. The respondents' feedback seems to show that the Malay Muslim community is more likely to be confronting problems from within than from outside, most of all those of the negative attitudes on the part of its members. These problems, thus, are shown as leading to the occurrence of further problems in other areas such as the economy, social trends, etc.

In addition, the respondents were asked to say what they thought were the possible factors in the main problems, as stated above. Ten main themes emerged from the responses to this question, namely, religion, attitudes, politics, the institution of the family, education, the economy, thinking, external factors and other factors related to these. The religious factor is the main and most frequently factor highlighted by most respondents, most seriously the lack of religious knowledge and education, lack of understanding, practising, emphasizing and holding or enduring to religion. Some of the comments of the respondents in this regard are as follows, 'Lack of religious education from parents', 'Lack of religious education of Muslim youth', 'Low level of knowledge about Islam', 'Lack of knowledge and religious education especially of children', 'Do not understand Islam properly', 'Do not understand the Qur'ān and the Sunnah', 'The practice of Islam is not fully implemented', 'Less practice of Islamic values in one's own behaviour', 'Not holding to the teachings of Islam', 'Taking religious affairs for granted' and 'Islamic laws are considered unimportant'.

Furthermore, the factor of attitudes, which was addressed by the second largest number of respondents concentrate most on the prevalence of regarding possessing negative attitudes, being selfish, individual attitudes and awareness and not being sensitive to one's surroundings and to current issues. Feedback given by respondents includes 'Attitudes of jealousy of each other', 'Laziness, embarrassment and happy to achieve too little success', 'Giving up easily', 'Difficult of making changes in oneself', 'No awareness of oneself', 'Being selfish', 'Everybody is busy with their own concerns or cases', 'Not interested in finding out about current issues' and 'Too little sensitivity to the community.'

Respondents also stressed that families, education, the community, economy, politics and government were the factors which contributed to the problem. These factors are described as problems relating to the family institution, problems concerning education at school and at home, lack of unity within the community, political disputes, weakness on the part of leaders, government and state regulations and too little interest in the economy. Hence, some of the respondents made the following comments: ‘Lack of guidance and emphasis on the family’, ‘Collapse of the family institution’, ‘Parents neglecting their responsibility to their children’, ‘Problems in the education system at school’, ‘A weak education system’, ‘An education system that is applied on secular principles’, ‘Not intellectual enough’, ‘Less cohesive for society’, ‘There is no understanding [within the community]’, ‘Political differences’, ‘Malay’s political disunity’, ‘Muslim leaders do not highlight the teachings of Islam’, ‘Lack of focus or of attention from our leaders to the causes of the problems’, ‘Relaxation of the laws’, ‘Unwise government policies in matters related to religion’, ‘Less interest in the economic sector’ and ‘More concern on material aspects of life’. An interesting example concerning the factor of knowledge which one respondent highlighted is that the Malays are ‘Not interested in knowledge, either to study or practise it. If someone shows interest, [it is because] the parents want them to succeed academically in order to get a good job and to rise in the bureaucracy’. Implicitly, these comments demonstrate that the critical and severe conditions created by the Malay Muslim community actually cause their own problems and challenges.

Furthermore, among other factors are those of issues of behaviour (*akhlaq*), the mass media and entertainment, the surroundings, thought and influences of foreign cultures. Amongst

respondents' feedback on these factors are the following, 'Collapse of morality and morals', 'Influence of the mass media', 'Widespread and extreme forms of entertainment', 'The influence of a negative environment', 'Muslim Malaysia is easily influenced by foreign cultures', 'Narrow-minded intellectuality, viewing things from a negative perspective and taking advantage of other people's weaknesses to succeed.' Overall, based on these responses, it could be concluded that the factors in the problems and challenges of the Malay Muslim community are highly diverse and have many sources. It is crucial to identify the causes or factors of the problems faced in order to solve the problems encountered by the community. By and large, the lack of association to religion is perceived as the underlying and foremost factor in the problems now experienced.

5.4.3 Interview

During the interviews, the respondents were also asked about their perceptions of the problems and challenges of the community, primarily in the same areas as the questionnaire. The questions covered their views regarding the main problems faced by the community and also the factors contributing to the problems.

Most of the interviewees had positive perceptions of the community in regard to the economy, education and religion. From their point of view, there have been improvements and achievements by the Malay Muslim community in areas of the economy and education, and at the same time that its members were moderately successful and making some progress in religious affairs. For instance, as **Respondent 4** said,

“Personally I think, in terms of the economy, that the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia at present are being more positive than they were in the past. We can see that the Malays can become well-known figures. What I mean here is that economic development means a rise in the standard of living. And that’s my opinion in general.”

Furthermore, one of the respondents, **Respondent 5** perceived that the Malays are between the Chinese and the Indians in terms of the economic achievements of different races in Malaysia. He said:

“To me, [the economic attainment of the Malays] is not yet at the stage of ‘excellent,’ if we are comparing [different peoples in Malaysia]. And to me, the socio-economy of the Malay Muslims is better than that of the Indians, but they are left far behind by the Chinese.”

Furthermore, **Respondent 6** also believed that there had been some economic growth in the Malay Muslim community, but it needed to be strengthened. As she said,

“In terms of the economy, I think, it is not to say that there are no Malay Muslims who are getting better and more developed in this area. There are some [Malay Muslim who are getting better]. The opportunity is there. But perhaps, it needs to be strengthened. For the Chinese, it is not because they are especially talented [or expert] in this area. No. It is because they have

been established for so long...that they have been great and expert in business. They know how to 'play with money'...And for the Malays, currently there is growth in terms of economic output. They are putting their full effort into it. For me, they are at present at the stage of moving forward and starting to grow and increase [in this area]."

Hence, **Respondent 10** highlighted that despite the increasing economic achievement of the Malays, they always came second to the other peoples in Malaysia. Perhaps it is due to the long establishment in this country of the non-Malays, the Chinese in particular in economic and business matters. As she said,

"For The Malay Muslim community, there is a growth and development in economic output. There is some growth, we can't deny that, especially regarding the implementation of the new economic policy (NEP), which has helped us [the Malays] a lot. But the economy in Malaysia is tightly controlled and kept in subjection by other races. Whatever happens, lots of things will still be obstructed. Before, we were left far behind as there was no New Economic Policy. And we can't manage it. Currently, although we are unable to achieve the NEP target of 30% equity to the Malays, there has been some improvement and development. Yet, even if we were given 100 years [to achieve the target of NEP], I don't believe [we could do it]. If we were given longer [to achieve the NEP target] the other races would get even stronger."

Furthermore, regarding education, most respondents are of the opinion that the Malay Muslim community is 'positive' and doing well. Some of the respondents measure the successes of the Malays in education on the basis that a number of prominent Malays and children have done well in school. For instance, as highlighted by **Respondent 8**,

"From the aspect of education, the Malay Muslims are getting more advanced, as there are a lot of them who are successful. There are also many prominent figures [among the Malays]. In education too, there are a lot of Malay Muslims. They are getting more advanced than they used to in

the past, when those who did well academically were from other races and the Malays who were rich. Nowadays, everyone can be successful. The poor people too are capable of it.

In addition, reduction of the rate of illiteracy among the Malays is also considered a yardstick of the success of Malays in education. As expressed by **Respondent 2**,

“In terms of education, so far it is OK, because institutionally, the present Malay community is no longer illiterate due to their development and advancement. For instance there are lots of well-known individuals who are the product of UM (the University of Malaya). [So], in terms of education, the Malays are now in advance and are moving forward.”

Furthermore, the success of the Malays in education is also assessed from their ability to be successful at the tertiary level, at university in particular. Hence, this achievement indirectly motivates other young Malays to try harder to gain more knowledge. As expressed by **Respondent 4**,

“The education [of the Malay Muslims] is quite good. There is an enhancement, where we can see many Malays in public higher education who have successfully obtained excellent results. Therefore, the Malays have become aware that absorbing more knowledge makes people more successful”

Yet, to another respondent, Malaysian students are seen as not quite capable of performing well at colleges and universities. In this respect, **Respondent 9** highlighted this issue,

“In terms of education, there has been some development. But I would say that it is balanced. With the achievement there has been a failure or ‘decline’. It is due to the situation, mainly at the universities, of the results of Malays students being by and large pretty bad. This is probably because we, the Malays so far outnumber to the Chinese [for example]. There are students from other races who have had bad results, but we [the Malays] get more of them [obtaining such results]. And usually they outstrip us. Normally...”

Consequently, **Respondent 10** stressed that there are groups of Malaysians who remain unaware or less concerned with the importance of education, despite the generally growing awareness of the Malays in this aspect. She commented:

“...I see that many have already realized its necessity. Unfortunately, there are certain groups, which I could classify as people who have a reasonable standard of living and get help from the government to upgrade it. However, when they are assisted by the government, they turn out to be spoiled and don't see this (education) as a need for their children, for instance, the members or people of FELDA (The Federal Land Development Authority). For this reason, social problems remain high, and getting worse among the members of FELDA. Or maybe they have realized this - I think everyone has realized [the importance of education]. What is left is its implementation. Or, how can I put it? People know about it, but treat it less urgently. Everyone knows [the importance of education]. It is quite a pity. That's how I see it. Everyone knows the necessity and importance of education. But their actions are turned in that direction.

Thus, according to the interview responses, there has been some improvement and the Malay community is doing well in respect of education. But there are still some weaknesses here, although they are treated as minor.

Meanwhile, 6 out of the 10 of respondents believe that the Malay Muslim community is moderately well off and doing well in term of religious affairs. This is attributed to the appreciation of religious teaching, i.e. Islamic teaching, of the community, which is seen to be good, many are seen to be interested in getting closer to religion. As expressed by **Respondent 7**, the community's religious condition,

“...I think...is good [in terms of] the appreciation of religious teachings. Many [would like to get closer to religion], judging by the formation of Qirā'ati classes (classes or tuition in reading the Qur'ān), especially in Kelantan, and a few in Kuala Lumpur. These classes, although the parents are not good at reciting the Qur'ān, they still send their children to learn to do it so that they will be skilled. That's it. They are interested.”

Furthermore, according to respondents, on the one hand, the religious affairs of the Malay community have become modernised, which means at present that classes to learn about religious matters are easily to accessed everywhere and suited to people's current lifestyle. In other words, religious matters still can be learned though people are busy with their daily duties. For instance, as perceived by **Respondent 8**,

“In terms of religion, the present Malay Muslim community in general still wants to learn about religion, but with a modern approach. Unlike before, when they used to go to 'pondok' (traditional religious education centre), nowadays, the application of religious affairs to our daily routine has become more modernised. Which means, religious classes are accessible to join and they are many... I think the modernisation [of this aspect] is good as it is appropriate to our daily routine. Hence, we are still able to learn about Islam although we are burdened with our daily routine.”

But on the other hand, **Respondent 10** is aware that although the Malay Muslim community increasingly appreciates the need of religion, the numbers of those who are interested in learning about it are still low. In other words, the numbers of participants is smaller than the numbers of facilities provided. As she explained,

“ The appreciation [of religion] is better than in the past. And there are a lot of opportunities to acquire the knowledge. I think that nowadays there is no problem about learning [religion]. It is everywhere. The opportunity is there, in the villages, mosques, there are a lot of opportunities. But the opportunities provided exceed the number of people who would like to learn...”

However, other respondents felt, on the contrary that there was less appreciation of religious teachings among the Malays, as evidenced by the widespread social problems within the community. As perceived by **Respondent 4**,

“In terms of religion, to me, a society which fully appreciates religion doesn't have social problems. Meaning that, if the application of religion is well-presented and conveyed to the community, no one will behave badly, not as badly as what we find nowadays...”

Thus, overall, the perceptions of respondents in terms of religious affairs of the community are varied, some perceiving it as good, and some as entirely bad.

Two aspects concerning the community were perceived by most interviewees as alarming and disturbing: political and social aspects. 9 out of 10 interview respondents identified that the

political aspect of the Malay Muslim community was bad, corrupt, influenced by negative elements and with too little emphasis on Islam. For instance, according to **Respondent 8**,

“ From the political aspect, I think there are many Malay Muslims who have become politicians, and yet, I think, there is less emphasis and application of Islam within politics. It is hard to see the fundamentals of Islam being followed as Islam should be. Moreover, many leaders do not stress [a political system] based on our religion. Islam is merely an official religion.”

A broadly similar view was offered by **Respondent 4**:

“...Well, the condition of politics is crucial. Although most of our politicians are the Malays, looking at what is happening these days in the political arena, we could only conclude that it is quite distressing.”

Apart from this, politics is depicted as one of the causes of disunity in the Malay community.

As stated by **Respondent 1**,

“I think the Muslim politicians in Malaysia are not very good. Due to politics, our Muslim community is divided and the politics of our country are in chaos. Their spirit of ‘Aṣabiyyah in politics has created the disorder, for we cannot accept [the opinions] of others. Whereas, if they were united, the Muslim community here could be more advanced than other communities.”

This view was agreed by **Respondent 3**, who discerned that the division in the Malaysian community in politics is due to differences between the political parties. He affirmed:

“ The Malay community [in terms of politics] is not ‘ok’. It is divided on party lines. But it is hard to say this, because they have different ideologies....It is an ‘extreme’ division.”

Thus, based on the respondents’ perceptions, the political aspect of the Malay Muslim community is perceived by most respondents as ‘negative’ and in a critical situation, which implicitly leads to division and disunity within the community.

Moreover, the social aspect of the Malay Muslim community is marked by most interview respondents as worrying, in particular regarding the wide extent of social problems. Some of them conveyed their views by tackling these from an Islamic point of view. For example, as mentioned by **Respondent 1**,

“In terms of the social aspects of the present Muslim community, it is not all that good. I don’t really know what the reasons are. But from my point of view, the problem touches only part [of the community]. Maybe some are reflecting this problem, and some are not. In my opinion, the Muslim community nowadays seems to overlook its religion, with regard to what each of us, as an individual, is supposed to do, e.g., who to associate with, the way of dressing, we can see that they dare to wear inadequate garments. Thus, their association [with friends] is so free that they no longer recognize the difference between ‘forbidden’ and lawful [in Islam].”

Another respondent agreed with this view, **Respondent 9**:

“Thus, society, the association of the Malay Muslims does not wholly following its religious teaching. Not following what it should. Sometimes we know about it [religious teachings] but we do not practise them.”

Further, **Respondent 7** aired her concerns by quoting news reports on the problem,

“In social terms, there is a problem. A newspaper dated 13th September 2009, in the last ten days of Ramaḍan reported that the Malay Muslim teenagers had been involved in a wild party at a disco in KL (Kuala Lumpur). Male and female teenagers were together. So, it was quite problematic and serious, even though it involved only some of these [teenagers].”

Moreover, external influences are identified by respondents among the causes of the social problems arising in this community. In other words, being easily influenced by negative elements, Malay teenagers are mainly perceived as embodying the crisis of the community in social affairs. For instance, as explained by **Respondent 4**,

“From my perspective, the Malay community is easily influenced by negative or Western culture. [For example], we can see that the attire of the Malaysian teenagers is very inappropriate and so is going about in ‘couples’. Yes, they are guilty of immoral behaviour in public. Therefore, in my opinion, there is a crisis within the current Malay community [in this respect].”

In other words, negative influences within the community are another cause of its problems.

For instance, expressed by **Respondent 8**,

“In term of the social problems of the Malay Muslim, I think things are getting worse than before, probably due to some influence. And probably there was no religious education instilled from when the children were small, which has made their behaviour worse, especially the Malays. And I think this happens mainly among teenagers.”

As a conclusion, the Malays are facing a critical situation regarding the widespread occurrence of social problems within the community, although Malays are described as good at socializing within their community.

In terms of integration, the interviewees took a fair and balanced view. On the one hand, some of them conclude that the community is not facing a critical, still less a crucial problem, whereas, on the other, some perceived that the unity and integration of the community were in a ‘good condition’. For instance, as mentioned by **Respondent 2**,

“To say that the Malays are divided is not really true. But to declare that there is no problem here – well, there is. To state that they are good [in this aspect], I would say that they are ‘average’.”

Meanwhile, the problem is viewed as a remote or minor problem which can be overcome. For example, as stressed by **Respondent 6**,

“I think there is no problem in terms of union or integration. No disorder [within the community]. Even if there is, the problem can be solved and overcome. But it depends on the situation. This problem can be solved within an intellectual community. But it will be difficult for a community that finds

it hard to accept outsiders, in other words, a community which is strongly united and hardly acknowledges strangers.”

Meanwhile, the issue is also summed up as acceptably settled and the community has no clashes or splits except when it comes to differences of political understanding. For instance, highlighted by **Respondent 5**,

“To me, it is OK, there is no division, except being separated due to political influences. Sorry, due to the political understanding, not political influences. This has become one of the factors that threaten unity.”

However, some think that the Malay community is in the midst of a crisis in this respect, perhaps due to the attitudes of the community members who are more alert to their personal than to public affairs. For example, in the eyes of **Respondent 8**,

“...it is not too good. Not ‘ok’, because everyone seems to be being selfish and not concerned to develop the Malays. Unlike before, when everyone tried to develop and work things out for the Malays, currently everyone is working hard for his or her own benefit, not for the sake of the Malays or because they are Malays.”

Integration within the Malaysian community is also portrayed as not in a healthy state or lacking in unity, in view of present circumstances where there are members of the community who hardly knows their fellows, including their neighbours. As stressed by **Respondent 1**,

“I think in Malaysia they are not quite united. For an example, in residential areas, the residents usually are so busy with their own concerns that some of them don’t even know their own neighbours.”

Overall, however, on the basis of the respondents’ feedback, the problem of unity and integration of the Malay Muslim community could be described as not serious. There are differences within the community such as in political understanding which bring division and disunity, but currently the situation is under control and the problems are likely to be solved.

Thus, from all the problems and challenges highlighted in all respects, most respondents shared their views that the state of society is the foremost problem encountered by the community at present.⁷⁴⁹ For example, as stated by **Respondent 5**,

“I think the current main problem is social. It is very critical...To me, it is very problematic.”

Moreover, most Malays are depicted as being involved in social problems, unlike other peoples in the country. As stated by **Respondent 1**,

“The worst is the social problems. Everywhere we go, there will be a lot of cases of social problems. In newspapers, there are many reports on social problems. And a lot of cases reported involve the Malay Muslims, such as cases of close proximity. In contrast, we rarely hear reports about the

⁷⁴⁹ In this part, respondents were asked for their views on the most numerous and the major problems faced by the Malay Muslim community, based on what is discussed above (respondents’ perceptions of the Malay Muslim community in respect of economics, politics, religion, social trends and integration).

Chinese, for example being involved in cases, such as being arrested at discos...mostly the cases involve the Malays”

Furthermore, the problem is portrayed by respondents as involving all levels of the community, the teenagers in particular and as happening everywhere in both urban and rural areas. As stated by **Respondent 3**,

“Social problems have occurred especially among the Malay Muslims and teenagers. Issues of moral degradation, it is quite critical and happening everywhere, in countless areas.”

Thus, showing no respect to parents is one of the signs of social crisis within the community, pointed out by **Respondent 4**,

“As I said before, the social problem is the foremost problem. For example, as we see nowadays, parents are no longer ‘strangers’ to teenagers. What I mean here is that they are treating their parents like their friends without showing respect to them. On the contrary, they should be ashamed of their behaviour if they are not practising religious values taught by their parents. This is what I meant. And yes, the social problem is quite serious.”

At the same time, economic problems are also viewed as the main problems encountered by the Malay Muslim community. For example, to **Respondent 10**, the economy is what has caused the weakness of the community and consequently many things cannot be implemented, including contributing to welfare. She went on,

“In my opinion, not having a strong position in economy is the cause of the problems. Once it is not strong, we have to work hard, a lot of things are neglected and we are unable to socialize or even contribute to the welfare of the people and to our own community. These are all due to not having a strong position in economy. That’s from my point of view.”

In addition, education is also interpreted as the foremost difficulty confronting the Malay community apart from social and economic problems. The lack of education, specifically religious education, is viewed as the cause of all the problems occurring in the community. Thus, the respondents expect that problems of all kinds will be prevented or controlled once a person applies religious teachings and puts them into practice. As stated by **Respondent 9**,

“To me, the main problem is education, because if we possess knowledge, insha-Allah, all problems will be under control. Once we have applied the Islamic knowledge that we have learned, all areas whether in the economy or politics can be controlled. Religious education is important in my opinion because if everyone knows what they should do [according to religious teachings] there will be no problem either in politics or the economy or in other areas. To me, we are lacking [in terms of religious education]. And this is the main reason.”

In sum, despite respondents’ different views in this respect, social problems are viewed by most interviewees as the major problems encountered by the Malay Muslim community. Other problems, including those of the economy and education, are also seen in the same way. Hence, in terms of the possible factors of the problems stated, half of the interviewees think that family issues are one of the main factors contributing to the problems. In other words, lack of attention and tenderness from the parents to the children and too little emphasis on

children's education, religious in particular, are the foremost causes of the present problems, social problems above all. Thus, these situations have occurred, probably due to the parents being too focused on their careers, too busy and too materialistic. For example, according to

Respondent 2,

"In terms of family, the Malay community currently are more focused on secular life. They concentrate more on how to get more money. Kind of materialistic. Therefore, the modern families seem no longer to take care of the children."

The attitudes of the parents who are more concerned with on material than spiritual aspects of their children led the children to engage in immoral activities. For instance, as expressed by

Respondent 1,

"...Lack of religious education and control from the parents. Nowadays, parents are busy, go to work early in the morning and come back late at night. So, they only give money for essentials for their children. They do not know that the children need their tenderness and attention. What the parents know is to give money. Hence, the poor children become stressed and they spend most of their time outside the home, subsequently involved in all sorts of [social] problems."

Furthermore, factors from the government and leaders are also seen as causing some problems. The leaders seem not to take care of and be fully responsible for the community. Otherwise, the problems which have arisen might have been prevented if the leaders had shown more concern and alertness to their responsibilities. As stated by **Respondent 5,**

“To me [the factors are] educational and social. Actually, education and politics...And to me, in terms of politics, if the leaders are concerned [with the problems], I think logically most of the social problems can be avoided.”

Lack of emphasis from the government in terms of instilling the element of religion in administration and religious education within the community is also seen as among the causes.

For example, as expressed by **Respondent 8**,

“I think there are a lot of factors. But if we state that there is a lack of education, for example, maybe it is due to the lack of emphasis from the government. If the government made it compulsory to instil religious education in the community from an early age, I think a lot of problems could be prevented.”

Meanwhile, other factors such as attitudes, surroundings and peers are among those highlighted by respondents. For example, individual attitudes are also crucial. The Malays seeming to be not much interested in developing themselves by increasing their knowledge, while being less motivated and being selfish are depicted as obstacles to the development of the community, and the causes of problems including economic and social ones. For example,

Respondent 10 explained,

“In my opinion, there are a lot of opportunities provided to expand the economy. But the foremost is that it all depends on our attitude. We are not interested in increasing our knowledge, especially regarding finance and financial management. Then, we think we are already good and comfortable and all sorts of unjustified notions. We feel that there is no need to work harder, to improve and reform ourselves. We take it easy and dislike getting a ‘headache’ by thinking and working in such attempts.”

Overall, the problems and challenges faced by the community are found in all areas of life. Thus the factors in the problems are more from within than from external sources. The attitudes of the Malay community, issues of parenting, education and religion are among the reasons for the problems within the community.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the findings of the research are presented, consisting of the demographic variables of the sample and the data on respondents' knowledge of the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* and their perceptions of issues for the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia. Hence, the quantitative and qualitative data were presented and analysed.

On the whole, the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* is familiar among the respondents and largely received a positive verdict from them. Furthermore, from the data obtained on the respondents' perceptions of the problems and challenges for the Malay community, most respondents believe that they relate more to the internal than the external problems of the community. In other words, the problems and challenges faced are mostly from within, which means that their source is in the self, such as attitude, etc. Thus, attitudes are believed to be

the major factors contributing to the issues. Hence, Chapter 6, the next chapter, concentrates on further discussion of the way in which these findings relate to practising the theory of *'Aşabiyyah* and of suggested solutions to the problems.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the findings of the research as presented in Chapter 5 are discussed further, by reflecting on the research objectives and previous studies related to the subject. The discussion focuses on three main subjects, namely, a further examination of the theory of *‘Aṣabiyyah* introduced by Ibn Khaldūn, the issues and challenges, together with other factors affecting the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia, and the possibility of applying the theory within the context of the contemporary Malay Muslim community, which is the crunch of the research.

6.2 SUMMARY OF IBN KHALDŪN'S THEORY OF 'AŞABIYYAH

The theory of *'Aşabiyyah*, as propounded by Ibn Khaldūn, has been discussed extensively in previous chapters (Chapters 1 and 3) of this thesis. Hence, in this section, the theory is once more reviewed to reflect the comments and knowledge expressed by respondents and Malaysian scholars obtained in the fieldwork research, as well as to the current literature and on this subject.

The results of the questionnaire demonstrate that a large percentage of the research respondents knew of the theory (76.9%) and 50 % of them perceived that the theory is not in accordance with or contradictory to the concept of brotherhood in Islam.⁷⁵⁰ Furthermore, the mean of knowledge among the respondents shows that they had an average knowledge of the general concept of *'Aşabiyyah*, the scholar Ibn Khaldūn and the relationship of this theory with the Islamic concept of brotherhood.⁷⁵¹

Moreover, according to interviews with students, although most did not know the theory of *'Aşabiyyah* as meant by Ibn Khaldūn in detail, several definitions were given describing the

⁷⁵⁰ See Chapter 5, section 5.3.1, p 208

⁷⁵¹ Ibid.

general concept of *'Aṣabiyyah*, such as the 'sense of belonging', 'extreme tribal spirit', 'racism' etc.⁷⁵² Thus, most of them also perceived that the sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* can be interpreted in two senses, positive and negative.⁷⁵³

Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* concerns social or group solidarity. It is a natural feeling or disposition among human beings, aimed particularly at helping and protecting group members when they are treated unjustly. This feeling, brought to strengthen a group, subsequently became in the eyes of Ibn Khaldūn a crucial factor in the growth of society and the formation of a strong and sturdy political system.⁷⁵⁴ This accords with a statement made by Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty regarding this theory in his interview:

*"In my personal opinion, 'Aṣabiyyah which is also translated as group solidarity, is almost a sort of unifying effort meted out by Ibn Khaldūn to strengthen the unity of one particular tribe which later on, or eventually becomes a cohesive group that would have made them unified and also having a sort of strong wheel to uphold the principles of religiosity and also to develop their psyche, becoming a strong tribe in order to achieve the ideals of the community for worldly and other-worldly affairs."*⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵² See Chapter 5, section 5.3.2, p 209.

⁷⁵³ See Chapter 5, section 5.3.2, pp 209-211.

⁷⁵⁴ Fuad Baali, *Society, State and Urbanism: Ibn Khaldūn's Sociological Thought*, p 43 and Zaid Ahmad, 'Ibn Khaldūn's Approach in Civilizational Studies', p 114.

⁷⁵⁵ Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty, interviewed for the present research at Selangor International Islamic University College or Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor (KUIS), Kajang, Selangor on August 28, 2009

Thus, although the sense of *‘Aṣabiyyah* has negative connotations, such as chauvinism, haughtiness and arrogance and a hint of injustice, which is strongly condemned in Islam,⁷⁵⁶ it also can be used for positive and beneficial purposes⁷⁵⁷ and for one outstanding group. This is what is called a ‘controlled *‘Aṣabiyyah*’, exercised for the sake of religion or to obey a divine order and in the interests of the truth.⁷⁵⁸ As Dr. Chandra Muzaffar stated in his interview,

“I suppose the easiest way of translating it into English is ‘group solidarity’. Ibn Khaldūn doesn’t use it in a negative sense the way I read it (you know). It uses in very neutral sense to describe phenomena which Ibn Khaldūn observed in a number of societies all over the Middle East, North Africa (I suppose) since he also lived in Spain for a while.”⁷⁵⁹

However, the ‘positive’ nature of *‘Aṣabiyyah* to its meaning, seems does not signify that it is in accordance with the Islamic concept of brotherhood and *Ummah*. Since its original sense was associated with particular groups, tribes and clans, it is unlike the concept of brotherhood and *Ummah*, which is based on justice, faith and transcends cultures, races, geography, languages and all sort of physical differences.⁷⁶⁰ Therefore, contemporary scholars cannot agree on this issue. Professor Mohd Kamal Hassan, for example, argues that the sense of *‘Aṣabiyyah* as meant by Ibn Khaldūn could be the same sense of *‘Aṣabiyyah* that was

⁷⁵⁶ Ali Çaksu, ‘Ideals and Realities: Ibn Khaldun’s Justification of *Asabiyya* and Political Power’, pp 108-109, M. Umer Chapra, ‘Socioeconomic and Political Dynamic in Ibn Khaldūn’s Thought’, p 4 and Zaid Ahmad, ‘Ibn Khaldun’s Approach in Civilizational Studies’, p 114.

⁷⁵⁷ In this respect, Chapra acknowledges that linguistically there are two meanings of the term *‘Aṣabiyyah*. One is in line with the Islamic concept of brotherhood, whereas the other is described as “...blind prejudiced loyalty to one’s own group” (Chapra, 1999:4). For details, see Umer Chapra, M. Umer Chapra, ‘Socioeconomic and Political Dynamic in Ibn Khaldūn’s Thought’, *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, p 4.

⁷⁵⁸ Ali Çaksu, ‘Ideals and Realities: Ibn Khaldun’s Justification of *Asabiyya* and Political Power’, p 108-109

⁷⁵⁹ Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, interviewed for the research at International Movement for a Just World (JUST) office, Petaling Jaya, Selangor on July 16, 2009.

⁷⁶⁰ Professor Mohd Kamal Hassan, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 5, 2009

condemned by the Prophet when *'Aṣabiyyah* reaches the point of being preserved for the sake of power and to protecting the dynasties and not for the sake of Islam, as has occurred in the history of Arab dynasties.⁷⁶¹ Professor Abdullahil Ahsan takes a similar view, doubting the relationship between these two concepts, on the grounds that the concept of brotherhood in Islam is based on equality, which is not found within the sense of *'Aṣabiyyah*.⁷⁶²

On the contrary, the sense in which Ibn Khaldūn meant *'Aṣabiyyah* is complementary to the Islamic concept of brotherhood and *Ummah*. The reason is that Islam recognizes and does not reject the actual situation of a community, which is mostly associated with and tending to racial affiliation and the influence of the major group, race or tribe.⁷⁶³ Thus, it is a natural process for individuals or groups to follow their own preference or special instinct in associating or affiliating with their group members.⁷⁶⁴ Because the sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* is a natural sense for human beings, it is not for Islam to eradicate it but for Muslims to exercise it well. Thus, this whole 'picture' of arguments, *'Aṣabiyyah* and the Islamic concept of brotherhood and *Ummah* could be described as 'the *'Aṣabiyyah* of the *Ummah*', according to Dr. Yusri Mohammad:

⁷⁶¹ Ibid.

⁷⁶² Professor Abdullahil Ahsan, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 7, 2009

⁷⁶³ Dr. Yusri Mohamad, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 4, 2009. He said on this point:

"...because in Islam, as we see, we give more priority to the bond of religion on one race, one racial origin, as opposed to concept of Islamic brotherhood, ukhuwwah Islamiyyah, ukhuwwah imaniyyah. However, Islam, the concept of Ummah, the concept of brotherhood is not just an abstract concept. It is also a concept in Islam to be implemented in real life. At that level, as far as I understand, the Islamic idea of the Ummah and brotherhood does not discount or reject a consideration, realistic actual practical consideration, such as racial affiliation, the predominant influence, influence of race in a certain setting."

⁷⁶⁴ Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty, interviewed for the research at Selangor International Islamic University College or Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor (KUIS), Kajang, Selangor on August 28, 2009.

“So, at the general level, or in principle, the *Aṣabiyyah* of the *Ummah*, you can say, is given bigger stress, bigger value, but at the same time you have this idea, the realistic idea of considering the actual settings.”⁷⁶⁵

In this respect, the sense of '*Aṣabiyyah*' as meant by Ibn Khaldūn could be seen as an 'inner' or internal sense or feeling which forms spontaneously formed within a person, whereas the concept of Islamic brotherhood and *Ummah* is imposed from outside.⁷⁶⁶ Therefore, the concept of *Ummah* and Islamic brotherhood can be established through '*Aṣabiyyah*', for the betterment of a community. Dr. Zaid Ahmad explains in an article the sense of '*Aṣabiyyah*' as something natural in the light of Islam,

“...Contrary to the one practiced in the pre-Islamic Arabia, '*asabiyya*' as a natural disposition in man – the inner spirit of cohesiveness and solidarity – is not only compatible with Islamic teaching but something that has to be instilled and practiced by members of the society. Without willingness to subordinate oneself to the group, peace and social development are not possible.”⁷⁶⁷

Apparently, this is how '*Aṣabiyyah*' worked in the early period of Islam where Muhammad (PBUH), from a noble and respected family, was sent as a Prophet and acknowledged his '*nasab*'. In other words, Syed Farid Alatas affirms that '...Allah does [acts] in a way that

⁷⁶⁵ Dr. Yusri Mohamad, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 4, 2009

⁷⁶⁶ Associate Professor Dr. Zaid Ahmad, interviewed for the research at the University of Putra Malaysia (UPM), Bangi, Selangor on August 23, 2009.

⁷⁶⁷ Zaid Ahmad, 'Ibn Khaldūn's Approach in Civilizational Studies', Massimo Campanini (ed.), *Studies on Ibn Khaldūn*, (Polimetrica: International Scientific Publisher, 2005, p 114

inclines with the social circumstances, with the culture...”⁷⁶⁸ Thus, there is a hadith of the Prophet which states that the leaders of the nation should be selected from the Quraisy.⁷⁶⁹ In this respect, the hadith recognize the greatness and strength of the Quraisy as leaders, yet the hadith does not mean that the preference goes blindly to this tribe. It refers to the situation at the time of the Prophet where the Quraisy were the best and greatest of all the Arab tribes in producing leaders.⁷⁷⁰ It could also apply to other circumstances in which a core group or race could lead the community, as long as they were strong, great and had a strong sense of ‘*Asabiyyah* compared to other groups around them and their leadership was based on justice and truth, and exercised for the sake of religion (Islam).⁷⁷¹

As a whole, it may be said that despite the different basis for the concepts of ‘*Aṣabiyyah* and Islamic brotherhood and *Ummah*, these concepts are complementary. The sense of ‘*Aṣabiyyah* or of tribal affiliation is a natural sense in human beings, which one cannot eradicate. Yet the foremost criterion in distinguishing condemned ‘*Aṣabiyyah* from approved ‘*Aṣabiyyah* in Islam is its purpose, judging whether or not it is invoked solely for the sake of a group or tribe as they uphold and helping each other against injustice, or for the sake of Islam, when truth, justice and mutual help are used purposely to aid one’s fellow-man in divinity, goodness and righteousness.

⁷⁶⁸ Associate Professor Syed Farid Alatas, interviewed for the research at National University of Singapore, Singapore on September 7, 2009.

⁷⁶⁹ A hadith of the Prophet, “الائمة من قريش”, which means, “The Imam (must) from the Quraysh. ”, (Reported by Ahmad and al Baihaqi).

⁷⁷⁰ Dr. Yusri Mohamad, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 4, 2009.

⁷⁷¹ Ustaz (Dr) Muhammad Uthman El-Muhammady, interviewed for the research at International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Kuala Lumpur on October 6, 2009.

6.3 THE MALAY MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN MALAYSIA, ITS PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

The problems and challenges encountered by the Muslim community in Malaysia were also been discussed in a previous chapter, when considering the current literature (Chapter 2). The issues of the community, economic, political, educational, religious, social and integrative, are discussed further in relation to the respondents' answers (see Chapter 5) and reflect the research objective, the current literature and earlier studies on this subject.

Overall, from the results of the answers to the closed-ended questions of the questionnaire, it appears that most respondents saw the condition or achievement of the Malay Muslim community as 'average' in all the above issues, with the exception of the social aspect⁷⁷² which was perceived by most as 'not good'⁷⁷³. Quite similar perceptions were found in the interviews, where most of the interviewees perceived the Malay Muslim community positively in almost in all respects, except the political and social ones.⁷⁷⁴

⁷⁷² 'Social' here refers to the control of social problems, crimes and entertainment within the community. For details, see Chapter 5, section 5.4.1, p 216.

⁷⁷³ See Chapter 5, section 5.4.1, p 216

⁷⁷⁴ For details, see Chapter 5, section 5.4.2, pp 220-233.

However, from the standpoint of the Malaysian scholars and academicians,⁷⁷⁵ the current situation of the community seems uneasy, unsatisfactory and uncomfortable. Problems are seen to occur in all aspects of Malay life. The Malays appears to have issues regarding the economy, social control, politics, aspects of integration, religious affairs and academic affairs. As Dr. Yusri Mohamad commented in his interview,

“Generally, I believe that the Malay Muslim community is still not in a comfortable position on various points, from various aspects, economy, social, religious, political, all. Not comfortable, and of late, I would say, [we have reached a] very critical, critical juncture, critical position, because what they have is not increasing. They are not improving as much as they are regressing, I mean, considering what they stand to lose. For example, the economy...we talk about - the economy is one, of course, the economy influences all aspects of life. So, we haven't, never been dominant in the private sector.”⁷⁷⁶

Perhaps we should first examine the current positions and situations of the Malay Muslim community. According to Dr. Chandra Muzaffar in his interview, the community is currently in a state of great change and transformations from its past condition, especially in politics, social control and economics.⁷⁷⁷ For instance, economically the Malays have improved and developed; they have become diverse following professions of all sorts, such as industry, manufacturing, agriculture, business, sport, law, etc., not concentrating on one or two only, as the Malays in the 1970s and 1980s mainly did, who were largely peasants or civil servants. Muzaffar described the situation as follows,

⁷⁷⁵ It is based on the interview sessions conducted during fieldwork research.

⁷⁷⁶ Dr. Yusri Mohamad, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 4, 2009.

⁷⁷⁷ Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, interviewed for the research at International Movement for a Just World (JUST) office, Petaling Jaya, Selangor on July 16, 2009.

“Now we can see whether in the area of economics or in politics or in culture, you find that the Malay community is very, very diversified in many ways. And if you look at the Malay Muslim community in term of economics, for instance, even in the past, the two major economic categories in the Malay community, were the ruling community, officials, and you had the Malay civil servants in the past, meaning ... 50,60 or 70 years ago. But today you have a very diverse community. In terms of the urban industrial sector, you find that Malays follow almost every occupation, whether in a service industry or in manufacturing, in commerce, in the professions, you find that that today you have a very substantial Malay professional community; doctors, lawyers, architects, engineers, academics and so on. So, the Malay community has become very, very diverse.”⁷⁷⁸

Looking at the economic aspect of the Malay Muslim community, on the one hand, according to the answers to the questionnaires and feedback from the students’ interviews, the development in the last few decades is seen as ‘average’.⁷⁷⁹ This could be interpreted as pointing to an improvement in the Malay Muslim community in this area. Yet on the other hand, they are also perceived by the interviewees (both the students and the scholars) that Muslims are not yet conquering or dominating the economy, least of all in the private sector.⁷⁸⁰ Here they lag behind other races in the country, as noted by Professor Mohd. Kamal Hassan:

“Second, if you compare the Malay Muslim community with the non-Malay community, in some areas of national life, the Malay Muslim community is still lagging behind, especially in science, education, technology, business, industry. No areas of the economy are actually, in the hands of the Malay Muslim community.”⁷⁸¹

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁷⁹ See Chapter 5, section 5.4.1, p 214 and section 5.4.3., pp 223-224

⁷⁸⁰ Dr. Yusri Mohamad, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 4, 2009.

⁷⁸¹ Professor Mohd Kamal Hassan, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 5, 2009.

Perhaps, one of the reasons for this situation is the attitude of the Malays, who are more inclined to take jobs in which they are under-employed in both, the public or private sectors, rather than being self-employed and setting up businesses of their own.⁷⁸² In other words, to be involved in one's own business is seen by most Malays as having a 'part-time job' on the way to a better one, for example, as an employee in a company or government organization. This is quite unlike the attitude of the Chinese including the Malaysian Chinese, who respect and admire businessman and entrepreneurs greatly and regard their work as great and excellent.⁷⁸³ Since being better-off means being involved in business, there can be no doubt that the economy of Malaysia is not in the hand of the Malays.

Consequently, the development, achievement and economic growth of the Malay community, along with urbanization⁷⁸⁴ has influenced the social changes experienced. This transformation has implicitly created two main groups within the Malay Muslim community: those who reside in prosperous urban areas and those in crowded homes in cities. The Malay community is classified into groups of the totally poor or destitute and the rich group: 'having a lot' or 'having little'.⁷⁸⁵ The first group has a higher income and leads a comfortable and possibly luxurious life, whereas the latter struggle to live in big cities, facing the problems of 'urban poverty'.⁷⁸⁶ Some of them not only lack a job which lets them survive in an urban area, but

⁷⁸² Nassrul Hakim Md Jani, 'Mengembalikan keagungan kuasa ekonomi orang Melayu', *Koleksi Rencana*, see <http://husain386.blogspot.co.uk/2008/08/kuasa-ekonomi-orang-melayu.html> (accessed June 18, 2012)

⁷⁸³ Ibid and Linda Amri, 'Rahsia Bisnes Orang Cina', *Cerita Tentang Buku*, see <http://myulatbuku.blogspot.co.uk/2009/05/rahsia-bisnes-orang-cina.html> (accessed June 18, 2012)

⁷⁸⁴ M. Bakri Musa, *Towards A Competitive Malaysia : Development Challenges in the 21st Century*, Selangor, Malaysia: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2007, p 124

⁷⁸⁵ Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, interviewed for the research at International Movement for a Just World (JUST) office, Petaling Jaya, Selangor on July 16, 2009.

⁷⁸⁶ M. Bakri Musa, *Towards A Competitive Malaysia : Development Challenges in the 21st Century*, p 124

also lack such basics as housing, health facilities, enough public transportation, childcare services etc.⁷⁸⁷

Indirectly, this situation is influenced by the widespread social problems within the Malay Muslim community, mainly among its teenagers. The responses to the closed-ended questions indicate that the largest groups of respondents (36.9% and 37.4% respectively) remarked that the control of social problems and exposure to entertainment within the community were ‘not good’.⁷⁸⁸ The student interviewees also found this worrying and a core set of problems faced by the community.⁷⁸⁹ The problem of ‘urban poverty’ and the impact of urbanization have forced Malay parents to work hard to earn a living. The Malay households where both husband and wife have to work, has indirectly created social problems among teenagers, because the parents cannot give so much attention to internalizing the *tarbiyyah* and Islamic education within the home and family.⁷⁹⁰ Thus, an imbalance has been created in the Malay community between spiritual and material aspects of life. The following situation acknowledged by Tong show additional reasons for the social problems in this community:

“...The steady dwindling in the circle of siblings, the absence of grandparents and immediate kin as their support-base, the hollowness of big houses among the rich families and spatial congestion in high-rise housing among the low-income families, and the lack of amusement parks and

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid., p124, and 126, and Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, interviewed for the research at International Movement for a Just World (JUST) office, Petaling Jaya, Selangor on July 16, 2009.

⁷⁸⁸ See Chapter 5, section 5.4.1, p 216.

⁷⁸⁹ See Chapter 5, section 5.4.3., pp 229-231.

⁷⁹⁰ Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty, interviewed for the research at Selangor International Islamic University College or Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor (KUIS), Kajang, Selangor, August 28, 2009.

playgrounds in the neighbourhoods, have made the traumas even more unbearable. Hence, besides the incidence of wife-battering and divorce (the 1991 Population Census reveals that Malays have the highest rate of divorce among the populations), cases of child-abuse, runaways, drug abuse, truancy, school dropout, vandalism, gangsterism, *bohsia* (teenage girls hanging silently around redlight zones, waiting to be picked up), *lepak* (loitering) and other forms of social problems are on the rise.⁷⁹¹

Problems in the economy and social control thus lead to the concern over religious affairs. Although the community in general is regarded by most of the respondents to be doing well ('average' in terms of understanding and fully practising Islamic teachings and their moral attitude and behaviour),⁷⁹² religion is also highlighted as the second most widespread source of the problems encountered by the community, according to the responses to the open-ended questions.⁷⁹³

The Malays are interested in religious education and look forward to opportunities to receive it.⁷⁹⁴ Yet it seems that the community is inclined to have a superficial understanding of Islam.⁷⁹⁵ Though the Malays are recognized as fairly strict in terms of their religious identity and in performing '*ibadah*', their understanding of Islam remains at this level and fails to understand the significance of their practices. Thus the significance of Islamic teaching is not

⁷⁹¹ Cheu Hock-Tong, 'Global Culture and Its Effect on the Malay Family and Community', in Inoue Nobutaka (ed), *Globalization and Indigenous Culture*, Japan : Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, 1997, see <http://www2.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/global/08cheu.html> (accessed June 16, 2012).

⁷⁹² See results in Chapter 5, section 5.4.1, p 215.

⁷⁹³ See Chapter 5, section 5.4.2, p 219.

⁷⁹⁴ One of the responses of interviewee, see Chapter 5, section 5.4.3, p 227.

⁷⁹⁵ Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, interviewed by the researcher at International Movement for a Just World (JUST) office, Petaling Jaya, Selangor on July 16, 2009, and Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty, interviewed by the researcher at Selangor International Islamic University College or Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor (KUIS), Kajang, Selangor, August 28, 2009.

part of their lives, but restricted to their ‘*ibadah*’. For example, the love of honesty, justice and self-discipline is not active and this, unnoticed, has also created some kind of barrier between the Malay Muslims and non-Muslims.⁷⁹⁶ In this respect, Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty has pointed out that this occurs due to the failure of the community to understand, accept and appreciate the idea of *tasawwur al-Islami*, the Islamic world-view:⁷⁹⁷

*“I would say that the understanding of Islam in the Malay society seems to be problematic. It is still problematic. After Islam came to this region more than 5 centuries ago, five hundred years, it is a problem. The problem is that the Malay seem mainly not to appreciate the idea of tasawwur Islam. They do not have the tasawwur Islam. Sort of accepting, understanding clearly the world view of Islam, at-tasawwur al-Islami... ”*⁷⁹⁸

Thus, the economic weaknesses of the Malays indirectly also brought about the weaknesses in Malaysian education.⁷⁹⁹ Although most of the respondents among the Malay students (in questionnaires and interviews) saw themselves as doing well and being average in term of academic achievement and intellectual performance,⁸⁰⁰ some of the interviewees among the Malaysian scholars pointed out that there is an issue within this area. Among the views highlighted, it was believed that their society was not keen to seek knowledge, not strong in education and more associated with secularism than Islamization in education.⁸⁰¹

⁷⁹⁶ Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, interviewed by the researcher at International Movement for a Just World (JUST) office, Petaling Jaya, Selangor on July 16, 2009.

⁷⁹⁷ Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty, interviewed for the research at Selangor International Islamic University College or Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor (KUIS), Kajang, Selangor, August 28, 2009.

⁷⁹⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹⁹ Professor Mohd. Kamal Hassan, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 5, 2009.

⁸⁰⁰ See Chapter 5, section 5.4.1, p 214.

⁸⁰¹ Associate Professor Dr. Zaid Ahmad, interviewed for the research at Putra University, Malaysia or University Putra Malaysia (UPM), Selangor, on August 23, 2009, Muhammad Uthman El-Muhammady, interviewed for the

According to Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty, not only there is less appreciation among Malay academicians of the vital need for Islamization in knowledge and in the educational system, but they also incline to secular knowledge without any association with religion.⁸⁰² Furthermore, some of them became very critical and began to question the relevancy of spreading Sharīah law in today's society. Such issues not only create confusion among Muslims, but also open the door for the opponents of Islam to attack it, making Muslims less confident about their own religion.

Meanwhile, in terms of the political affairs of the Malay Muslim community, although the results of the closed-ended questions show that most respondents perceived the political achievements of the community to be 'average' (45.4%),⁸⁰³ most of the interviewed respondents regard the political affairs of the community as unpleasant, disturbing and problematic for society.⁸⁰⁴ The current political situation in Malaysia, as they portray it, has been 'stained' with issues of corruption and less emphasis on Islamic teachings, it is one of the causes of Malayan disunity, which contributes to the anxiety expressed by the student interviewees.⁸⁰⁵

research at International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Kuala Lumpur on October 6, 2009, and Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty, interviewed for the research at Selangor International Islamic University College or Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor (KUIS), Kajang, Selangor on August 28, 2009

⁸⁰² Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty, interviewed for the research at Selangor International Islamic University College or Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor (KUIS), Kajang, Selangor, August 28, 2009

⁸⁰³ See Chapter 5, section 5.4.1, p 214.

⁸⁰⁴ See Chapter 5, section 5.4.3., pp 228-229.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid., p 229

For example, it has been revealed that the poor showing by the coalition of the National Front (*Barisan Nasional*) in Malaysia's twelfth General Election (2008) and the lead taken by United Malay Nation Organization (UMNO), which is now ruling the country, was caused by internal dissent: they proposed senior members of National Front as candidates, who were identified as compromised by corruption, excessive wealth, criminality and the abuse of power.⁸⁰⁶ Naturally, this failed to satisfy Malaysian voters. As a result, the National Front won only 144 out of 222s seats in Parliament and lost the states of Kelantan, Kedah, Penang and Selangor to opposition coalition parties, known as the People's Pact or People's Alliance (*Pakatan Rakyat*), a combination of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (*Parti Islam SeMalaysia* or PAS), People's Justice Party Malaysia (*Parti Keadilan Rakyat Malaysia* or PKR) and Democratic Action Party Malaysia or DAP. Hence, instead of being involved in these issues, the government, or the controlling force in government, is supposed to confront it, but they seems to have stopped doing this or even speaking out about it.⁸⁰⁷ As the Young Prince of Perak (Raja Muda Perak), Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah complains,

*“Governments can no longer just offer their citizens material wealth. The intangible benefits of development, including an absence of corruption, abuse and repression, and the protection and enlargement of individual rights and freedoms, are now equally important goods that citizens demand and which governments must deliver.”*⁸⁰⁸

⁸⁰⁶ Norhayati Mohd. Salleh 'Pilihan Raya Umum ke-12 (PRU-12): "Tsunami" Politik Melayu?', *Jebat*, 35, 2008, see <http://journalarticle.ukm.my/366/1/1.pdf> (accessed June 16, 2012), p 55

⁸⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 60-61

⁸⁰⁸ *The Edge*, April 28, 2008, p 16, cited in Norhayati Mohd. Salleh 'Pilihan Raya Umum ke-12 (PRU-12): "Tsunami" Politik Melayu?', p 61

In addition, perhaps due to rapid growth and urbanization within the Malay Muslim community, the Malays have also become more critical, analytical and judgmental in their thinking on political affairs. They are portrayed by Dr. Chandra Muzaffar as a community where the leaders can no longer 'lead them by the nose'.⁸⁰⁹ When it comes to matters which touch on their future, they question every issue or statement released by every political party. For example, they would question whether to trust PAS when it stated that they would safeguard or fight for Islam in the country⁸¹⁰ Even the Malays have also started to question whether the UMNO is still relevant or not.⁸¹¹

However, these changes mainly impact on town-dwellers, who can receive alternative information from ICT or the new media (e.g., the Internet, blogs, etc.) but not those who are in rural areas and who still depend for information on the main mass media, including newspapers, radio broadcasts and television programmes.⁸¹² Thus, the rural Malays are generally not affected by the changes but remain loyal to UMNO and strongly support Malaysian nationalism. According to Zalkapli, in the last general election only 5% of Malays were 'swing voters', compared with the 20% of Chinese and 30% of the Indian voters. Hence, despite the 'new critical and analytical [stance] of the Malays', country people are not quite

⁸⁰⁹ Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, interviewed by the researcher at International Movement for a Just World (JUST) office, Petaling Jaya, Selangor on July 16, 2009

⁸¹⁰ Ibid

⁸¹¹ *New Straits Times*, April 17, 2008, p 8 cited in Norhayati Mohd. Salleh 'Pilihan Raya Umum ke-12 (PRU-12): "Tsunami" Politik Melayu?', p 61.

⁸¹² Haris Zalkapli, *Cabaran Politik Baharu Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia : Media Icon Sdn Bhd, 2009, p 27.

open to radical change and are not inclined to take risk for the prospect of changes including changes in politics, except in situations which may benefit and be useful to them.⁸¹³

Furthermore, the diversity of the Malays in political affairs shows that the current Malay Muslim community is not monolithic but comprises several different groups.⁸¹⁴ There are Malays who associate themselves with Islam and adopt its worldview, but do not altogether support the notion of Malay rights and *bumiputeras* (Malay groups which have a very strict religious identity) and there are also liberal Malays, i.e., people who are Westernized in their thinking and life, whom others portray as liberal.⁸¹⁵

Overall, some changes have taken place within the political environment of the Malay Muslim community. Although politics have been disturbed by issues of corruption, abuses of power, etc., the people nowadays are looking for improvements, integrity and ‘cleanness’ in politics. The Malays as a whole may not be ready to make new and drastic political changes, but their leaders need to understand the current state of mind of the people, who are getting more diverse and complex, thus more likely to take a sophisticated approach in dealing with their problems and challenges.⁸¹⁶

⁸¹³ Ibid, p 33

⁸¹⁴ Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, interviewed for the research at International Movement for a Just World (JUST) office, Petaling Jaya, Selangor on July 16, 2009

⁸¹⁵ Ibid.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid.

Consequently, the issues of Malaysian politics bring up the issue of integration within the Malays. At first glance, this seems problematic and requires further thorough discussion. In contrast, most of the respondents to the questionnaire and interview questions among students and scholars shared the view that this was 'average' in its achievements. According to the feed-back questionnaire results, most of the respondents perceived the strength of the Malay Muslims' unity and solidarity as 'average' (48.9%), besides being average in terms its spirit of mutual help (46.3%).⁸¹⁷ Thus, all the interviewees I perceived it as not in crisis but fairly good, with the exception of politics. As Dr. Zaid Ahmad affirmed,

*“Integration within the Malay Muslim community, we have not much problem actually, apart from politics, because politics is always dominant in our society. It is always a dominant factor. If there is a division, more or less, [it is] not because of.... I mean, it is not in terms of the interest of mazhab (sects) or whatsoever. No. Basically it is politics. And, maybe, the second one regarding our differences of thinking. Different ways of thinking. We are not united.”*⁸¹⁸

On the one hand, conflict in politics is perceived as the cause of the disunity, disintegration and perhaps tension over the integration of the Malay Muslim community.⁸¹⁹ For example, there has been a long period of disagreement and dispute between UMNO and PAS, who at the same time compete against each other to win Malaysian votes. On the other, the problem is not so much one of political disputes or differences of opinion which, according to Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, are to be expected, but one of how people should treat each other and deal

⁸¹⁷ See Chapter 5, section 5.4.1., p 217

⁸¹⁸ Associate Professor Dr. Zaid Ahmad, interviewed by the researcher at the University of Putra Malaysia (UPM), Bangi, Selangor on August 23, 2009

⁸¹⁹ Professor Mohd. Kamal Hassan, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 5, 2009

with disagreements, especially in politics.⁸²⁰ In this respect, it is crucial to agree to disagree and to accept differences between people in a proper and civilized manner. ,⁸²¹ Other people should be seen as Muslim brothers even though they belong to different parties.⁸²² In other words, the goal is to be different and disagree in a humane way, as promoted in Islam.

Hence, the main Malay political parties in particular, i.e., UMNO, PAS, PKR, have been urged to discuss together practicable ways of finding and solving problems and working together regardless of background or political differences. A coalition between these political parties might not be possible, given what has happened in the past, when PAS joined the coalition of National Front Coalition in 1973 – the effects of the incident of 16 May 1969, continued for five years and resulted in great losses for the PAS in the general election of 1978.⁸²³ Yet it is not impossible to have a discussion on the problems of the Malay Muslim community, with a view to future benefits to Malaysian unity and political power, as well as safeguarding Islam.⁸²⁴ At present they all challenge each other by exposing their political power and strength, but the Malaysian political parties would be more mature if they freed themselves from bias and preconceptions and competed for votes by each giving its best effort

⁸²⁰ Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, interviewed for the research at International Movement for a Just World (JUST) office, Petaling Jaya, Selangor on July 16, 2009.

⁸²¹ Ibid.

⁸²² Professor Mohd. Kamal Hassan, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 5, 2009.

⁸²³ See Chapter 2, page 83 for further details.

⁸²⁴ Bernama. 'PAS, Umno Muzakarah necessary for Malay, Muslim unity, *MalaysiaToday Online News*, May 23, 2012, see <http://www.malaysia-today.net/mtcolumns/newscommentaries/49506-pas-umno-muzakarah-necessary-for-malay-muslim-unity> (accessed June 15, 2012)

to fortifying such areas as education and the economy; this would be useful to the Malays and the community as a whole.⁸²⁵

To tell the truth, being too politicized seems one of the reasons for the political disintegration of the Malays. Too much attention has been given to politics compared to other areas, such as education, the economy, religious affairs, etc. From Dr. Yusri Mohamad's standpoint, the unity of the Malays could be strengthened if the community stopped concentrating on one area, politics, and attended to all the other crucial areas. If these were strengthened, he believed that the Malays would not only 'have time' to fight each other in political affairs, but also would be able to build a Malay community which was strong in other ways, including education, science and technology, social welfare etc. As Dr. Yusri Mohamad emphasized,

*"I believe another of the reasons is that the Malay Muslims remain too politicized. What I mean is that they focus too much on politics and politicians, whereas, for the community there are so many other sectors than political parties, politicians, that need to be developed, need to be strengthened if we want to be strong enough, want to emerge as a strong community. But since we focus too much on politics, and politics is by nature, in our culture, divisive, we become divided. If we actually – let's say, list ten areas, and politics is one of them – I believe it would be easier for us to be united on the others, to have closer working relationships [in] other areas, e.g. education, religion, the economy, NGOs, civil societies, we should have more. Like the Chinese, Indians, the Chinese, especially, they are strong, they are united, because they don't just rely on the political parties to unite. They can also unite by means of various groups, educational groups, cultural groups."*⁸²⁶

⁸²⁵ Ibid.

⁸²⁶ Dr. Yusri Mohamad, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 4, 2009.

Meanwhile, although the integration of the Malay Muslim community is depicted in general by respondents as 'average', it is perhaps not as strong as they suppose. Several obstacles within the community need to be identified and dealt with, in order to integrate it strongly. The physical boundary of different states, i.e. the sense of belonging to different states which the public, mainly the Malays, nowadays feel intensely, should be reduced. In other words, inter-regional integration or inter-state integration needs to be built which transcends the sense of physical boundaries.⁸²⁷ Furthermore, there is the classes in the community are deeply divided, i.e., royalty, 'the aristocrats' inherited status', middle and lower classes. But these entrenched divisions could be lessened by educating people to respect others as equals and as brothers or sisters in spite of their different social or economic class. Consequently, this might reduce the problems of integration as well as developing further the social bonds between Muslims from different places (e.g., Muslims from Sabah and from Sarawak), which might be a long process, but a feasible one. Overall, the unity and integration of the Malay Muslim community is mainly more problematic in political terms than any other; religious unity is not threatened, yet is not perhaps up to the standard that it should be. Thus, the strength of Malay Muslim integration could be enhanced by following the suggestions above.

Hence, these problems are due not to one but to a combination of many factors, both internal and external. Internal factors would be described as internal traits of the community, including negative attitudes, a lack of understanding of one another, of appreciating and understanding religion, problems of the family as an institution, disunity in the community, political

⁸²⁷ Professor Mohd. Kamal Hassan, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 5, 2009.

disputes, etc. For instance, being too materialistic in their thinking has led the Malays to overvalue what they can see with the naked eye, but not things which have a hidden value, e.g., they should appreciate and value less the people who now dominate society such as singers, artists and entertainers and more the people such as scholars and religious scholars, who do not yet enjoy their rightful place in society.⁸²⁸

Among the external factors in society's problems, some elements may be described as beyond its control and management, but they still contribute to the difficulties.⁸²⁹ Among these are the influence of foreign cultures, the process of globalization, influence of the mass media and the spread of some forms of entertainment; all these are the main influence on the country's social problems and moral degradation. Thus, each of problems has its own factors. For example, apart from the factor of attitude, problem of economic advance of the community is also described as influenced by corruption.⁸³⁰ In competition with other peoples, the Malays are depicted as the 'winners' in this race towards corruption.⁸³¹ Thus, such malpractice means that the Malays have achieved only around 18% of equity, much below their target of 30% in the New Economic Policy.⁸³²

⁸²⁸ Associate Professor Dr. Zaid Ahmad, interviewed for the research at the University of Putra Malaysia (UPM), Bangi, Selangor on August 23, 2009.

⁸²⁹ http://www.un.org/Depts/oios/mecd/mecd_glossary/documents/glossary/set_e/external_factor.htm (accessed June 10, 2012)

⁸³⁰ Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty, interviewed for the research at Selangor International Islamic University College or Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor (KUIS), Kajang, Selangor, August 28, 2009.

⁸³¹ Ibid.

⁸³² Ibid.

On the whole, the Malay Muslim community confronts problems of all the above kinds. They may not be serious, except for those in politics and social control, but they should be taken into consideration and overcoming them will require serious action.

6.4 THE CASE OF THE MALAY MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN MALAYSIA: CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF IBN KHALDŪN'S THEORY OF 'AŞABIYYAH

The theory of *'Aşabiyyah* and current problems and challenges for the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia have been discussed and examined. Now it is time to examine whether the theory can be put into practice in this context. If it is applicable, how and which parts or aspects of the community are appropriate to and can 'fit in' with the theory? Or, if it is not relevant, what are the reasons for this? Is there a possibility that any part of the theory is relevant to this context?

Our initial conclusion in section 3.3.5 of Chapter 3 was that Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aşabiyyah* had a place in the modern context, in particular in a Muslim community. On the grounds that the loss of the sense of *'Aşabiyyah* among Muslims is one of the factors in the

decline of Muslim civilization, regaining it becomes one of the factors in the rise of Islam.⁸³³ But its applicability to today's world should be examined more thoroughly by taking into account the condition of communities and countries whose identity is at present mainly based on the concept of a nation state.⁸³⁴

Thus, two obstacles can be identified in applying and practising the theory in a contemporary situation. First, regarding the nature of the theory itself, according to Ibn Khaldūn, the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* is primarily based on tribes or tribal partisanship, common descent and blood ties which he claims are the strongest bonds within a particular group. Consequently, on this basis, the group become stronger and more able to defeat other groups with weak *'Aṣabiyyah* and establish a new government, replacing the old and weak one.

The second obstacle concerns the current condition of the community and country in general. As explained by Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, people nowadays are living in a world of nation states which are very diverse and based on many groups and communities, rather than one particular ethnic group.⁸³⁵ States which previously were set up on the basis of a specific ethnic group or the solidarity of a society, thus evolved into modern nation states formed basically by one or

⁸³³ M. Umer Chapra, *Muslim Civilization: The Causes of Decline and the Need for Reform*, pp 21-22, Akbar Ahmed, 'Ibn Khaldun's Understanding of Civilization and the Dilemmas of Islam and the West Today', p 31, Mustapha Kamal Pasha, 'Ibn Khaldun and world order', in Stephen Gill and James H. Mittelman (eds), *Innovation and Transformation in International Studies*, p 64.

⁸³⁴ Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, interviewed for the research at International Movement for a Just World (JUST) office, Petaling Jaya, Selangor on July 16, 2009.

⁸³⁵ Ibid

several combined nationalities into a formal political union or alliance.⁸³⁶ Such changes, which create a diverse and complex community, therefore, make it difficult to apply the theory of *'Aşabiyyah* which is based on the solidarity of a particular group.⁸³⁷ By its emphasis on one particular group, such solidarity might eradicate the other groups or communities within the modern nation state.⁸³⁸ In addition, the impact of globalization, borderless communication and the transcendence of national boundaries by technology also raise the question of the relevance of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of a pure and whole *'Aşabiyyah* within the ethnically diverse and globalized communities of contemporary nation states.⁸³⁹

These arguments suggest that the theory of *'Aşabiyyah* could apply to the modern context not as a discrete and integral theory, such as was seen in the time of Ibn Khaldūn, but to locations in general and the challenges faced by the community, even though they are quite different from those past, perhaps much bigger and more complex than during his time. The principles of the problem do not change. Therefore, the principles of *'Aşabiyyah* are relevant for implementation in the modern period, regardless of the context of group solidarity, in particular or the prevalence of nation states.

⁸³⁶ Mike Lauletta, 'What is A Nation-State?', *Political Realism*, May 1996, see <http://www.towson.edu/polsci/ppp/sp97/realism/whatisns.htm> (accessed June 21, 2012)

⁸³⁷ Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, interviewed for the research at International Movement for a Just World (JUST) office, Petaling Jaya, Selangor on July 16, 2009

⁸³⁸ Ibid.

⁸³⁹ Ibid.

In terms of the nature of theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*, although it is based on blood ties and tribal partisanship, it could also be possessed by people who have no blood relationships, but share common view of being allied and clientship, as Rabī' explains.⁸⁴⁰ Thus, in the modern context, the sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* can be applied, not, indeed, on blood relations, but on the concept of group collaboration for the purpose of the national benefit and in its interests.⁸⁴¹ As most modern states are established on the basis of mixed and joint groups, loyalty to the country by protecting its national identity is more relevant and necessary nowadays than allegiance to a certain group.⁸⁴²

Furthermore, by nature, people cannot live without some race, group or clan affiliation. It is a natural sense, which cannot be detached or eliminated from human life.⁸⁴³ This is recognized by Ibn Khaldūn to say that people living in a community or society can produce greater things and protect themselves better from danger, than those who live in isolation. Thus, Dr. Yusri Mohamad affirmed that a natural sense of living in a society and willingness to apply *'Aṣabiyyah* are essential for life today:

“Yes, I think it is still very relevant, because it is human nature. Race, clan or race, group sentiment is part of human nature. You can never detach it or removed it in an absolute sense. In absolute sense, you can never do without it. And I think it is still real. I doubt if there is any country, any nation currently, who can clearly aim that race is no longer a factor in their own

⁸⁴⁰ Muhammad Mahmoud Rabī'. *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldūn*, p 50

⁸⁴¹ Amer Al-Roubaie, Ibn Khaldūn's Concept of *'Aṣabiyyah*: A Solution to Contemporary Problems in Muslims Societies, in Osman Bakar and Baharudin Ahmad (eds), *Proceeding International Conference : Ibn Khaldun's Legacy and Its Significance*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia : International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) and International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), 2009 p 321.

⁸⁴² Ibid., p 322.

⁸⁴³ Dr. Yusri Mohamad, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 4, 2009.

country. It may not be the factor in a formal sense, maybe, not in the constitutional legal system, they don't have any discrimination as to race, but in reality, I doubt it."⁸⁴⁴

In reflecting on the state of the Malaysian Malay Muslim community today, the sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* in principle, seems to be required if the community is to sit together, fight and overcome communal problems, regardless of background, political differences, etc. The Malay Muslim community currently comprises not one but a mixture of groups on several different criteria, whether state, e.g., the Malay Kelantanese, Johorians or Terengganus, etc.; common descent, such as the Minangkabau, Papatih, Syed families, etc., or political affiliation, or that of Islamic movements mainly associated with the Malays, such as the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia or ABIM), Malaysian Muslim Solidarity or ISMA, Pertubuhan Jemaah Islah Malaysia or JIM, etc. Despite these background differences, they should work for the betterment of the Malay community and Islam, since they are all Malays and most are Muslim. Thus, less cohesion or *'Aṣabiyyah* among the Malays might cause further political division, economic inactivity, social dissatisfaction and religious confusion, and result in greater weakness.

From another perspective, the current political scenario in Malaysia seems to reflect implicitly what was underlined by Ibn Khaldūn in his concepts of *al-'Umrān* and *'Asabiyyah*, i.e., the rise and fall of a certain group or community. Internal factors are identified as causing the poor reputation of UMNO and coalition of the National Front during the last general election

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid.

(2008) owing to dissatisfaction among the party members regarding the candidates listed for election.⁸⁴⁵ Some former candidates of the party were among the dissatisfied, thus indirectly influencing the loss of support from party members and voters, resulting in their loss of seats (see above). In addition, internal party quarrels, in which the party members deliberately made accusations against each other to improve their position in the party, implicitly weakened their social bonds, or what could be termed their *'Aṣabiyyah*.⁸⁴⁶ Problems such as concern over the standard of living, high rates of criminality and the abuse of power within the government may have emerged as signals of the decline of UMNO as the ruling party, which it had been since 1949. If these weaknesses are not remedied, it is not impossible that this party will lose in the forthcoming general election, collapse as a ruling party and be replaced in government by another with stronger *'Aṣabiyyah* which is not tainted accusations and speculations about corruption and power abuse. If this happens, without doubt, Ibn Khaldūn's observation of the establishment and decline of Muslim governments will be vindicated, together with his resulting concepts of *Al-'Umrān* and *'Aṣabiyyah* and his view of the life and death of a dynasty.⁸⁴⁷ This makes his concept highly relevant, reflecting the modern situation by the principle and essence of the theory.

⁸⁴⁵ Norhayati Mohd. Salleh 'Pilihan Raya Umum ke-12 (PRU-12): "Tsunami" Politik Melayu?', p 55.

⁸⁴⁶ Kassim Ahmad, 'Cabaran Politik Malaysia', *Utusan Online*, February 22, 2010, see http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/info.asp?y=2010&dt=0222&pub=Utusan_Malaysia&sec=Rencana&pg=re_01.htm (accessed June 15, 2012)

⁸⁴⁷ For details, see Chapter 3, pp 121-124.

6.5 CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, several features were brought to a conclusion. First, even though Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* is based on things which no longer hold sway, it can be modified to fit a modern context, based on joint group cooperation and common alliances or clientship. Thus, it depends on senses which are instilled by nature in human beings, therefore, instead of being eliminated or eradicated, the sense can be used for positive and beneficial purposes in line with Islamic teaching.

Second, the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia confronts problems and challenges in all aspects of life: the economy, education, religion, integration, social control and politics. Although perceived by most of the study's respondents as at an 'average' level, with the exception of politics and social affairs, each of these aspects has its own issues. Thus, internal and external factors, physical and spiritual factors, all of them play a role in these problems and challenges.

Third, in terms of practising and implementing the theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* within the context of this community, it is suggest that the theory could be practised, not in its original sense, but to

‘extract’ its principles and modify it appropriately for its current context.⁸⁴⁸ To this community, the spirit of *‘Aşabiyyah* is required if the Malays are to work together in overcoming their problems and challenges, regardless of the differences of kinds among them. Ready to work together, to accept each other’s differences (e.g., background, opinions, understanding), ‘agreeing to disagree’ are among the initial but essential steps in building within the community a positive sense of *‘Aşabiyyah* which is in line with Islamic teachings.

⁸⁴⁸ Associate Professor Dr. Zaid Ahmad, interviewed for the research at the University of Putra Malaysia (UPM), Bangi, Selangor on August 23, 2009.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION OF THE THESIS

This research studied Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* and its applicability to the modern period by focusing on the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia. Thus, the details of the theory and the current context of the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia were considered in depth to ascertain the meanings of *'Aṣabiyyah* as Ibn Khaldūn understood it and examine whether his theory could be applied in this context.

To obtain data, my fieldwork research used two methods; distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews with students from the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. Further interviews were conducted with Malaysian scholars to gain further information about Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* and its applicability in the modern context, as well as the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia and the current situation of Muslim societies in general. Library research was also carried out to gather similar information.

Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* is viewed differently by contemporary and past scholars, starting with its definition and what it meant to Ibn Khaldūn, the difference between this theory and the concepts of *Ummah* and Islamic brotherhood and whether the theory is relevant or not to the current situation in the Muslim world. Basically, Muslims have a positive perception of this theory, since it is in line with the Islamic concept of *Ummah* and brotherhood. The sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* is a natural characteristic in human beings. This is demonstrated by Ibn Khaldūn, who maintains that one of the factors in the establishment and then the decline of Muslim governments during his period was the strong sense of *'Aṣabiyyah* and its subsequent weakening. However, when it comes to implementing his theory in our own day, there are many aspects that have to be looked into. From the discussion, it is suggested that the theory remains relevant to the current situation more in terms of practising its principles than applying it as a whole as it was viewed in the past. The principles and concept of the theory could be employed with modifications, according to current circumstances.

This research concludes that the Malay Muslim community in general is held to be in a moderately good state, apart from the social control and political aspects of society. However, from the point of view of the Malaysian academicians, most aspects of the community in general are unsatisfactory. In other words, what the respondents meant by 'average' in the areas of religious affairs, the economy, education and integration was that society was not doing badly but was still far from excellent and had much room for improvement. Hence, the crucial and critical social and political aspects of community life require further action and more suggestions of ways to overcome their problems.

Thus, the factors in and causes of the problems have to be considered, in order to tackle their challenges. In terms of the economy and social control, reducing the economic and social gaps within this community would allow its economic wealth and comfort to be shared by all its members. To encourage more Malays to take an interest in and learn more about entrepreneurship and business would help to raise their achievement and perhaps to gain more economic control of the area. The system of education could be enhanced by more emphasis on religious matters, mainly Islamic education, not just through teaching but also through understanding and practising the doctrines. This should be a matter not only for schools and other educational institutions, but should begin at home where a family can provide sufficient religious teaching for its children. In educational and academic areas, instilling and fostering a respect for knowledge among Malaysian children and students would also help to turn the community into a more knowledgeable, intellectual, informed and outstandingly well-taught one. The combination of physical and spiritual elements could thus establish it as a better community, with such economic and educational achievements as prosperity, political stability and a climate of safety and peace.

Regarding the applicability of the theory to the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia, this research suggests that the principles of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* could be relevantly introduced and practiced. If it were, it would encourage a sense of social cohesion within the community in overcoming or at least reducing its problems and facing its challenges, mainly in the areas of politics and integration. One of the essential steps in building the social cohesion (the positive sense of *'Asabiyah*) of the Malay Muslim

community is for its members to learn to accept each other's views, or 'agree to disagree', regardless of origin and background, political differences and perhaps religious understanding. Thus, this notion has to be built on the basis of justice and in accord with Islamic principles. Every opinion must be accepted as long as it does not contradict the principles of Islam. Furthermore, despite its current excessive focus on politics, the attention of the Malay Muslim community should be directed to other areas which could enhance community development, i.e., religion, education, the economy, social welfare, etc. To do so could help to reduce the problems faced by a community in which the natural sense of social bond or *'Aşabiyyah* is strengthened.

7.2 RECOMMENDATION OF THE RESEARCH

As a result of this research, several recommendations might be made for further research in the same area:

1. Further studies regarding the low achievement of Malay Muslims in comparison to that of other races in some of the main aspects of life, i.e., education, politics, economy, social control, etc. would be interesting to pursue, perhaps as studies in the social sciences from the Islamic standpoint. This suggestion in fact came from Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty during his interview for the present study, when the

question arose why the Malays are inferior in all areas to the Chinese and Indians in the country.

2. A similar research subject could be chosen but viewed from a different perspective which required fieldwork of its own. It is suggested that the respondents in this case could be chosen from the country's professionals, or perhaps from professionals who are studying part-time in related subjects or areas. As a mature group, they might be difficult to interview and might require longer interview sessions, for example, but their views on the issues addressed would be worthwhile and they might take a wider view and an enhanced perspective of the issues.
3. The study of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah* in a modern context could be expanded and could concentrate on its applicability to modern government practices, for example in Malaysia. Such research might consider the present Malaysian government led by UMNO, its establishment, current situation and the signals of its decline, or state governments led by opposition parties, such as the PAS in Kelantan; or Muslim governments throughout the world, e.g., Egypt, Tunisia, Brunei, etc.
4. Further studies on possibilities of mutual understanding, on how people 'agree to disagree' and accept other opinions with respect, specifically between the main Malay

political parties in Malaysia could be conducted, with the purpose of finding common or similar features between them that might enhance and develop the community in its progress and further improvement.

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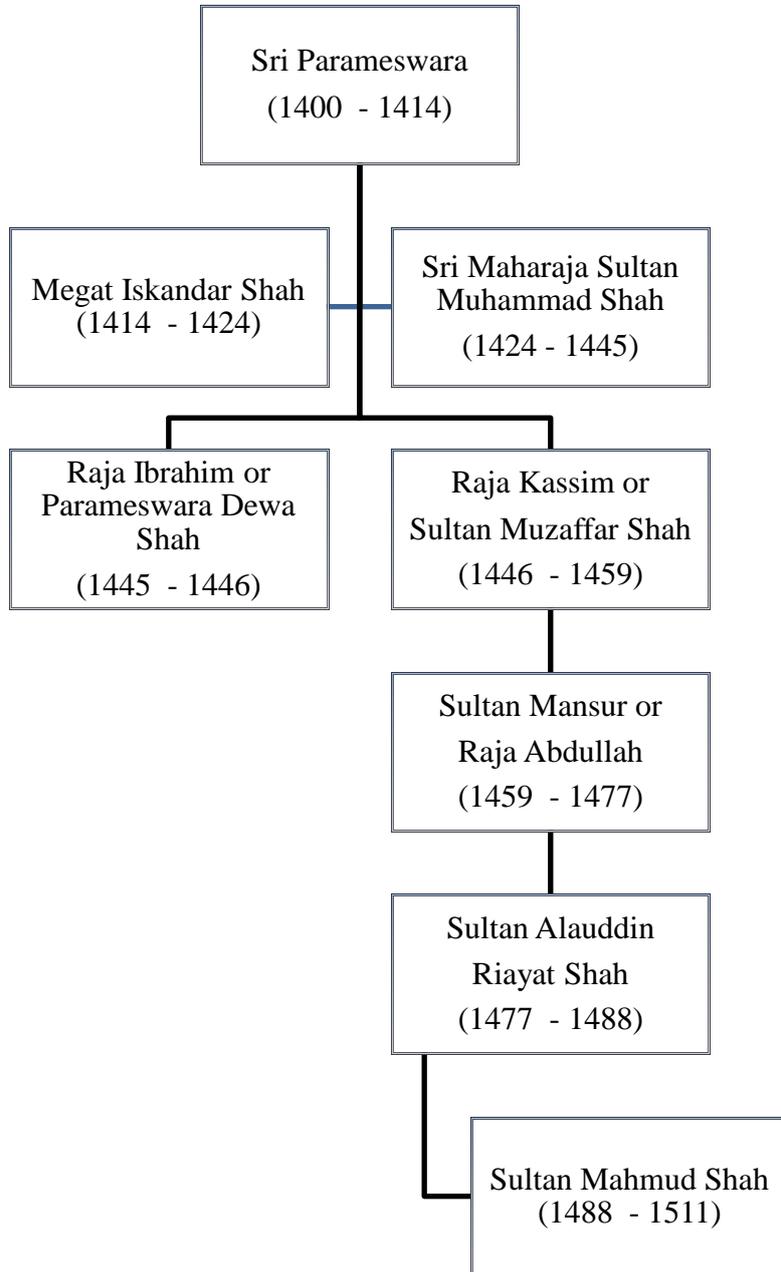
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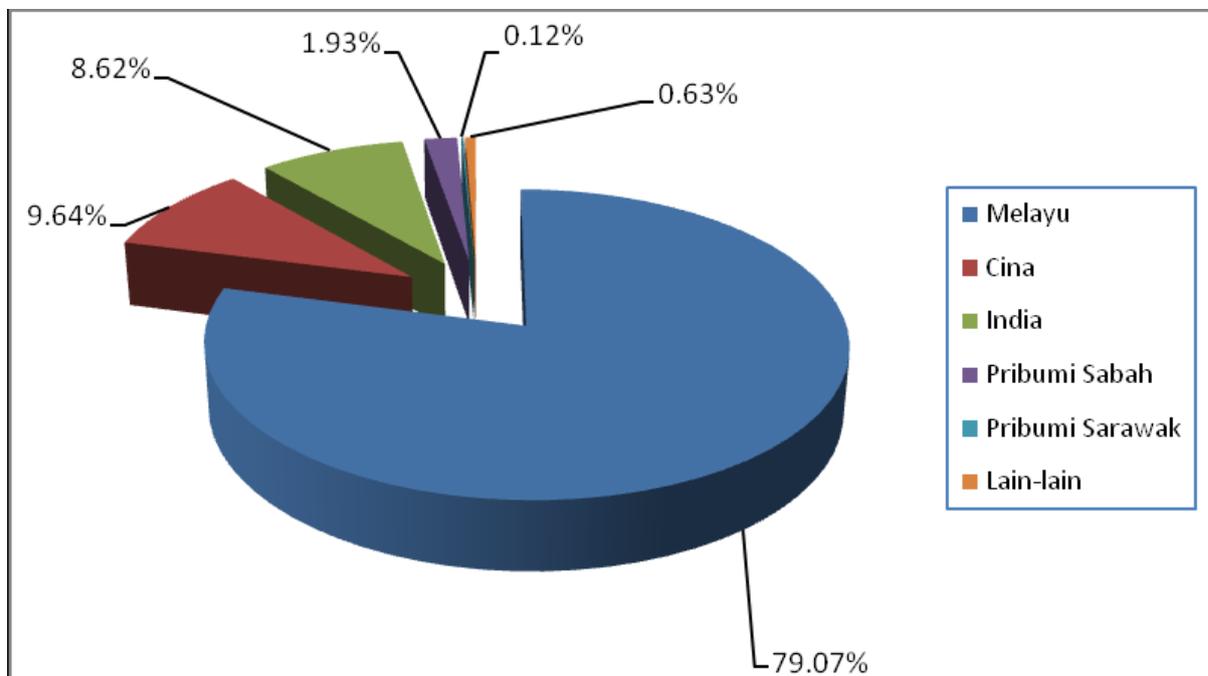
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Source: Ibrahim Abu Bakar, "Malaysian Perceptions Of China",
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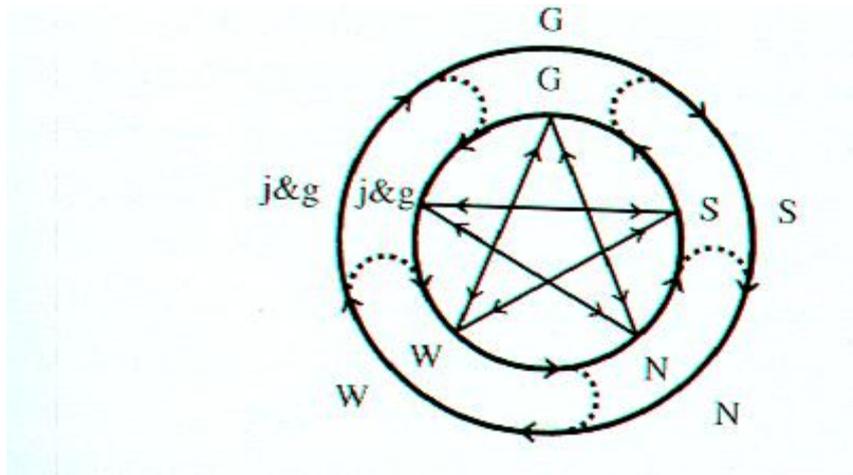
Drug Addicts Comparison by Ethnic for January-December 2010

ETHNIC	JAN – DEC 2010	%	JAN – DEC 2009	DIFFERENCES 2010/2009
Malays	18,693	79.07%	13,705	36.40%
Chinese	2,279	9.64%	951	139.64%
Indian	2,037	8.62%	942	116.24%
Indigenous Sabah	456	1.93%	56	714.29%
Indigenous Sarawak	29	0.12%	23	26.09%
Other	148	0.63%	55	169.09%
Foreigners	0	0.00%	4	-100.00%
Total	23,642	100.00%	15,736	50.24%

Fraction of Drug Addicts According to the ethnic for Januari-December 2010



Source : Agensi AntiDadah Kebangsaan Kementerian Dalam Negeri (National Anti-drug Agency, Ministry of Home Affairs), *Laporan Dadah Disember 2010*



Keynotes :

G : sovereign/political authority

S : the Shariah

N : people

W : wealth or stock of resources

g : development

j : justice

Diagram of Khaldūnian's theory developed by M. Umer Chapra

Source : M. Umer Chapra, 'Socioeconomic and Political Dynamic in Ibn Khaldūn's Thought', *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol. 16, No.4, Winter 1999

Biographical Details of Interviewed Scholars

Associate Professor Muhammad Nur Manutty

Muhammad Nur Manutty currently is a Senior Academic Fellow at Academy of Islam at Selangor International Islamic University College (Kolej Universiti Antarabangsa Islam Selangor or KUIS) in Bandar Sri Putra from 2009. He is married, with five children; his academic career began in 1974. At the time, he was attached to the National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia or UKM), where he worked until 1983. Next, he was appointed to a lectureship at the Centre of Fundamental Knowledge, International Islamic University of Malaysia, which is based in Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Later, he worked in the Department of Usuluddin and Comparative Religion. However in 1999, he resigned from his job to enter politics and has become one of the founders to the National Justice Party, which was launched in Kuala Lumpur on 4th April 1999.⁸⁴⁹ During his political involvement, he was an Islamic education consultant to the Muslim Convert Association of Singapore from 2000 until 2009.

Manutty is also actively involved in social activities. He was the General Secretary of Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar Islam Malaysia (PKPIM) from 1970-1973, which was his initial participation in Islamic activism. Later, in July 1971, he joined the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia: ABIM). There, he held several posts, including Assistant to the General Secretary of the society, Head of Education, Head of the Welfare Bureau, Vice-President for International Affairs and President of ABIM from 1991-1997. In 2009, Manutty was appointed the Deputy President of Wadah Percerdasan Umat, Malaysia, which is an off-shoot of the ABIM senior members' medium, formed around 2005.⁸⁵⁰

⁸⁴⁹ Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Nur Manutty, interviewed for the research at Selangor International Islamic University College or Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor (KUIS), Kajang, Selangor on August 28, 2009.

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid

Associate Professor Syed Farid Alatas

Alatas is a Malaysia national, who is currently the Head of the Department of Malay Studies at the National University of Singapore. Al-Attas gained most of his university education in the United States, where he took a bachelor's degree in Economics, followed by a Master's and PhD in Sociology at Johns Hopkins University in the United States. Before working in Singapore, he taught at the University of Malaya for three years. His areas of interest are in the numbers aspect of the study of Islam, concentrating on the study of Muslim reform ideologies, as well as the sociology or historical sociology of Islam, where his interest in Ibn Khaldun developed. In other words, he is interested in constructing and developing a theoretical framework which is consistent with Ibn Khaldun's work. Alatas is also working on the philosophy and sociology of social science, examining on such issues as orientalism and eurocentrism and suggesting critical alternatives which can be developed in non-Western societies, in Asia in particular.⁸⁵¹ In this field, he has numerous publications, such as *Democracy and Authoritarianism in Indonesia and Malaysia: The Rise of the Post-Colonial State* (1997), *Alternative Discourse in Asian Social Science: Responses to Eurocentrism* (2006)⁸⁵² and *Ibn Khaldun* (2012). He is the editor of *Asian Inter-Faith Dialogue: Perspective on Religion, Education and Social Cohesion* (2003) and co-editor of *Asian Anthropology* (2005).

Apart from academic questions, Alatas is also actively involved in Muslim-Christian relations and dialogue, by initiating interfaith events and inter-religious and inter-civilization seminars, forums and dialogues, hosted in particular in Malaysia and Singapore and bringing together Muslims and Christians, including the theological thinkers of both religions.⁸⁵³

Associate Professor Abdullahil Ahsan

Born in East Pakistan, he left the country to continue his studies during his late teens, in the early 1950s when East Pakistan was divided from Pakistan and became Bangladesh. He pursued his undergraduate studies in East Pakistan and Pakistan and went on to graduate study at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, where he obtained his Master's degree and the

⁸⁵¹ Associate Professor Syed Farid Alatas, interviewed for the research at National University of Singapore, Singapore on September 7, 2009.

⁸⁵² Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore, see <http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/soc/faculty/sfalatas.html>, (accessed December 1, 2012)

⁸⁵³ Associate Professor Syed Farid Alatas, interviewed for the research at National University of Singapore, Singapore on September 7, 2009.

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA, where he wrote his doctoral thesis.⁸⁵⁴ He has wide experience of working in different places, having worked in the US until 1988 after finishing his graduate study. Later, from 1998 to 1999, he worked at the International Islamic University in Pakistan. He has worked in Malaysia since 1999 and currently holds a professorship at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and the Institute for International Islamic Thought and Civilization.⁸⁵⁵ Ahsan has written a number of articles on the relationship between contemporary Islamic and Western civilizations, including *The Organization of the Islamic Conference: Introduction to an Islamic Political Institution* (1998) and *Ummah or Nation: Identity Crisis in Contemporary Muslim Society* (1992). He has also, with Stephen B. Young, published a book, entitled *Guidance for Good Governance: Explorations in Qur'anic, Scientific and Cross-cultural Approaches* (June 2008). Many of his writing (both books and articles) have been translated into Arabic, Bengali, Bosnian, Turkish and Urdu.⁸⁵⁶ At present, he is working on *Muslim Nations in Contemporary History* and *The Rise and Fall of Civilizations*.⁸⁵⁷

Tan Sri Professor Mohammad Kamal Hassan

Kamal Hassan is a Professor at the Department of Usuluddin and Comparative Religion, Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM). He began his career as Deputy Rector for Academic Affairs at the same university (1990-1997). Later, he was appointed at Georgetown University to the Chair in Islam in Southeast Asia, and worked for two years (1997-1998). In 1999 he became Rector of IIUM, where he remained until 2006.⁸⁵⁸ Currently, apart from being a Professor at IIUM, Kamal Hassan also serves at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC).⁸⁵⁹

Regarding his educational background, he is a graduate student of the University of Malaya in Islamic Studies (1965/66). He was awarded a full scholarship to study at Columbia University in New York for degrees as Master in Arts, MPhil and PhD, from 1968 until 1975. Apart from the United States, his research has also been carried out in Indonesia – the subject of his PhD thesis was the Muslim intellectual responses to the modernization policy in the new order introduced by Suharto. Hence, one of his areas of interest is Islamic thought in the Malay

⁸⁵⁴ Abdullah Al-Ahsan Vice-President, International Movement for A JUST World, see http://www.just-international.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3361&Itemid=140 (accessed November 30, 2012)

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid

⁸⁵⁸ Professor Mohd. Kamal Hassan, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 5, 2009.

⁸⁵⁹ Keynote Speakers, International Conference on Islam in Asia and Oceania: Historical, Cultural and Global Perspectives, see <http://www.iaao2012.com/keynote-speaker/> (accessed November 30, 2012)

world, specifically in Indonesia.⁸⁶⁰ Apart from teaching, he has contributed many publications, largely on philosophy, religion, social issues and education, including *The Encyclopedia of Malaysia: Religions and Beliefs*, *Islamic Identity Crises in the Muslim Community in Contemporary Malaysia*, *Islamic Studies in Contemporary Southeast Asia: General Observations* and *Al-Islam fi 'alam Al-Malaysia*.⁸⁶¹

Ustaz (Dr) Uthman El-Muhammady

El-Muhammady is a religious specialist, who is expert in three languages, i.e. Arabic, Malay and English. Born in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, in February 1943, he received his early education in Malay and religious subjects and was awarded bachelor and Master's degrees in Islamic Studies from the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. He then became a lecturer at the Department of Islamic Studies at the same university, where he worked until 1973.⁸⁶² He then returned to Kelantan to become a full-time writer and dā'iyy. In 1995, he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters (DLitt) by the University of Science, Malaysia, in appreciation and acknowledgment of his contribution to da'wah activities and literary involvement in Islamic Thought. In the same year, he was also appointed as Distinguished Fellow of the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia or IKIM).⁸⁶³ Currently, he is the Distinguished Academic Fellow at the Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC).⁸⁶⁴

His main interest is in the area of Islamic thought and science in relation to contemporary life and culture.⁸⁶⁵ With his academic interests, he has written and presented a number of papers by him, either at local or international conferences.⁸⁶⁶ Among his publications are *'Peradaban dalam Islam' (Civilization within Islam)* (1976), *'Memahami Islam (Understanding Islam)* (1997) and *'Fathul-Mu'in: Terjemahan dan Huraian Maksud*, a Malay translation of an Arabic fiqh text.⁸⁶⁷ Furthermore, he is also involved actively in social organisations, including

⁸⁶⁰ Professor Mohd. Kamal Hassan, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 5, 2009.

⁸⁶¹ Keynote Speakers, International Conference on Islam in Asia and Oceania: Historical, Cultural and Global Perspectives, see <http://www.iiiao2012.com/keynote-speaker/> (accessed November 30, 2012)

⁸⁶² 'Muhammad 'Uthman El-Muhammady A Brief Biodata' *Traditional Islam*, see http://traditionalislam.tripod.com/BriefBiodata_UstazUthman.htm (accessed December 3, 2012)

⁸⁶³ Ibid

⁸⁶⁴ Ustaz (Dr) Muhammad Uthman El-Muhammady, interviewed for the research at International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Kuala Lumpur on October 6, 2009.

⁸⁶⁵ 'Muhammad 'Uthman El-Muhammady A Brief Biodata' *Traditional Islam*, see http://traditionalislam.tripod.com/BriefBiodata_UstazUthman.htm (accessed December 3, 2012)

⁸⁶⁶ Ibid

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid

membership of the Committee of Trusteeship for Yayasan Karyawan of Malaysia and of the Editorial Board of 'Pengasuh', a monthly magazine published by the Islamic Religious Council of Kelantan (Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan or MAIK).⁸⁶⁸

Dr Yusri Mohammad

Yusri Mohammad is a lecturer in Islamic Law at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), with particular interest in the areas of Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic Constitutional Law and Governance Human Rights, among others.⁸⁶⁹ His dedication to academic pursuits does not stop him being actively involved in civil society and non-government organizations (NGOs). He was appointed President of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM) of which he had been a member for nearly 20 years. Moreover, he also participates in numbers of Muslim non-governmental coalitions, such as the Perikatan Belia Bersatu Malaysia (PEMBELA) and the Malaysian Youth Council, as well as several government consultative committees, such as Majlis Perundingan Islam.⁸⁷⁰

Dr Chandra Muzaffar

Dr Chandra Muzaffar is a distinguished scholar and dynamic social activist. At present, he is President of the International Movement for a Just World (JUST), a non-government organization established in Malaysia. He has also initiated a multi-ethnic social reform group known as the Aliran Kesedaran Negara (ALIRAN), which he has led for nearly 14 years.⁸⁷¹ Being actively involved in social activities, he joined the board of various international non-government organizations promoting civil dialogue and social justice. In addition, he is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Yayasan 1Malaysia, a newly established association initiated by the present Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak.⁸⁷² In the academic area, Muzaffar holds the appointment of Noordin Sopiee Professor of Global Studies at the Centre for Policy Research and International Studies, University of Science, Malaysia (University Sains Malaysia: USM).

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid

⁸⁶⁹ Dr. Yusri Mohamad, interviewed for the research at the International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, Selangor on August 4, 2009

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid

⁸⁷¹ For a profile of Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, International Movement for A JUST World, see http://www.just-international.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3366&Itemid=140 (accessed November 29, 2012)

⁸⁷² Ibid

As an active and committed academician, he has numerous publications on civil dialogue, international politics, Malaysian society, religion and human rights to his credit. Among his major publications are *Protector* (1979), *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia* (1987), *Human Rights and the New World Order* (1993), *Global Ethics or Global Hegemony* (2005), *Hegemony: Justice; Peace* (2008) and *Religion and Governance* (2009).⁸⁷³

Prof Azizan Baharuddin

Azizan Baharuddin is a distinguished academician from the University of Malaya and activist in social affairs. Recently, she was appointed Director for the Centre for Civilizational Dialogue and Professor in the Department of Science and Technology Studies, Faculty of Science, at the University of Malaya.⁸⁷⁴ She obtained her Bachelor's degree in Science from the University of Tasmania, Australia in 1978.⁸⁷⁵ In 1979, she obtained her Master of Science degree in the History and Philosophy of Science from University College London and her subsequent PhD in the Philosophy of Science: Science and Religion from the University of Lancaster, United Kingdom in 1989.⁸⁷⁶

Her fields of interest mainly concern interfaith dialogue, dialogue and studies on civilization, religion, science and society, bioethics, environmental ethics and science, religion and development.⁸⁷⁷ In these fields she has published many books and articles, such as *Dialogue of Civilizations and the Construction of Peace* (2007), *Science and Religion: An Islamic Perspective* (2007), *Inter-Religious Dialogue in Malaysia* (2005) and *Islam and Ecology* (2003).⁸⁷⁸

As a social activist, she has been appointed member or advisor of several professional organizations, including Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Islamic Understanding (Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia atau IKIM) (2005 to 2006), member of YADEIM's Nahdatul Ulama Intelektual Muslim (2004) and member of the Committee for Racial Integration, Department of National Unity and Integrity and many more.

⁸⁷³ Ibid

⁸⁷⁴ Professor Dr. Azizan Baharuddin, Curriculum Vitae.

⁸⁷⁵ Ibid

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid

⁸⁷⁸ Ibid

Associate Professor Dr Zaid Ahmad

Zaid Ahmad is an Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Government and Civilization Studies, Faculty of Human Ecology, University Putra, Malaysia. A graduate of the National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia or UKM), he pursued his Master's and PhD studies in Manchester, in the UK. Zaid Ahmad is an expert in the area of philosophy and civilization studies.⁸⁷⁹ Thus, his various research interests include issues of Islamic thought and civilization, Muslim history and society, globalization and contemporary civilization, the epistemology and philosophy of history, culture and change in contemporary civilization.⁸⁸⁰

He has written and published numbers of books and articles on his research interests, including work on Ibn Khaldun. Among his publication are, *The Epistemology of Ibn Khaldun* (2003), *Inter-Ethnic Relation in Malaysia: Selected Reading* (2006), with Jayum A. Jawan, "Ibn Khaldun's Approach in Civilizational Studies" in *Studies of Ibn Khaldun* (2005) and "Ibn Khaldun" in *Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy* (2006).

⁸⁷⁹ Jabatan Pengajian Kenegaraan dan Ketamadunan (Department of Government and Civilization Studies), University of Putra Malaysia (UPM), see <http://www.eco1.upm.edu.my/web%20pensyarah-bi/zaid.html> (accessed November 21, 2012)

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid.

Respondent's Number	
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PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

The aim of this questionnaire is to study the respondents' perceptions of the current Malay Muslim community in Malaysia and its relationship with Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *'Aṣabiyyah*

**For
Office
Use
Only**

SECTION A: The background of respondent

Please tick in the appropriate boxes or specify your answers in the blank spaces below

1. Gender	1. Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	2. Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	

[] 1

2. Marital status	1. Single	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	2. Married	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	3. Widow	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	4. Widower	<input type="checkbox"/>	

[] 2

3. Age	1. 20 and below	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	2. 21-30	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	3. 31-40	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	4. 41-50	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	5. 51-60	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	6. 61 and above	<input type="checkbox"/>	

[] 3

4. Ethnic origin	1. Malay	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	2. Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	3. India	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	4. Or please specify:	<input type="checkbox"/>	

[] 4

5. Religion	1. Islam	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	2. Buddhism	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	3. Hinduism	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	4. Christianity	<input type="checkbox"/>	

[] 5

6. Home address

7. State of origin

1. Kelantan
2. Terengganu
3. Pahang
4. Selangor
5. Melaka
6. Negeri Sembilan
7. Johor
8. Perak
9. Kedah
10. Pulau Pinang
11. Perlis
12. Sabah
13. Sarawak
14. WP Kuala Lumpur
15. WP Putrajaya
16. WP Labuan

[] 6

8. Background of education

1. No formal education
2. Primary school
3. SRP / PMR
4. SPM
5. Certificate
6. Diploma
7. Bachelor
8. Master
9. PhD
10. Or please specify:

[] 7

9. Occupation

1. Student
2. Lecturer
3. Tutor
4. Administrator
5. Clerk
6. Or please specify:

[] 8

Section B: Respondent's knowledge of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of 'Aṣabiyyah

Please circle only ONE of the numbers below according to the specified scale:
Example: ①

SCALE FOR THIS SECTION

- 3. Yes
- 2. No
- 1. Not sure

1. Do you know the meaning/definition of 'Aṣabiyyah?

3	2	1
3	2	1
3	2	1

2. Do you think the concept of 'Aṣabiyyah is opposed to the concept of brotherhood in Islam?

3. Do you know who Ibn Khaldūn is?

[] 9

[] 10

[] 11

Section C: Respondent's perception of the present Malay Muslim community in Malaysia

Please circle only ONE of the numbers below according to the specified scale:
Example: ⑤

SCALE FOR THIS SECTION

- 5. Very Good
- 4. Good
- 3. Average
- 2. Not Good
- 1. Not at all Good

1. What are your views/perceptions regarding the current Malay Muslim community in Malaysia, in terms of

- 1. economic achievement?
- 2. political achievement?
- 3. academic achievement?
- 4. intellectuality?
- 5. understanding of Islamic teachings?
- 6. fully practising Islamic teachings?
- 7. morality and behaviour?
- 8. controlling social problems?
- 9. controlling entertainment?
- 10. controlling the crime rate?
- 11. the spirit of mutual help?
- 12. strength of unity and solidarity?
- 13. the sensitivity of the surrounding community?
- 14. level response to current issues?

5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1

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- [] 20
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- [] 22
- [] 23
- [] 24
- [] 25

2. In your opinion, what are the main problems faced by the current Malay Muslim community in Malaysia?
Please write your answer in the space below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. In your opinion, what are the main causes/factors of the problems mentioned above?
Please answers below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. What is your vision of the Malaysia Muslim community in Malaysia in the future?
Please write your answer in the space below

Are you interested in being interviewed for this research?

Yes
No

If yes, please fill in your details below so that the researcher can contact you.

Name : _____
Faculty : _____
Year of study : _____
Contact number : _____
Email address : _____

Thank you for your cooperation, which is highly appreciated.

Asyiqin Ab Halim

Postgraduate Student,

Department of Theology and Religion,

The University of Birmingham, UK

SLAB/SLAI Felo,

Department of Islamic History and Civilization,

Academy of Islamic Studies,

The University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur

019-9107799

mamirhamzah@yahoo.com

Nombor Responden	
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SILA JAWAB SEMUA SOALAN

Objektif soal-selidik ini ialah mengkaji pandangan responden terhadap masyarakat Melayu Muslim di Malaysia dan perkaitannya dengan teori '*Aṣabiyyah*' yang diperkenalkan oleh Ibn Khaldūn

BAHAGIAN A: Latarbelakang responden

Sila tanda ✓ pada kotak atau nyatakan jawapan anda pada ruang yang disediakan.

		Kegunaan Pejabat Sahaja
1. Jantina	1. Lelaki 2. Perempuan	[] 1
2. Status perkahwinan	1. Bujang 2. Berkahwin 3. Janda 4. Duda	[] 2
3. Umur	1. 20 tahun ke bawah 2. 21-30 3. 31-40 4. 41-50 5. 51-60 6. 61 ke atas	[] 3
4. Bangsa	1. Melayu 2. Cina 3. India 4. Lain-lain, sila nyatakan _____	[] 4
5. Agama	1. Islam 2. Buddha 3. Hindu 4. Kristian 5. Lain-lain, sila nyatakan _____	[] 5

6. Alamat rumah

7. Negeri kelahiran

1. Kelantan
2. Terengganu
3. Pahang
4. Selangor
5. Melaka
6. Negeri Sembilan
7. Johor
8. Perak
9. Kedah
10. Pulau Pinang
11. Perlis
12. Sabah
13. Sarawak
14. WP Kuala Lumpur
15. WP Putrajaya
16. WP Labuan

[] 6

8. Latarbelakang pendidikan

1. Tiada pendidikan formal
2. Sekolah rendah
3. SRP / PMR
4. SPM
5. Sijil
6. Diploma
7. Ijazah Sarjana Muda
8. Sarjana /Master
9. Doktor Falsafah/ PhD
10. Lain-lain, sila nyatakan

[] 7

9. Pekerjaan

1. Pelajar
2. Pensyarah
3. Tutor
4. Pegawai tadbir
5. Kerani
6. Lain-lain, sila nyata

[] 8

Bahagian B: Pengetahuan responden terhadap teori 'Aṣabiyyah' oleh Ibn Khaldūn.

Sila bulatkan SATU SAHAJA pada nombor yang sesuai berdasarkan skala di bawah
Contoh : ①

SKALA JAWAPAN BAHAGIAN INI

- 3. Ya
- 2. Tidak
- 1. Tidak Pasti

1. Adakah anda tahu pengertian istilah 'Aṣabiyyah'?

3	2	1
3	2	1
3	2	1

[] 9

2. Adakah anda berpendapat konsep 'Asabiyyah' bertentangan
Dengan konsep persaudaraan dalam Islam?

[] 10

3. Adakah anda tahu siapakah Ibn Khaldūn?

[] 11

Bahagian C: Pandangan terhadap masyarakat Malayu Muslim di Malaysia

Sila bulatkan SATU SAHAJA pada nombor yang sesuai berdasarkan skala di bawah
Contoh : ⑤

SKALA JAWAPAN BAHAGIAN INI

- 5. Sangat Baik
- 4. Baik
- 3. Sederhana
- 2. Kurang Baik
- 1. Sangat Kurang Baik

1. Apakah pandangan anda terhadap masyarakat Melayu Muslim di Malaysia masakini dari sudut?

1. pencapaian ekonomi?
2. pencapaian dari sudut politik?
3. pencapaian akademik?
4. tahap keintelektualan?
5. tahap pemahaman ajaran Islam?
6. tahap mengamalkan ajaran Islam sepenuhnya?
7. tahap akhlak dan tingkah-laku?
8. tahap kawalan masalah-masalah sosial?
9. tahap kawalan dari sudut hiburan?
10. tahap kawalan kadar jenayah?
11. tahap semangat bantu-membantu?
12. tahap kekuatan penyatuan dan setiakwan?
13. tahap sensitiviti terhadap masyarakat sekeliling?
14. tahap kepekaan terhadap isu semasa?

5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
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2. Pada pandangan anda, apakah masalah-masalah utama yang dihadapi oleh masyarakat Melayu Muslim di Malaysia pada hari ini? Sila senaraikan jawapan anda di bawah.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. Pada pandangan anda, apakah faktor-faktor utama kepada masalah yang dinyatakan di atas? Sila senaraikan jawapan anda di bawah.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. Apakah harapan anda terhadap masyarakat Melayu Muslim di Malaysia pada masa hadapan? Sila senaraikan jawapan anda di bawah.

Adakah anda berminat untuk ditemuramah berkaitan kajian ini?

Ya

Tidak

Jika ya, sila isikan maklumat anda di bawah untuk dihubungi oleh penyelidik,

Nama : _____

Fakulti : _____

Tahun Pengajian : _____

No. Perhubungan : _____

Alamat email : _____

Terima kasih di atas kerjasama yang diberikan dan amatlah dihargai.

Asyiqin Ab Halim

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