

## **Religion, civil society and good governance: The ‘pertubuhan jamaah Islah Malaysia’ (JIM) experience**

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**Abstract :** The ‘good governance’ agenda promoted by international institutions and other aid agencies as part of the globalisation phenomenon proposes, amongst others, the active role of civil society in the political process. Effective functioning of civil society is believed to be essential for “good” governance. Currently, the dynamism of global civil society movements has shifted to a new dimension to incorporate culture and faiths into the discourse on development, economy, politics and governance in a more progressive approach. In tandem, faith and religion, have been identified empirically as another motivators for civil society activism, hence its distinctive role in development and good governance. Such phenomenon has been addressed in the many circles of academia. This paper explores the role of faith in mobilizing civil society towards the achievement of what is known as “good governance” in Malaysia with Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM) as a case study.

**Keywords:** Good Governance, Civil Society, Faith Based Organisation, Refomasi, Anwar Ibrahim, Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia.

### **Introduction**

Good governance is made up of complex relationships between both private and public sector along with civil society, with the equilibrium power amongst them to maintain the practise of sustainable democracy.<sup>1</sup> Civil society organisations have long been recognized worldwide as providers of relief and promoter of human rights. Likewise, they have also been widely recognized as essential “third” sector actors and widely seen as critical contributors to economic growth and the civic and social infrastructure essential for a minimum quality of life for the people.<sup>2</sup> Currently, civil society movements are acting as important agents for promoting good governance like transparency, effectiveness, openness, responsiveness and accountability.

In recent years, the contribution of domestic and global (international) civil society organizations, especially nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), towards the process of development has expanded rampantly as the result of globalisation and ICT revolution.<sup>3</sup> With this growth come new and larger expectations for the contributions these organizations might

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make to governance. Such global development inspired the participants of the “Sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government” to reach the consensus about the significant role of civil society in the new paradigm of governance.<sup>4</sup>

Conversely, due to the global resurgence of religion and its encroachment into the public sphere, a new trend of incorporating culture, faith and tradition into the discourse of development, economy, politics and governance in a more progressive dimension has become an emerging fad. As a result, religious devotion has become a fundamental motive for many social movements across the globe. Religious actors and institutions in such a situation act as agents of advocacy, funding, innovation, empowerment, social movements, and service delivery, which ultimately contributes to the development of socio-economic, as well the political life of a nation. This recent trend has inspired *Global Civil Society Report* to point out the essentials of incorporating transcendental dimension into any current analysis on social development.<sup>5</sup>

Based on such rationale, the experience of *Pertubuhan Jamaah Islam Malaysia* (JIM) as part of many other religion-based civil society organisations will be empirically studied in this article. As part of the product of the 1970s global Islamic revivalism phenomenon, JIM initially emerged as an Islamic movement in Malaysia with certain idealism. But it was later turned into a civil society movement responding to the local context and needs. All the way through nearly two decades since it was established, the organisation has been contributing to the process of what is known as “good governance” through its activities. Similarly, JIM’s dynamism has been subtly resulting in empowering citizens, building the third sector institutions, participating in the political process of accountability, and demanding for the rule of law. This paper will attempt to explain how religion could contribute to good governance through the framework of civil society. Furthermore, it will descriptively examine the role JIM as an Islamic civil society organisation and how it has been acting as a constructive element in nation building and in enhancing the goal of good governance.

### **Civil society and good governance**

Civil society in its mundane definition can be understood as a sphere that is separate from the state and the market and formed by people who have common needs, interests and values.<sup>6</sup> It can be defined too as a civic space that occupies the middle ground between government and private sectors. In essence, it is a vacuum where people engage neither in government activities nor in commerce. Lehning points that this ‘civic space’ lets people exist as public beings, hence “it shares with government a sense of the public sphere and a regard for the general good and the common wealth, but unlike government it makes no claims to exercise a monopoly on legitimate coercion. Rather, it is a voluntary realm devoted to public goods. It is constituted by freely associated individuals and groups and, unlike the private sector, it aims at finding a common ground and integrative and collaborative modes of action”.<sup>7</sup>

It is this civil domain to which traditional civic institutions such as foundations, schools, churches, public-interest organisations and other voluntary associations properly belong. UNDP identifies civil society realm as a space defined by the activities such as attending

church, mosque or synagogue, doing community service, contributing to a charity, or being a member of a sports club.<sup>8</sup> Equally, it could be defined as a sphere of voluntary associations that serve as social spaces in which the members of the association reinforce their social webs and articulate their (moral) relationships. However, a renewed interest in civil society emerged during the 1990s, which pushed the civil society connotation as a new emerging trend towards democracy.<sup>9</sup> This new phenomenon opens up a new space for civil society as a result of the need to fill in the increasing gaps in social services created by structural adjustment and other reforms in developing countries.<sup>10</sup>

In sum, civil society is a term that refers to the arena of un-coerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil societies are mainly populated by organizations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups".<sup>11</sup>

Within such notion and framework, civil society organisations are viewed as a potential factor to enhance the process of good governance by various methods. As pressure groups, they can play their role in policy analysis and advocacy; as watchdog groups, they can have a large role in monitoring state performance and the action and behaviour of public officials; as social change agents, they can have a large portion in moulding the society by building social capital and enabling citizens to identify and articulate their values, beliefs, civic norms and democratic practices; and as political agents they can bring changes to the political atmosphere through the mobilisation of particular constituencies, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized sections of masses, to participate more fully in politics and public affairs; and as third sector industries, they can participate in stimulating development effort by improving the wellbeing of community members.<sup>12</sup>

Accordingly, Edwards and Foley outline three major roles of civil society in the process of governance: providing services, holding the government and market accountable by representing or advocating for citizens, and building the capacity of citizens to participate in the realm of governance.<sup>13</sup> Such idea clearly implies the need of minimal state, as being part of the philosophy of the 'Good Governance' agenda.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, the Accountability,<sup>15</sup> a UK-based international non-profit organisation in their report *Development as Accountability* proposes four major action plans for the civil society organisations and networks in enhancing their active role in development and governance: To act as the advocates of accountability and transparency; to act as independent experts in analysing public-private partnerships for service provision and infrastructure; to act as partners in development projects; and finally to act as watchdogs undertaking assessment and benchmarking exercises on how different development actors, including government, business and international agencies, support or inhibit accountability.

Within the framework of the aforesaid role of civil society, religious societies as part of the larger picture of civil society should be perceived as an important element for the governance process. This nevertheless is not an easy task, since the public sphere has been regarded as a no-go territory for religion due to the prevailing post-enlightenment secularist tendency and apathy towards religion. Such a premise should primarily be challenged to pave further discussion on the topic. In regard to such a position, Casanova presents a sociological approach in proposing the concept of *deprivatisation* of religion to understand the way in which religion can find its existence and function in the secular world.<sup>16</sup> Casanova explains how secularisation (as one of the landmarks of modernity) still allows religion and faith to enter its public sphere realm as can be seen from the current global uprising of religions around the world.<sup>17</sup> As there is no monolithic way of explaining the nature of relation between secularisation and religion, he insists that this new phenomenon is not a continuation of the declining of the established *caesaro-papist* church that been rejected and declined after the final blow it received from the modernity project.

In the same way, secularisation as a process of differentiation between various spheres (economy, social, political, religious, etc.) and the social and scientific sphere progressively emancipated themselves from the prism of religious institutions and norms. This differentiation process leads to the *deprivatisation* of religion, whereas religion refuses to be relegated in the private sphere. While in tandem, its claims to enter the public sphere left to it by the process of differentiation, which is civil society, to redefine the very boundaries of the differentiated spheres. Thus, civil society has been a field where the *deprivatisation* of religion finds its way to escape from mere private territories into the supposedly 'secular' realm. Through its new space, religious institutions and organisations pose its repudiation to the status-quo of positivism by bringing the interconnection of private and public morality, and by challenging the claims of moral spheres and renormativisation of the public economic and political spheres.<sup>18</sup>

From another sociological point of view, the *social norms* approach in the same token can also explain the consequence of religions as a set of values to social practices. The approach defines that values would be meaningless without shared social practices that will sustain them (i.e. solidarity, freedom, taxation, mutual co-operation, caring, etc.). Values as 'irreducibly social goods' inhere in numerous social relationships, such as family, trade unions, interest groups, religious communities, or by those bound by a common history or language. These social norms contribute a large degree of involvement to development through the ambit of civil society and social capital. This situation is supported by contemporary reality on how faith based or faith inspired organisations and movements vigorously utilise those milieus to articulate their ideals to facilitate good governance and development.

In the same manner, Talal Asad, an anthropologist, rejects the traditional anthropological perception of religion as mere symbols that resemble a system of meanings.<sup>19</sup> Religion, as he maintains, needs coercion, through law and power, to make individual act according to religious precepts; and it also presents social embodiment and constitutive activities of the world which implies the need for a set of practices to express the beliefs, as well as discipline

(by institutional structures) to enforce them and a community of believers in which this discipline is exercised and enjoy their allegiance and serve as a base of their identity. Due to the needs of social and public spaces to exercise religious beliefs, he concludes that religious world and the social world are inseparable, but continue to be interdependent mutually. Akin to the previous argument, the recent global return of religion into the public sphere exemplifies such an anthropological thesis.

To conclude, this new paradigm of how religion and governance can work together in theory and practice paves a different way to look at the alternative means to good governance agenda. Akin to the aforementioned examples on the contribution, religion could give to good governance agenda as part of the new global *fad du jour* through faith-based organisations from all over the world, similar results could be traced also from the involvement of faith-based organisations in Malaysia. In what follows, I will attempt a critical and descriptive assessment of *Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia* (JIM), as both an Islamic movement (faith-based organisation) and civil society frontier, and will evaluate its contribution towards the practice of good governance since the early days of its establishment. Besides its persuasion of attaining Islamic ideals to which its members adhere and which are the organisation's *raison d'être*, the means capitalised to achieve those goals contribute implicitly and explicitly to the crystallisation of good governance. This can be clearly seen from a brief explanation of the movement's discourse and activities in the subsequent sections of this essay.

### ***Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia* (JIM) and good governance**

Established on 27 July 1990, *Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia* (JIM) was the transformation of Muslim students *dakwah* (da'wah) movements mainly from the UK Malaysian Muslims' Islamic Representative Council (also known as IRC), USA Malaysian Islamic Study Group (also known as MISG) and also local universities *dakwah* activists.<sup>20</sup> As part of the 1970s global Islamic resurgence actors, the founders of the organisation were mainly receiving their tertiary education abroad and exposed to the ideology and vision of the two most influenced Islamic movements in the UK and the USA, the Egyptian based Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun* or also known as *Ikhwan*) and the South Asian based *Jamaat Islami*. It was from these two movements that JIM's founders were inspired to initially articulate their *dakwah* missions.<sup>21</sup>

The organisation's initial vision since its establishment was an extension of the Muslim Brotherhood ideal of establishing an Islamic State and implementing Islamic *Shari'ah* within the Malaysia context.<sup>22</sup> It saw that reform and change could only happen in a gradual process through the bottom-up process. This ideal exemplifies the adherence of the organisation to the principle of *Islah* (reform) process, which is to be accomplished through a comprehensive *tarbiyyah* (educational) approach within society.<sup>23</sup> This *Islah* method could be obviously seen throughout its pro-active organisation of educational-based activities since the very first day of operation.<sup>24</sup> With the emphasis on developing 'reformist individuals' (*musleh*), then turn to 'virtuous families' which later evolve to 'communities of the pious', JIM believes that the flow will contribute a lot to the ultimatum change of the state system at further level.<sup>25</sup> At this

stage, JIM adopts the *homeostasis* approach in uplifting Islam in Malaysia *via* maintaining and strengthening Islamic commitment among the Malay-Muslim leaders of the period.<sup>26</sup>

Throughout the phase, JIM has rigorously concentrated on internal development of the organisation as well as on the missionary and educational programs in outreaching society mostly amongst the middle class Muslim Malays. It was understood that at this period, Anwar Ibrahim who was then the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia had managed to convince JIM leaders to bring the organisation into the centre rather than isolating itself at peripheries.<sup>27</sup> The aforementioned diplomatic approach successfully created for JIM various rooms for the enhancement of their reform work amongst its members as well as the larger society. Nevertheless, at this level, the comprehensive human capital production within JIM's structure and activities, despite their missionary work, only operated in a semi-exclusive approach based on its motto "Community Building with Islam".<sup>28</sup>

According to such discursive, the production of reformist individuals by JIM only works within the radius of its internal mechanism. Consequently, from the political economic perspective, JIM represents an Islamic experiment in accumulating (religious) social capital, which is recently acknowledged as an important actor in good governance agenda for political and market efficiency at the micro level. In tandem, the major discourse that dominates the organisation during the period implies a tactical and gradual transition of paradigm from the alliterated emulation of traditional *ikhwani* political opposition approach towards a more contextual and state-friendly attitude in JIM's orientation.

In the same token, JIM has remained apolitical during the early years of establishment and maintained the *dakwah* and *tarbiyyah* (missionary and educational) image in establishing its mission and vision. JIM contribution to nation building was seen through its relentless effort of education and promoting virtues amongst the people.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, it was the 'Reformasi' (reformation) wave in the year 1998 that had awakened the organisation to move forward for further engagement.<sup>30</sup> *Reformasi* as a spontaneous reaction towards the sack of Anwar Ibrahim from his deputy premiership post by the former Prime Minister Mahathir Muhammad has created a new phase for JIM *dakwah* horizon. The mass dissatisfaction amongst people for the mistreatment to Anwar has pushed JIM members to the street with other political parties and civil movements demanding justice for Anwar after he was detained without trial.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, the *reformasi* groups also demanded more rights and freedom. During the *reformasi*, UMNO, the dominating component in the ruling party coalition (BN) was allegedly associated with corruption, nepotism and cronyism by the people. Mahathir himself, as accused by Anwar Ibrahim, was responsible implicitly and explicitly for such culture that later became the major *fad* of the party.<sup>32</sup>

The *reformasi* phenomenon led to a strategic paradigm shift by JIM as a movement. The organisation metamorphosed from a non-partisan organisation dealing mostly with evangelical style activities to a pro-active civil society that is involved directly in politics.<sup>33</sup> This turning point or what is famously uttered by its then president, Saari Sungip as the 'leap' (*lonjakan*) led its members to be more inclusive by actively participating directly in politics, thus locating itself within the map of Malaysian political life (Saari Sungip, 1998). Apart

from their demand for Mahathir, the then Prime Minister, to step down from his post, the *reformasi* groups also called for 'good governance' reform in the government, which was represented through their call for the real effort for the eradication of corruption in governance process, the abolishment of the detention without trial 'internal security act' (ISA) and the end of the cronyism, nepotism and patronage culture in the state administration.<sup>34</sup> At this stage, JIM believes that it must fully capitalise on the democratic structure and space in the country to fully pursue its *islah* agenda in a prescriptive and preventive way along with its agenda for nation development.<sup>35</sup>

Upon such discourse, JIM turned to wider engagement with the other parties with the same aspiration from the non-Islamists and non-Muslim organisations.<sup>36</sup> It started its official overture in political life with its affiliation with the coalition of civil society movements and opposition parties and demanded for a more democratic Malaysia, in a loose coalition called GERAK on 27 September 1998.<sup>37</sup> Since then, the organisation discourse has changed from mere focus on primordial issues relating to Islam to the political discourse of freedom, human rights, rule of law, accountability, good governance and civil society, which its leader believe to be rooted strongly in the foundation of justice propagated by Islam (Ibrahim, 2007). Accordingly, since the 1999 election to the latest 2008 election, several JIM members have actively participated in politics with the existing parties, namely PAS (Islamic Party) and PKR (National Justice Party).<sup>38</sup>

In the mean time, JIM or its members are actively involved in MAFREL as a watchdog for all the general and bi-elections in Malaysia.<sup>39</sup> In the same vein, JIM continues to promote political awareness amongst the people through their activities, participation in political lobby and campaign, press statements and the continuous educational process. As a political pressure group, JIM is relentlessly involved in the Abolish Internal Security Act (ISA) movement (GMI), where its vice president, Syed Ibrahim al-Habshi has been the movement chairperson hitherto.<sup>40</sup> The movement managed to spread awareness amongst people of how the draconian act became a tool of the executive power to curb people's freedom and its implication to the people's right as a whole. This, however, does not prevent JIM from maintaining its initial identity as a dakwah organisation that lives on with the *islah* endeavour through its *dakwah* and *tarbiyyah* activities.<sup>41</sup>

However, in the year 2004, under its new president, Zaid Kamaruddin, JIM shifted into another new dimension of transformational activism. Based on its 'principle centeredness' standard, JIM presents its new vision, *Developing a Malaysian which is fully implementing (inclusive) Shari'ah by 2020*.<sup>42</sup> Its *Islah* approach was then expanded and tailored towards achieving a specific focal target for a designated timeline. In achieving the avowed aim, JIM proposes its 'Big Picture' framework aimed to enable the realisation of the new vision through '*public opinion leadership*' (POL). Consequently, JIM presents its 'Four Year Strategic Plans' to accomplish the targets by strengthening its internal organisation through sharing, mobilisation and empowerment, and also by strategically projecting its reform method through the occupation of a distant final position in its set of priorities according to the 'Big Picture'.<sup>43</sup> JIM identified 15 strategic niches to be fully utilised to attain those goals (politics, youths, *ulama*, media, international relations, education, *dakwah* [Islamic

propagation], women, human capital, administration, local governance empowerment, finance, economic capital, welfare and community counselling services).<sup>44</sup>

At this phase, JIM works tremendously as a *civil society movement* in developing *good governance* culture to be prevailing in the state administration through their holistic political and social participation. Its members believe that only through participation of the organisation and its members in the political field the organisation's quest for good governance as part of their *islah* passion could be crystallised, hence the 'Public Opinion Leadership'.<sup>45</sup> With all its existing institutions and reform mechanisms, JIM has managed to realign them to achieve its new vision, which indirectly or implicitly will contribute to the practice of good governance at the society and community level.

Ironically, in preparing its new pace to achieve the aforesaid vision, ideologically (but not practically) JIM is moving backwards at this new phase, by re-emphasizing its original mission towards the establishment of comprehensive *Shari'ah* doctrines (and without any substantial explanation on what the longed *Shari'ah* utopia would appear).<sup>46</sup> JIM President's 2006 speech audaciously declares JIM's rejection of the liberal democratic and capitalist ideologies.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, the movement turning-back to over re-emphasizing internal *tarbiyyah* mechanisms thus reflects its epistemological break for this new chapter. Consequentially, JIM vehemently rejuvenates its internal (or traditional *ikhwani* oriented)<sup>48</sup> educational system for its members targeted to ensure the quality of its member at par with *soleh wa musleh* (pious and reformist).<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, conceptually, with such an ideal, from a social capital point of view, JIM as an organisation of civil society is indirectly assisting the nation in developing social capital consisting of self-actualised functioning individuals.

Additionally, the self-actualised functioning members, who are being prepared to be the agents of change in crystallising the 'big picture', are being activated and collectively connected through JIM's district-based local branches empowerment policy (JIM *daerah*). The empowerment policy was initiated as part of its modus operandi in disseminating JIM's aspiration to the larger audience in the community through continuous *dakwah* (propagation) and *tarbiyyah* (education) programs. In ensuring the efficiency of the empowered local branches, JIM decides to adopt the KPI (Key Performance Indicators) and KRA (Key result Area) evaluation system. All the empowered branches will be evaluated and audited annually to ensure that they are coherent with the four-year plan of JIM in achieving the organisation's 'big picture'.<sup>50</sup> While at the formal educational level, as a third sector, JIM's chain of private schools networks all over the region have been a landmark for 'private' Islamic schools with integrated curriculum by emphasizing the excellence of their students in both academic and religious subjects.<sup>51</sup> The schools have shown great performance despite their independence from the state fund.<sup>52</sup>

As for the society welfare, JIM also plays an effective role in providing social welfare for society through its youth development programs (KRJ) and half way houses (*Raudatus Sakinah*<sup>53</sup> and Hidayah Centre)<sup>54</sup>. Its youth development program has been a landmark and a compulsory niche for the empowered local branches to enhance JIM's contribution to society in the field of youth activism.<sup>55</sup> Through youth activities, JIM's branches manage to infiltrate

the state funded schools to spread its ideal on building a better community through conscious individuals. Efficiently, such volunteer-oriented effort will lift some burden on the state's budget that normally spends on youth work and human capital building. Consequently, those activities are able to detach the people from intimately depending on the state, thus creating a larger space for bigger and independent society for good governance.

In the same breath, due to the organisation's ideal vision of the importance of family institution as an important element in building a viable pious society, JIM also emphasizes the preservation of family values. Its internal marital 'match-making' mechanism has managed to assist the members to establish the family units consisting of internal marriages between its members.<sup>56</sup>

JIM's children development programs through the organisational chains of nurseries and kindergartens owned and administrated by either its women's wing (i.e. *rangkaian tadika Amal*)<sup>57</sup> or the empowered local branches continue to provide an early education for the members' children, as well for the community.<sup>58</sup> At the same weight, through its women's wing, JIM also is involved in dynamically campaigning for issues concerning women, children and family at the national level. It is not only engaged in issues as a pressure group but also directly in educating, empowering and mobilising women and families.<sup>59</sup>

With regard the women issue in specific, *Wanita JIM*, as the organisation's women's autonomous wing vow their continuous commitment to producing a workforce of Muslim women activists (which they coin as *du'at* – callers) in society who are responsible and caring citizens through welfare work and social services.<sup>60</sup> In achieving such missions, the women's wing is consistently engaged in society from all levels through their activities and the media. Furthermore, JIM aims to place its women's wing in a prominent position with a vibrant role at both national and international levels through networking, media engagement and social involvements. Likewise, JIM also aims to build a corps of women specialists in various fields such as health, law, *Shari'ah*, education and entrepreneurship.<sup>61</sup>

While in the field of humanitarian services, JIM does not confine their discourse of human rights to local issues. JIM actively deals with international issues since the eruption of the racial tense in Ambon, Indonesia in the years 1999-2000. Since the date, JIM has established the international wing (JIM International), which focuses on the humanitarian international issues concerning Muslims.<sup>62</sup> JIM is also known for its pro-active efforts in the issue of Palestine through their national and international lobbies, and humanitarian work in the Palestine refugee camps in Beirut, West Bank and Gaza.<sup>63</sup> The organisation's Palestine Centre of Excellence (PACE) has been their voice to the public through their statements, memorandums, publications and researches.<sup>64</sup> While in the South East Asian region, JIM has relentlessly contributed to the development of Muslims in the region through its contribution to the development of education, religious, welfare and social sectors of those mostly underdeveloped Muslim communities.

In sum, JIM as a pro-active faith-based civil society organisation proves that religion could be a useful tool to assist the process of governance, hence development. It has also managed to prove that the common stereotyping of Islamic movements by a monolithic

picture of traditionalism and merely another power hunger element in the community is far from the truth. Through their activities, which reflect its independence from the state, JIM has succeeded in developing 'functioning' individuals (which is amongst important elements for good governance) amongst its members and its targeted audience, thus has created a productive social capital for nation development. These will indirectly reduce the rent-seeking culture amongst the people and will lift the unnecessary burdens and ineffective economic activities from the state.

A thorough and deep contemplation on the impact of JIM's activities on enhancing the good governance agenda, it is obvious that those activities have articulated mostly all the roles that civil society could effectively play within the new governance framework. Additionally, JIM's activism indirectly enables society to be empowered and to reduce the size of the state, which is essential in the new governance discourse as mentioned earlier. Governance wise, JIM contributes proportionately to enhancing the good governance practice in the country as well developing various means of development through the cultivation of the culture of accountability, empowering the civil society, ensuring the rule of law and the calling for the protection and promotion of human rights.

### **Conclusion**

Much has been written akin to this paper in describing the constructive relation between religion and faith within the comprehensive framework of the current notion of governance. Religious people and institutions as other actors of governance, as discussed earlier would successfully play the role of agents of advocacy, funding, innovation, empowerment, social movements, and service delivery, hence contributing to the development of socio-economic, as well the political life of a nation.<sup>65</sup> In regard to such argument, Armstrong asserts that neglecting faith influence, which she coins as *mitos* in the modern human galaxy is indeed a great loss for their life.<sup>66</sup> The failure of incorporating the *mitos* in the reality life will lead the community to astray and calamity. In such a way, religion as part of culture is worth being considered in the studies of governance as another facet of globalisation.

Equally, the engagement of current global religious movements in the civil society realm enhances the participation of people in development.<sup>67</sup> Such involvements will proportionately benefit the state and the market as well the people in ensuring their well-being. As per the relation between religious movements and their contribution to democratic governance hence development across the globe, Islamic movements too have made their own contribution. As faith-based organisations, the non-violence Islamic movements have been contributing to the check and balance process of the countries in which they operate, especially through the accountability mechanism and their constant fight against bad governance practice by the regimes. The full participation of the movements in the democratic life of their countries has contributed towards the effort to move towards good governance. As for the economy, Islamic movements as social capital bring more opportunity cost for the state, decrease the rent-seeking cost and cultivate the third sector to minimise the size of the state for efficiency.

The aforementioned JIM dynamic role in the governance sphere could be a successful example of how an Islamically-oriented civil society movement can contribute to the development of good governance and democratic culture in a multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural society. Its encompassing involvement in political, social, education and economic life enables the members of society, or at least within its circle of influence, to be the active actors of governance in ensuring the well being of the citizens. This result, in a way, proves that faith in the age of globalisation, and within the framework of civil society, can still continue to be relevant to the public sphere by having its a significant role in the process of governance.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> See Peter Eigen, “The Central Roles of Civil Society in Fighting Corruption in the era of Globalisation”, Address to the Carter Centre, Transparency for growth Conference, 4 May 1999, Atlanta; Ruth Hubbard, “Criteria of God Governance”, *Optimum: The Journal of Public Management*, 30(2), (1999), 37-50.
- <sup>2</sup> See Clara Ikekeonwu, Shirley Randell & Anne Touwen, “Civil Society Partnerships and Development Policies: Emerging Trends”, (UNESCO: 2007); Francis Fukuyama, “Social Capital, Civil Society and Development”, *Third World Quarterly*, 22(1), (2001), 7-20; OECD, “The DAC Guidelines: Poverty Reduction”, (Paris: OECD Publications Services, 1995).
- <sup>3</sup> See Helmut K. Anheier, Marlies Glasius & Mary Kaldor, “Introducing Global Civil Society”, in *Global Civil Society* edited by Helmut K. Anheier, Marlies Glasius & Mary Kaldor, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Helmut K. Anheier, & Hyo-Je Cho, “International NGOs as an Element of Global Civil Society: Scale, Expressions, and Governance”, Background paper prepared for the Sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government, Seoul, South Korea, (May 24–27, 2005); Aisha Ghaus-Pasha, “Role of Civil Society in Governance”, Paper prepared for the Sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government, Seoul, South Korea, (May 24–27, 2005).
- <sup>4</sup> Eigen, “Capacity and Responsibility of Civil Society”, Paper presented at the Sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government, Seoul, South Korea, (May 24–27, 2005).
- <sup>5</sup> *Global Civil Society Report 2004/5*, 2005, 45.
- <sup>6</sup> Ghaus-Pasha, *Role of civil...*,
- <sup>7</sup> Percy B. Lehning, “Towards a Multi-cultural Civil Society: The Role of Social Capital and Democratic Citizenship”, in *Civil Society and International Development*, edited by Henny Helmich Percy B Amanda Bernard, Percy B. Lehning (France: OECD, North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, 1998), 28.
- <sup>8</sup> UNDP, *UNDP and Governance: Experiences and Lessons Learned* (Management Development and Governance Division, Lessons-Learned Series No. 1, 1997).
- <sup>9</sup> Alfred Stepan insists that democracy is only considered consolidated in a country if there is development of a robust and critical civil society to help the check and balance of the state is constantly generating. See Alfred Stepan, “Religion, Democracy and the ‘Twin Tolerations’ in

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*World Religions and Democracy*, edited by Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner & Philip J. Costopoulos, (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2005).

- <sup>10</sup> Ghaus-Pasha, *Role of civil...*,
- <sup>11</sup> See: [http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what\\_is\\_civil\\_society.htm](http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm).
- <sup>12</sup> Ghaus-Pasha, *Role of civil...*,
- <sup>13</sup> Bob Edwards & Micheal W. Foley, "Civil Society and Social Capital: A Primer", in *Beyond Tocqueville: civil society and the social capital debate in comparative perspective: Civil society, Civil history: historical and contemporary perspectives*, edited by Bob Edwards, Micheal W. Foley & Mario Diani, (Hanover & London: University Press of New England, 2001).
- <sup>14</sup> R. A. W. Rhodes, *Understanding Governance: Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability*, (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 2003), 15.
- <sup>15</sup> AccountAbility, *Development as Accountability: Accountability Innovators in Action*, (UK: AccountAbility, 2007), 9.
- <sup>16</sup> Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
- <sup>17</sup> Peter Berger coins such situation as the 'desecularisation' of the world. See Peter Ludwig Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, (New York: Doubleday, 1967).
- <sup>18</sup> Casanova, *Public religions...*, 5-6.
- <sup>19</sup> Here, Asad was replying to the traditional anthropological definition established by Clifford Geertz that view that a religion is (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.
- <sup>20</sup> See Zainah Anwar, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia: Dakwah Among the Students*, (Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, 1987), 29-43.
- <sup>21</sup> Fauzi A. Hamid, "Transnational Islam in Malaysia", National Bureau of Asian Research, NBR Project Report, April 2009, 148.
- <sup>22</sup> See Anne Sofie Roald, *Tarbiya: Education and Politic in Islamic Movements in Jordan and Malaysia*, (Lund: Lund Studies in Religions, 1994), 279; Fauzi, A. Hamid, "Islamist Realignments and the Rebranding of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia", *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs*, 30(2), (2008), 215-40, 217.
- <sup>23</sup> Roald, *Tarbiya...*, 279.
- <sup>24</sup> Saari Sungip, *Membina Teras-Teras Kekuatan (Ucapan Dasar Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional 1996)*, (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia [JIM], 1996).
- <sup>25</sup> See Sungip, *Membina...*; Sungip, *Menempatkan Misi Pengislahan Dalam Transformasi Arus Perdana (Ucapan Dasar Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional 1997)*, (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia [JIM], 1997).

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- <sup>26</sup> Sungip, *Menempatkan...*; Sungip, *Melonjakkan Aktivisme JIM Dalam Agenda Pengislahan Masyarakat (Ucapan Dasar Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional 1998)*, (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia [JIM], 1998).
- <sup>27</sup> However, Saari Sungip the then president of JIM asserts that the organisation's friendly engagement with the centre was due to the commitment of the major component of the ruling party, UMNO towards Islamic agenda for the country. It was known widely that during those years, the Islamic agenda within UMNO was driven by Anwar Ibrahim's factor. See Sungip, *Bersama Menggarap Erti Perjuangan (Ucapan Dasar Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional 1999 (1))*, (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia [JIM], 1999a); Jomo Kwame Sundram & Ahmeed Shabery Cheek, "The Politics of Malaysia's Islamic Resurgence", *Third world Quarterly Journal*, 19(2), (1998), 843-68; Jan Stark, "Contesting models of Islamic governance in Malaysia and Indonesia", *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 16(2), (2004), 115-131.
- <sup>28</sup> Literally translated from Bahasa Melayu: *Bersama Islam Membina Masyarakat*.
- <sup>29</sup> Sungip, *Membina...*,
- <sup>30</sup> See Saliha Hassan, "Islamic Non-Governmental Organisations" in *Social Movements in Malaysia: From Moral Communities to NGOs*, edited by Meredith Weiss & Saliha Hassan, (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), 104; Yoshihi Kaneko, "Dual Structure in the State-NGO Relationship", in *the State & NGOs Perspective from Asia* edited by Shinichi Shigetomi, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), 196.
- <sup>31</sup> Sungip insisted that JIM's involvement with Reformasi and its support for Anwar derived from the organisation's principle-centricity stance rather than a personal, individual, or political issue. See Sungip, *Melonjakkan...*,
- <sup>32</sup> Meredith Weiss, *Protest & Possibilities: Civil Society and Coalitions for Political Change*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).
- <sup>33</sup> Or what they coined as the citizen politics. See Aliran Monthly interview with Mohd. Rashid Hasnon (Head of JIM, Penang) and Isahak Ismail (Secretary of JIM, Penang): <http://www.aliran.com/oldsite/monthly/2002/9h.html>). See also Kaneko, *Dual structure...*, 196; A. Fauzi, *Islamist realignments...*, 219-20.
- <sup>34</sup> Hassan, *Islamic...*, 104; Weiss, *Protest...*, 162-91).
- <sup>35</sup> Sungip, *Menempatkan...*,
- <sup>36</sup> Sungip, *Bersama Mencipta Masa Depan Gemilang (Ucapan Dasar Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional 1999 (2))*, (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia [JIM], 1999b).
- <sup>37</sup> Sungip, *Menempatkan...*,
- <sup>38</sup> Its then president, Saari Sungip contested in the 1999 election under the banner of the then Parti KeADILan Nasional (KEADILAN) (later turned to Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR)), along with the leader of its women wing, Fuziah Salleh (<http://www.jim.org.my/v1/index.php/kenali-jim/profail-jim?start=3>). See also A. Fauzi, *Islamist Realignments...*,
- <sup>39</sup> For more details, see <http://mafrel.wordpress.com/about-2/>

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- <sup>40</sup> Gerakan Mansuhkan ISA (GMI) coalition of 33 NGOs against the detention without trial through the Internal security Act (ISA) formed on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2001 to fight for abolishment of Internal Security Act (ISA) and release of all ISA detainees from Kamunting detention camp. More information could be retrieved from: <http://www.suaram.net/taxonomy/term/8>.
- <sup>41</sup> Mohamed Hatta Shaharom, Ahmad Sodikin Kasimin and Mohd. Radzi Shaari, (eds.), *Risalah Pemimpin: Penulisan Jawatankuasa Pusat JIM*, (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2000), 5.
- <sup>42</sup> Zaid Kamaruddin, *Menggembeleng Ummah Memperjuangkan Syariah (Ucapan Dasar Presiden Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional ke-16 2006, Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM))*, (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2006).
- <sup>43</sup> Kamaruddin, *Bersatu Menegak Syariah Menjamin Kesejahteraan Ummah (Ucapan Dasar Presiden Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional ke-17 2007 Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM))*, (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2007).
- <sup>44</sup> See: <http://www.jim.org.my/v1/index.php/kenali-jim/profail-jim?start=4>.
- <sup>45</sup> Kamaruddin, *Bersatu...*, 17-18.
- <sup>46</sup> Such inability to expound intellectually and scientifically the *Shari'ah* 'realm' that the organisation aiming and working to established is supposedly derive from its lack of socio-politico and political economic discourse due to the lack of expertise and scholars from those fields within the organisation cadres and leaders. Akin to other non-violence *Ikhwani*-oriented Islamic movements, JIM's cadres and leaders comprise mainly of hard-sciences background professionals and engineers along with the traditional moderate religious scholars as its spiritual guiders. Unlike its main rivals, the Islamic Youth Movement (ABIM) and Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS), less people with social sciences and art background attracted to JIM.
- <sup>47</sup> Kamaruddin, *Menggembeleng...*
- <sup>48</sup> Traditional *Ikhwani*-oriented educational (or indoctrination) system for individual development with certain 'Islamic' qualities consists of the regular circles (*usrah*), *tamren* (trainings), *mukhayyamat* (campings), *daurat* (colloquiums), *katibah* (overnight trainings), *rehlah* (travelling together) are amongst the means adopted by many *Ikhwani*-inspired movements for their members' spiritual and intellectual personal development. It is through all these collectively conducted programs along with Shura (mutual consultation) mechanism and the obliged voluntarily loyalty (*ta'at*), the members affiliation to the movement and their level of trust (*thiqah*) amongst each others are constantly developed. As a social capital, trust is an important element to bring the members together for a socio-economic purpose that is most useful for development through social networking and individuals' ties. In JIM's case, the educational system exemplifies the cement that brings the blocks together and strengthens the organisation. Jum'ah Amin, *Manhaj al-Imam al-Banna, al-Thawabit wa al-Mutaghayirat*, (Cairo: dar al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', 1999).
- <sup>49</sup> Jawatankuasa T-PSM JIM, *Panduan Pembangunan Insan dan Organisasi JIM*, edisi kedua 2006, (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2006).
- <sup>50</sup> Kamaruddin, *Bersatu...*, 15.

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- <sup>51</sup> Thus far, there are about 30 private schools established by JIM and managed by Musleh venture Bhd., see: <http://www.jim.org.my/v1/index.php/relung/institusi/176-sekolah>.
- <sup>52</sup> See Jahidin Nor Zalmiah, *Dinamika Kurikulum SRI-SMI: Antara Ideal dan Realiti*, (Unpublished paperwork presented at Pusat Pendidikan Al Amin, 2001); Nor Zalmiah, "Ulum Naqliah: The Experience of Al-Amin Islamic Schools", in *Dakwah Kontemporari Menjana Permuafakatan Organisasi, Risalah Pemimpin jilid 8*, edited by Sepihie Ahmad Jamali, et. al., (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia [JIM], 2007).
- <sup>53</sup> *Raudatus Sakinah* is a shelter cum rehabilitation house for problematic teens mostly with the unexpected early pregnancy cases. See: <http://www.jim.org.my/v1/index.php/relung/institusi/150-raudhatus-sakinah>.
- <sup>54</sup> A shelter house for new Muslims that been abandoned by their families due to the conversion. See: <http://www.jim.org.my/v1/index.php/relung/institusi/161-hc>.
- <sup>55</sup> See: <http://krj.jim.org.my/v1/?module=main>.
- <sup>56</sup> See: <http://www.bm2u.net/>
- <sup>57</sup> See: <http://www.jim.org.my/v1/index.php/relung/institusi/177-tadika>.
- <sup>58</sup> See: <http://www.jim.org.my/kenal/wanita.php>
- <sup>59</sup> Harlina Halizah Siraj, *Memperkasa Jaringan Kekeluargaan Bagi Mendepani Cabaran Ummah (Ucapan Dasar Ketua Wanita, Perhimpunan Perwakilan Wanita Nasional 2005, Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM))*, (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia [JIM], 2005).
- <sup>60</sup> Harlina Halizah Siraj, "Pengukuhan Kepemimpinan Wanita JIM: Mengorak Langkah ke Arah Menerajui Dakwah dan Ummah", in *Risalah Pemimpin: Penulisan Jawatankuasa Pusat* edited by Mohamed Hatta Shaharom, Ahmad Sodikin Kasimin & Mohd. Radzi Shaari, (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2000), 105.
- <sup>61</sup> Maznah Mohamad, "Women's engagement with Political Islam in Malaysia", *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 16(2), (2004), 142.
- <sup>62</sup> Maszlee Malik, "Aktivisme JIM International sepanjang tahun 2000-2004" in *Pemusatan Dakwah Pengislahan Dinamika Ummah*, edited by W. M. Zukri, C. M. Zin, et. al., (Kuala Lumpur: JIMedia, 2005).
- <sup>63</sup> Malik, *Aktivisme...*; Malik, *Kembara Beirut: Menjejaki Pelarian Palestin di Lubnan*, (Kuala Lumpur: JIMedia, 2006).
- <sup>64</sup> See: [www.pacemalaysia.net](http://www.pacemalaysia.net)
- <sup>65</sup> Jeffrey Haynes *Religion and Development*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
- <sup>66</sup> Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God: Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, (New York: Ballantine, 2000).
- <sup>67</sup> Haynes, *Religion...*,