

## CHAPTER ONE

# Introduction

Islamic revivalism has been an active feature of Malay society in Malaysia since the early 1970s. There are other important factors of change alongside the religious one affecting urban Malay families. The present study aims to examine to what extent and on which sort of social action Islam has influenced the attitudes and behaviour of urban Malays both males and females. It also examines the relationship between religiosity and social behaviour of two generations: the generation who were brought up under Islamic resurgent circumstances and the previous generation which had their childhood years before this period.

Malaysia has experienced significant changes since independence in 1957, as it has shifted its economic base from agriculture to industry. These changes include rapid social and geographical mobility, living pattern changes, an open-class system, modernisation, and urbanisation. As a newly independent agricultural country, industrialisation and a high economic growth have significant consequences which include changes in values and behaviour.

People of Malay, Chinese, and Indian ethnic origin form the main ethnic groups in Peninsular Malaysia. A major challenge facing the country is the creation of a plural society with different cultures, languages, religious beliefs and socio-

economic strata. The multiethnic composition of Malaysia is the result of the migration of a large number of Chinese and Indians during British colonial period. The differences between ethnic groups in Malaysia have been aggravated by colonial heritage which encouraged ethnic nationalism.

Economic growth and ethnic awareness are not the only major changes in the history of Malaysia. Another significant feature of contemporary Malaysia is religious revivalism, especially among urban Malays. Religious revivalism has accelerated since the 1970s. To any visitor to the Malay Peninsula in the 1960s or early 1970s presently visiting this region again, it is quite obvious that he will find, besides economic changes, as Mehden (1988:254-5) points out, changes reflecting a greater sense of Islamic identity. These changes include an increase in conservative attire among Malay females, the adaptation of Arabic traditions by some religious groups; the increase in the number of those attending Friday prayers; the purity of food in terms of religious belief (halal); and the increasing activeness of Islamic organisations.

## **1.1. Dimension of the Problem**

There are several factors that influence the change in values and behaviour in Malay society. These include ethnic awareness, urban population of Malays of the Peninsula, economic growth, mass media, and religious revivalism. In many ways these factors are interrelated.

### **1.1.1 Ethnic Awareness**

Of the three major ethnic groups in Peninsular Malaysia - i.e., Malays, Chinese, and Indians - the Malays form the

predominant ethnic group in the peninsula<sup>1</sup>. The term *bumiputera* is used for three categories: the aborigines (*Orang Asli*)<sup>2</sup>, the Malays and Malay-related<sup>3</sup>, and non-Malays<sup>4</sup>.

The Malays constitute 55 percent of the population, all of them Muslim by birth. The Chinese represent 34 percent and are mainly Buddhists, Confucians or Christians. And, about 10 percent of the total population are Indians who are mostly Hindus.

The development of the plural society in Malaysia can be traced to the colonial era. In the early stages of the colonial period, Peninsular Malaysia was an area inhabited almost entirely by Malays and by some nomadic aboriginal people.

Three waves of migration occurred during the colonial period (Abdullah and Mohamed, 1982: 105-6). The first group of migrants arrived from Indonesia gradually over the centuries working in agricultural land. The second wave came from China<sup>5</sup>. The establishment of British rule in Penang, Malacca and Singapore by the turn of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of a long period of continuous Chinese migration. In

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<sup>1</sup>The Malays are also a substantial minority in Sarawak and a smaller group in Sabah.

<sup>2</sup>The *Orang Asli* groups are the oldest inhabitants of what is now Malaysia, survived in only small numbers and in scattered groups, mainly in the Malay Peninsula.

<sup>3</sup>They are the Javanese, the Banjarese, Bayanese, Bugis, and Minangkabau who migrated from Indonesia to the peninsula since the last century and the Bajau of Sabah are also regarded as Malays.

<sup>4</sup>The third group, who are non-Malays but considered as *Bumiputera* are the Iban, Bidayuh (Land Dayaks), the Melanau, Kenyah, Kayan and Bisayah in Sarawak, and the Kadazan (Dusun), the Murut, Kelabit and Kadayan in Sabah.

<sup>5</sup>The Chinese were known to have first settled in Temasik, now Singapore, in the mid-fourteenth century. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was a Chinese community in Malacca (Saw, 1988:11-12). These communities were limited in size.

the mid-nineteenth century the immigration of Chinese had developed into a well-organised system and came under the protection of the British colonial government (Saw, 1988:12). From the mid-nineteenth century, Chinese labourers migrated upon encouragement by colonial administrators, particularly to work in tin mining<sup>6</sup>. When the British entered mechanised mining, many Chinese mine labourers were displaced. But the opportunities in estates, urban commerce, and small-scale industry continued to encourage the flow of immigrants from China.

The third wave of migration occurred with the recruitment of Indian labourers from India<sup>7</sup> for cultivation of sugar, and later rubber and the development of public works during the early decades of the twentieth century<sup>8</sup> (Abdullah and Mohamed, 1982:106; Ross-Larson, 1980:13). The Malays had little contact with the burgeoning tin and rubber industries or with the new commercial activities in towns. They retained their traditional lifestyle and were encouraged to be good paddy farmers, thus

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<sup>6</sup>The Chinese owned and operated the tin mines and eventually the main Chinese tin mining villages were developed into towns by expanding the roads and rail systems. Hence, rapid growth characterised the settlements.

<sup>7</sup>The connection between the Indians and the Malay Archipelago goes back as early as the seventh century, with the existence of the Hindu Empire of Srivijaya in Sumatra. The first Indian settlement in the peninsula was set up during the Malay Kingdom of Malacca (Saw, 1988:22). Since then, the Indians have had a more frequent and direct relations with the Malays of the peninsula.

<sup>8</sup>The British colonial government brought in Indian convicts and indentured immigrants to construct public works and to fill the lower ranks of the colonial administration. Meanwhile, in the private sector the plantation owners, mostly Europeans, imported both free and indentured immigrants to work in their rubber estates.

keeping them separate from the modern sector as a result of British colonial policy<sup>9</sup>.

After independence, the Chinese were almost exclusively urban and mainly involved in commerce and industry. A majority of Indians were estate workers, but a good number of them lived in urban areas involved in different occupations, while the rural population primarily remained Malay<sup>10</sup>.

This urban/rural division by ethnic groups has had some far-reaching social and economic effects (Abdullah and Mohamed, 1982:107). Modern facilities and opportunities, including education and technology, were developed to a higher level in the towns and cities than in the villages. This gave the majority of the Chinese, and to a lesser extent Indians, socio-economic advantage over the majority of the Malays. In 1970, the Malays were by far the poorest ethnic group and were heavily concentrated in low income occupations like agriculture. Although in 1987 the percentage of the poor Malay decreased to less than that of 1973, it was still 4.6 times higher than the Chinese and more than double that of the Indians<sup>11</sup> (table 1.1).

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<sup>9</sup>There are other ethnic groups who have been living on the peninsula much longer than the latest Chinese and Indians such as Arabs, Indian Muslims, and Chinese Babas.

<sup>10</sup> The development of a dual economy, an export-oriented commercial sector and a subsistence agricultural sector, and the emergence of a communal ideology under a century of British rule segmented Malaysian society along ethnic, occupational and geographical lines (Osman-Rani, 1990:1).

<sup>11</sup> Poverty has been significantly reduced in Malaysia, especially absolute poverty in the form of starvation, famine or lack of shelter, does not occur but relative poverty of the lower bottom 40 percent of households remain an issue from 42.4 percent in 1976 to 13.5 percent in 1993. The hard-core poverty rate had also declined from 19.6 percent in 1976 to 3 percent in 1993 (Ministry of Finance Malaysia, 1994).

The occupational and value differences among ethnic groups gave rise to misunderstandings and stereotyping. Each ethnic group has a pre-conceived image of the other, generally through speech, names, phenotypes. It is often glossed over by stereotyping in daily interactions (Lee, 1990a:116-117). Some practices of Chinese and Indians (Hindu) are regarded by Malays

**Table 1.1 : Income Classes of Various Races in Peninsular Malaysia**

Classification	Malays		Chinese		Indians	
	1973	1987	1973	1987	1973	1987
Poor	59.7	26.4	24.7	5.8	34.8	12.6
Middle class	39.6	70.0	72.0	85.7	62.7	82.2
Rich	0.7	3.6	3.4	8.5	2.5	5.2

Source: Malaysia's Economic Vision, 1992.

as distasteful, like pork consumption, keeping dogs in their houses, gambling, and imbibing alcohol. Husin Ali (1981:114) believes that there is a great social distance between the majority of the Malays and the Chinese and the Indians, and existing inter-ethnic relations are limited.

### **1.1.2. Urban Malays of the Peninsula**

The number and percentage of Malaysia's urban population has rapidly increased since independence (table 1.2). The process of urbanisation in the peninsula is closely related to the development of the tin mines and rubber plantations. The non-Malay immigrants have played a vital role in urban development since mid-nineteenth century. The gradual concentration of Chinese and Indian settlements along the

foothills of tin and rubber belts were in contrast to the Malay settlements mainly in the east coast states and estuarine areas of the west coast (Sidhu and Jones, 1981:12).

**Table 1.2 : Population of Malaysia, 1960-1991** ('000)

	1960	1970	1980	1991
Total population	9,000*	10,439	13,136	17,567
Population of Peninsula	6,279**	8,827	10,970	14,186
Percentage of urban population of Peninsula	-	29	37	54.3

\* Estimate      \*\* 1957 Census

Sources: Population and Housing Census of Malaysia 1991.

Department of Statistics Malaysia, 1995.

**Table 1.3 : Urban Population of Peninsular Malaysia 1911-1991**

Year	Urban dwellers over 1,000		Urban dwellers over 10,000		Total population
	Number	%	Number	%	
1911	-	-	250,275	10.7	2,339,000
1921	569,000	19.1	406,930	14.0	2,906,691
1931	835,900	22.1	571,951	15.1	3,787,758
1947	1,301,400	26.5	929,928	18.9	4,908,086
1957	2,679,700	42.7	1,666,300	26.5	6,278,758
1970	3,694,700	41.9	2,530,433	28.7	8,819,928
1980	-	-	4,148,000	36.3	11,442,000
1991	-	-	7,705,388	54.3	14,185,964

Sources: Department of Statistics, 1970 and 1980 census reports, 1995; Sidhu and Jones, 1981; Saw, 1988.

The earliest statistical data on urban population<sup>12</sup> in the Malay Peninsula is traceable to 1911, when the total number of

<sup>12</sup>There has been different definitions for an urban population. In the early census reports of the population, urban areas were equated to gazette administrative districts with a population of 1000 or more inhabitants (Saw, 1988:84). This figure is now regarded as too low and some scholars adopt the definition of urban as areas with 10,000 or more inhabitants.

the urban population was over 250,000 inhabitants which constituted 10.7 percent of the total population. The urban populations gradually increased from 10.7 percent of the total population in 1911 to 18.9 percent by 1947 (table 1.3). After World War II, rural immigrants were attracted to the urban areas. In 1957 there were 1,666,300 urban dwellers (living in cities with over 10,000 inhabitants) in the peninsula, or more than one fourth of the total population. The data of the 1970 and 1980 census indicated the continuation of the process of population movement to urban areas<sup>13</sup>.

Non-Malays have always been dominant settlers of urban areas since the creation of towns and development of urban areas in the peninsula. In 1921, the Malays constituted 18.4 percent of the urban population or 6.7 percent of the total Malay population (table 1.4).

**Table 1.4 : Percentage of Population in Urban Area of the Peninsula by Ethnic Groups, 1921-1990**

Year	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Others	Total
1921 (I)	18.4	60.2	17.8	3.6	100
1931 (I)	19.2	59.6	17.8	3.4	100
1947 (I)	21.1	62.3	13.8	2.8	100
1957 (I)	22.6	63.9	10.7	2.8	100
1970 (II)	27.6	60.0	11.3	1.1	100
1980 (II)	32.8	53.9	12.2	1.1	100
1990 (III)	35.2	51.7	11.9	1.2	100

Sources: (I) Sidhu and Jones, 1981.

(II) Department of Statistics, 1970 and 1980 census reports.

(III) Ahmad Idriss, 1990.

<sup>13</sup>Today, Peninsular Malaysia is one of the most urbanised regions in Southeast Asia. Over 54-percent of its total population live in towns and cities with over 10,000 inhabitants. If the urban threshold was lowered to 1,000, this percentage would be higher.



Throughout the period between the two World Wars, Malays accounted for barely one-fifth of urban settlers. Despite the colonial policy, the Malay urban populations were enlarged during that time. However, it was not until independence that the Malay rural-urban migration intensified.

Social mobility was reinforced by the Emergency, resulting in non-Malay rural dwellers migrating to urban areas<sup>14</sup>. By the very same process of enforced migration, the rural Malay areas became more homogeneous in composition. In 1957, the urban Malay population of the peninsula was 22.6 percent of the total urban population. The Chinese urban population by this time was two-third of the total urban population.

**Table 1.5 : Percentage of Urban and Rural Population of Ethnic Groups in Peninsular Malaysia, 1921-1990**

Year	Malay			Chinese			Indian		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
1921	6.7	93.3	100	40.5	59.5	100	23.1	76.9	100
1931	8.3	91.4	100	38.8	61.2	100	25.9	74.1	100
1947	11.3	88.7	100	43.1	56.9	100	33.8	66.2	100
1957	19.3	80.7	100	73.0	27.0	100	41.1	58.9	100
1970	21.8	78.2	100	71.1	28.9	100	44.8	55.2	100
1980	21.5	78.5	100	57.7	42.3	100	43.3	56.2	100
1990	23.8	76.2	100	64.8	35.2	100	47.4	52.6	100

Sources: Department of Statistics, 1970 and 1980 census reports  
 Sidhu and Jones, 1981  
 Ahmad Idriss, 1990.

<sup>14</sup>The authorities in 1948 declared a state of emergency because they faced the communist insurgency of the communist party of which most members were Chinese. Thousands of non-Malays settled in existing towns, regrouped in estates and tin mines, or moved to the 600 or so specially-created new villages. Most of these projects were devoted almost exclusively to Chinese (Saw, 1988:86), whose sympathy for the communist insurgents was suspected.

By the time of independence (1957), the urban population of Malays in the total Malay population was 19 percent, whereas Chinese and Indians were 73 and 41 percent respectively (table 1.5). Both the censuses of 1970 and 1980 revealed significant growth of the Malay urban populations compared to other ethnic groups.

The New Economic Policy (NEP) encouraged rural Malays to migrate to cities because of the priority given to Bumiputeras in employment and the policy of reserving a certain quota for Bumiputera workers in the private sector, especially the newly established companies. The NEP resulted in an increase of the urban Malay population to more than 35 percent of the total urban population by 1991. However, the Chinese constituted more than half of the urban population of the peninsula. In addition, the Malay population increasingly play a more important role in the urban area in Malaysia. The recent trend of urbanisation of the Malays was encouraged by NEP and the New Development Policy (NDP)<sup>15</sup>.

On the whole, a large number of Malays have been absorbed into the administration and civil services, while middle class Chinese and Indians are mainly in the professions and businesses (Husin Ali, 1981:116-117).

Of interest to the present study is the fact that a majority of people involved in the *da'wah* activities, as Sharifah Zaleha (1993:8) indicates, comes from the Malay middle class who are mostly urban dwellers. According to Sharifah, the

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<sup>15</sup> See page 12 on NEP and NDP.

da'wah groups easily gained support from middle class, urban and educated Malays.

### 1.1.3. Economic Growth

Malaysian society has been passing through a period of major economic development since the beginning of the 1970s. The country presently enjoys one of the highest rates of economic growth in the world<sup>16</sup>. During the last twenty years, Malaysia's annual growth rate of real gross domestic product (GDP) has been more than twice that of the industrial countries, and hence has been higher than the average rate of GDP growth in developing countries<sup>17</sup> (table 1.6).

**Table 1.6: Average Annual Growth Rate of Real GDP of World economic Trends Compared to Malaysia (%)**

Countries	Trends			Estimate
	1972-1981	1982-1987	1988-1991	1992-1995
Industrial countries	3.0	2.9	3.4	3.0
Developing countries	5.0	3.3	3.7	5.0
Malaysia	7.6	4.2	8.9	8.7

Sources: Malaysian Economic Association, 1992.

Department of Statistics, Malaysia, 1995.

Since independence there have been six economic development plans. The first covered the period from 1966 to 1970. After the racial riots of 1969, the government formulated

<sup>16</sup> Malaysia's annual Gross Domestic Product growth rate in 1992 was 7.8 percent followed by 8.3 percent in 1993, 9.2 percent in 1994, and was estimated at 9.6 percent for 1995 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 1995). In 1993 the growth rate in Gross National Product was 8.7 percent, in 1994 was 8.6 percent, and estimated at 8.1 percent in 1995 (Ministry Finance Malaysia, 1994).

<sup>17</sup> The average annual GDP growth rate for this period was 6.1 percent. Therefore, moderate growth was achieved from the time of independence until the outbreak of racial riots in 1969 (Osman-Rani, 1990:6).

a new long-term plan for the next twenty years. From 1971 to 1991 the government implemented four economic development plans which were within the framework of the New Economic Policy (NEP). This policy was introduced in 1970 to promote economic growth with equity across the races, with the objective of eradicating poverty and restructuring society.

The Second Outline Perspective Plan, covering the period of 1991-2000, has been formulated based on a policy which is called the New Development Policy (NDP). The NDP provides a broader framework for achieving objectives such as accelerating the process of eradicating poverty and restructuring society so as to correct social and economic imbalances in the next ten years within the context of a rapidly expanding economy. The NDP will set the pace towards achieving the status of a fully developed nation by 2020, not only from the economic perspective but also in all other perspectives.

In Malaysia, the government has been shifting its economy from agriculture to industry. Raymond Lee (1992:158-159) conceptualises this process as composed of three stages: the first decade of the independence (1957-1967), the 1970s, and post 1980s. According to Lee, this process does not follow the same historical trajectory as industrialisation in Western countries. Bureaucratic rationality, Lee realises, established during colonial time, is the springboard of modernisation because of the underlying administrative mechanism<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Lee calls this phenomenon as 'administocracy' rather than technocracy for introducing industrial structure in Malaysia.

### 1.1. 4. Mass Media

The role of the mass media is of great importance both in the process of modernisation and in the diffusion of Western culture in Malaysia. Presently, in Peninsular Malaysia there are four television channels and eight radio networks<sup>19</sup>.

**Table 1.7: Ownership and Use of Television and Radio, 1994**

	Television	Radio
Number of owner of the set	9,495,000	9,484,000
Percentage of the owner	93	93
Percentage of owner in urban area	96	96
Percentage of Malay owner*	91	92
Percentage of Malay viewer/listener	91	93

\* It is in Peninsular Malaysia.

Sources: Kementerian Penerangan Malaysia, 1994a, 1995c.

**Table 1.8: The Number of Television Viewers and Radio Listeners, 1989-1995** ('000)

Year	Television Viewers	Radio Listeners
1989	8,668	6,565
1991	9,087	7,181
1993	9,569	8,492
1995	9,841	8,649

Sources: Kementerian Penerangan Malaysia, 1990, 1993, 1994a, 1995c, 1995d.

In 1994, according to the Ministry of Information Malaysia (table 1.7), 93 percent of total adults in Peninsular Malaysia owned both television and radio. Ownership of television and radio is higher among urban settlers than rural dwellers.

<sup>19</sup> There is also one cable television; in addition the satellite television with over twenty channels is coming.

Among ethnic groups, Malays owned the least compared to Indians and Chinese. The Malay listener to radio is slightly more than the Malay television viewers (table 1.8).

Recently, there have been some changes in the content of television programmes. There has been a reduction in the entertainment programmes and an increase in the educational programmes. In 1989, for example, more than 41 percent of TV1 and 63 percent of TV2 programmes comprised entertainment and drama. In 1992, this percentage was reduced to 36.5 percent for TV1 (table 1.9), and 51.6 percent for TV2; and in 1994 it was

**Table 1.9: Percentage of Television and Radio Programmes,  
1992 and 1994**

Programmes	TV1 1992	TV1 1994	TV2 1992	TV2 1994	Radio 1 1992	Radio 1* 1994
Religion	10.7	7.1	1.8	1.7	9.8	2.2
Youth	-	-	-	-	0.6	1.2
News	-	-	-	-	9.4	8.9
Drama	23.3	21.7	37.0	37.8	1.6	2.1
Entertainment	13.2	5.7	14.6	12.2	61.5	38.8
Advertisement	7.0	5.4	10.0	9.0	0.9	7.9
Children	10.3	7.4	5.5	7.3	0.6	0.6
Education	28.0	45.2	26.7	30.6	11.3	23.8
Sport	7.5	7.5	4.4	1.4	1.4	2.0
Women	-	-	-	-	3.5	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\* In 1994, 2.2 percent programmes of Radiol broadcast for farmers and fishermen.

Sources: Kementerian Penerangan Malaysia 1993, 1994a.

percent for TV1, and 50 percent for TV2. Most of these programmes are produced in Western countries or are influenced

by Western culture. During the same period the percentage of religious programmes have also been reduced.

In recent years, video has increasingly become popular among urban populations of Malaysia (table 1.10), to the point of becoming a strong rival to television. The Malay owners and viewers of video by far are less than the Chinese and Indians. In 1994, about 30 percent of adult Malays watched video, while over 70 percent of Chinese adults and 60 percent of Indians did so.

**Table 1.10 : Video Ownership and Viewing in 1993 and 1994**

	1993	1994
Number of video owners	4,251,000	4,805,000
Percentage of video owner	43	47
Percentage of video viewer	44	47
Percentage of urban video viewer	96	96
Percentage of Malay video viewer	28	30

Source: Kementerian Penerangan Malaysia, 1994.

Printed materials such as newspapers and, to lesser degree, magazines are also considered influential media in Malaysia. In 1995, of the total adult population of the peninsula, 64 percent read newspapers and 30 percent magazines. The Malay magazines were read by 33 percent and the English magazine by 17 percent of the adult population<sup>20</sup> (table 1.11). The top three popular magazines in Malaysia are *Wanita*, *Jelita*, and *Keluarga*. The first two are women's magazines and the third is a magazine for family. Out of 33 weekly magazines with more

<sup>20</sup> There are other printed materials in Chinese and Tamil languages. Usually Malays read newspapers and magazines in the Malay language, and some Malays read English printed materials too.

than 50,000 issues, over half of them cater to the women, family and the youth.

**Table 1.11: Number and Percentage of Malay and English Press Readers in Peninsular Malaysia, 1995**

	Malay	%	English	%
Newspapers	2,891	28	1,440	14
Magazines	3,448	33	1,727	17

Source: Kementerian Penerangan Malaysia, 1995a.

### 1.1.5 Religious Revivalism

Although Islamic revivalism in Malaysia and among Muslims of Southeast Asia is not new, the uprising of May 1969 was a reinforcing event, and a new wave of Islamic revivalism emerged. As a consequence of the trends and factors mentioned previously, fear of losing identity and faith on the one hand, and the need to challenge the strength of the religion on the other, arose among different Malay groups from religious extremists to moderates. The present religious movements in Malaysia has socio-political features; each religious group maintain its own goal with different degrees of political scope. Therefore, religious revivalism developed among Muslims, an understanding of Islam that faith can deal with contemporary economic, social, and political issues.

Islamic revivalism became increasingly strong in Malaysia during the 1970s. It is known as the *da'wah* movement, and has deserved special attention. The term *da'wah* (*dakwah* in Malay) means to invite people to the religion of Islam, and contained a threatening tone in the 1970s and early 1980s (Hussin Mutalib, 1990:73; Sharifah, 1993:1).



The *da'wah* activity in Malaysia is the most important movement among Malays since the time of independence. As Abdullah and Mohamed (1982:122) clarify, the *da'wah* group strongly advocate the enforcement of Islamic fundamentals in all aspects of life, warning against the encroachment of other cultures, especially the Western and other non-Muslim ways that have influenced many urban Malays. The *da'wah* movement has been an important social force (Musalib, 1990:99) and has had a profound influence on Malay families<sup>21</sup>.

Some scholars share with Nash (1984:75) an opinion that many of the new middle class Malays find the urban life style, the need for Western sophistication, and the continual inter-ethnic tolerance, threatening to their core values. To him, the religious movement (*dakwah*) is often a fitting and welcome relief and retreat. Nash (1984:78) points to factors such as the complex interaction of the members of *dakwah* groups, the pressures from the nation-state, the continuing Westernisation and modernisation, and the social status of the Malay community in the communally multiple society as the principal sources of the Islamic movement in Malaysia.

Thus, there are several contributing factors in the changes that are identifiable in Malay society. These factors significantly affect Malay families. Forces of change come from many different directions and sources. Present urban Malay

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<sup>21</sup> The relation between economic development and the ideological changes in Malaysia, particularly among Malays, has drawn the attention of many scholars. Fatimah and Hashami (1992:2), for example, say that the rapid process of growth in Malaysia, as it is fast heading towards being a developed nation, has caused a revolution of ideologies which has affected the institution of the family.

society is affected by five important factors which determine the behaviour of the everyday life of the people. One is the colonial policy which created a multiethnic society with cultural diversity which resulted in ethnic competition. The growing urban population of Malays is another factor which changed the ethnic composition of the cities. Also, rapid economic growth, access to and the availability of sophisticated technology and science, caused industrialisation and urbanisation. Another factor includes the Western products of mass media and therefore Western values, moral and cultural problems of urban life, competition with rival ethnic groups, and keeping their own ethnic identity. Finally, religious revivalism, or in clearer terms Islamic awareness (*da'wah*) which is the anti-thesis of the other factors.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The study examines the extent Islam affects the everyday life of urban Malay society in the face of ethnic competition, modernisation and religious revivalism. It focuses on urban middle income Malay families as the social units which are confronted with and experience social change. Its intention is to plot the intensity of religious faith in the Malay family from independence to the present.

The study pays particular attention to the manner in which changes have occurred in the role expectations of a couple's religiousness, as the family unit shifts over time, from the generation of the 1960's to the present generation of young families<sup>22</sup>. For this purpose, the study examines how young and

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<sup>22</sup> About the concepts of young and elderly generations used for this study, see chapter two page 48.

elderly Malay families with different degrees of religiosity deal with certain social variables.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of the study is:

To determine the function of religion in terms of social behaviour in contemporary Malay families;

To elucidate the significant differences between young and elderly Malay families with regards to the role of religion;

To identify the relationship between respondent's attitudes and social behaviour and degrees of religiosity according to the following variables: marriage, custom and ceremonies, birth control, child-rearing, women, husband-wife relations, recreation, modern appliances, mass media, and ethnic relations.

The present study does not limit itself to observation, interviews with certain leaders or experts, interpretation of certain organisational activities, or events that may be recorded in documents; it gets its main data from ordinary families in the society. This study aims to present both descriptive and explanatory analyses examining urban Malay religious behaviour over time. The units of analysis are urban middle income Malay families in Kuala Lumpur. The study is designed to use a cross-sectional survey data in order to approximate a longitudinal survey.

### **1.4. Background of the Study**

A number of studies touch on various aspects of the Malays, modernisation, religious revivalism, and values which

are somehow related to the present study . They may be grouped in different categories.

Syed Hussein Alatas (1972) is one of the early sociologists who wrote on modernisation among Malays. He and Sharon Siddique (1972) and Judith Djamour (1977) emphasise both Islam and *adat* in the lifestyle of the Malays when confronted with modernisation. Tham Seong Chee (1977) describes the major cultural influences on Malay families and (1983) the present Islamic institution among Malays and their theological attachments while they are facing the modernisation process.

Shaharuddin Maaruf (1988) examines a cross-section of views of political leaders, community leaders, literary figures, the religious elite and academics on the issue of Malay development. Amran Kasimin (1991) studied religion and social change among the indigenous people but this is not exactly related to the present study. Raymond Lee (1992) examines the modernisation programme in Malaysia in the complex context of the interplay between ethnic nationalism, international markets, class formation and inter-ethnic competition. He sees Islam as an element of resistance against the forces of modernisation.

A number of scholars have published books and articles on Islamic revivalism or the *da'wah* movement in Malaysia. Some of them like Kessler (1972), Nagata (1984), Ameer Ali (1984), Muzaffar (1987), Mehden (1988), Lee (1990b) and Hussin Mutalib (1990) write about the political activity of Islamic movements in Malaysia. The others focus more on the institution and ideology of *da'wah* groups like Peacock (1978), Tham (1983), Nagata (1986), Milner (1986), Zainah Anwar (1987), Jamil (1988), and Sharifah (1993).

Nilufer Narli (1986) studied the conflicts and consequences of female Malay undergraduates exposed to the type of Islamic ideology which is promulgated through the *da'wah* movement and the ideology implicit in the national development policy. This study, more than other studies, is closer to the present research since it included a survey among a certain group of Malays regarding their attitudes and behaviour about Islam and the process of modernisation.

Elsewhere, studies about families reveal that the family still plays an important, if not central, place in the religious socialisation process. The study of Myung-hye Kim (1993), for example, shows that the industrialisation of South Korea has not destroyed the Confucian foundations of patriarchy, but has transformed them by the spread of individual wage labour and public education. Hayes and Pittelkow (1993) in their study of Australian families indicate that there is strong support for religious transmission in Australia by both parents.