

GLOBALIZATION AND MIGRATORY PROCESSES IN THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE MALAY MUSLIMS OF MALAYSIA

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Abstract

Globalization in Malaysia has introduced the Malay Muslim population to new ethno-religious dynamics at the urban-to-urban level internationally and rural-to-urban sphere nationally. At the international level, Malay Muslims who studied abroad have returned with alternate conceptions of Islam at odds with the local version as well as fostered transnational links to outsiders that later facilitated their religious influence locally. At the national level, Malay Muslim migration to an urban economy opened to global capitalism have produced reactionary discourses and attitudes by conservative Muslims desirous of countering the excesses of this economic reality. Implications for a Christian holistic transformation in light of these dynamics are proposed.

THE CITY AND GLOBALIZATION

Globalization¹ can be defined in various ways. According to Friedman (1993, xviii), its basic character is its speed of communication, travel, commerce and innovation. For Robertson (1992, 8), it is a ‘compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole...both concrete global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole.’ However it is defined, globalization is new in some senses but in other ways it is not. Three possibilities for its origins have been proposed² (Schäbler 2004, xvi): (1) that a form of it has always existed historically as early as the unrecorded, prehistoric movements of people across the planet³ (2) that it is an outcome of capitalism in the modern period (3) that it is a product of the ‘disorganized capital’ of post-industrialism and post-modernity.

There are at least three theoretical positions on globalization (Schmidt 1998, 129): (1) the primacy of free enterprise (neoliberalism) (2) the statist view (neoKeynesianism) (3) the sociological understanding (critical third-way).

The first view is identified with Westernization, a forced trend which tends towards homogenization. Although features such as technology, production, and consumption patterns and building practices are similar in all major cities, differences in social practices and outcomes do not necessarily lead to social homogenization (Schmidt 1998, 129). However, because of the reach and power of available communication systems, they create the impression that there are no alternatives to them (Schreiter 2001, 128). The second view implicitly claims that state authority has come to an end and that the creation of a globalized society has fragmented centralized authority. This however excludes dissident social forces from the arena of state policymaking with consequences for urban social sustainability (Schmidt 1998, 130).

Though increasing centralization of the world's production and trade are found in the hands of a few hundreds of multinational corporations (MNCs) and financial institutions (e.g. World Bank and IMF) that push for its dominance (Abraham 1996, 86), such globalization processes are not irreversible (Hannerz 2000, 18).

GLOBALIZATION'S INFLUENCE ON THE CITY AND PEOPLE

Globalized information networks typically function through urban media centers with a global reach. When locals can access media such as the Internet, the limits and knowledge provided by the local media are overcome (Hannerz 2000, 28), further facilitating potential movements to migrate as overseas attractions become more 'real'.

Its effect on people can be described by the concept of a 'global ethnoscape'⁴ in 'the landscape of persons who make up shifting worlds in which we live (Appadurai 1999, 192): tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest-workers, and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree.'

The life and migrations of people into the cities and city-making itself have always been linked to the spread of urban capitalism (Forbes 1996, 102), which largely determined the growth, rebuilding, reconstruction, and reconfiguration of cities around the world in the late nineteenth century and onwards (Bishop 2004, 1). This can occur when globalization is used as a discourse to open up fragile societies (at the state level) and cities (at the local level) that are not ready for international competition⁵ (Schmidt 1998, 129). However, in the late twentieth century, it has become more necessary to emphasize the global nature of this growth as well as the international and post-colonial identity dynamics in discussions of global urbanism (*ibid.* 2).

Capital cities are typically economic centers of international commerce and exchange.⁶ They may undergo moderate to extreme makeovers on many levels to incorporate the demands of a developing global economy independent of any state-specific central organization (*ibid.*, 4). When international pressures like globalization arrive in Southeast Asian societies, they usually touch their capitals first (*ibid.*, 134). There are a number of reasons for this. Among them is that Southeast Asian urbanization is distinctive owing to marked concentrations of people and economic activity in urban conglomerates (*ibid.*). These conglomerates tend to be large MNCs from the West or Asian giants that have expanded overseas to tap into globalization processes for the sake of economic profits. The globalization of capital and labor through these MNCs has opened up local markets to the world (*ibid.* 129). As the alignment of jobs and opportunities are created, modified or destroyed according to the dictates of the global market economy, they provide different opportunities for workers of various abilities.

Globalization also provides 'powerful incentives to tailor urban politics to the requirements of increasingly powerful international productive and financial capital, thus putting social sustainability in jeopardy.' (Schmidt 1998, 130) There is therefore a social cost to break into the world market. What are the costs of countries positioning national economies to the market system? Among them is a convergence between low welfare expenditures and export-orientation. Another is the demand for lower-wage workers, manifested in the appearance of increasing

female workers or the shift of production to other locations. Because the movement of labor now flows with the movement of global capital, the world becomes ‘polycentric rather than bipolar...like a pattern of turbulence rather than push-and-pull, more a field of contention than a battle line between center and periphery’ as nation-states compete for global capital (Schreier 2001,127).

If ‘decentralization and deconcentration of decision-making from the state to urban authorities’ occurs because that is what international capital favors, it then becomes easier to outmaneuver weak urban regulators and policy makers than strong and responsive states (Schmidt 1998, 131). Foreign investment thus brings in dollars but takes cities and countries into the process of globalization (Abraham 1996, 87). When globalization weakens the nation-state’s power, MNCs can run roughshod over government’s attempts to regulate them. While the state has been weakened, it will not disappear, since there are still functions for it that even neoliberal capitalism depends on. Ironically, neoliberal capitalism strengthens the state in some ways [as] countries now need central banks to deal with investors and the International Monetary Fund. (Schreier 2001, 129).

Although it is tempting to equate globalization with a new colonialism, the lack of a center in the de-territorialization of culture, the flow of global capital chasing the most efficient city market economy and its support by city elites from around the world make everyone a participant in this phenomenon (*ibid.*, 133).

With the geographical distribution of global economies, the conception of ‘global city’ functions emerges. By examining how different cities access, are accessed or even constructed with accord with a relatively heterogeneous set of global city functions, we may understand how they may become so without necessarily being world cities (Bishop 2003, 4). Not all global cities access globalization functions in the same way and likewise, globalization functions through global cities in diverse ways (In Southeast Asian global cities for example, radical capitalism coexists in tension with rigid government bureaucracy such as Malaysia or Thailand). This is because the need to operate in a fully free market economy (such as its success as a nodal point in facilitating financial exchange, e-media, cultural and geographic paths between other cities) cannot be separated from a need to maintain nationalistic bureaucracies to administer it (*ibid.*, 7):

[There is] visible tension at the social level, because both needs run counter to each other [for] global capitalism surpasses the economic interests of the nation...unless a nation is refigured...along the lines of international business, with the citizen reconstrued on the model of the global employee. In this sense the imperial pattern works in support of tendencies within global urbanism that subordinate national identity – even under the sign of the most strident nationalism – to international economic interests (*ibid.*).

MIGRATIONS

To discuss the nature of city migrations, some theoretical background and discussion on aspects of migration is necessary, especially large-scale migrations in the modern period that are marked by the traits of long-distance trade and global lines of communication (Cohen 1996, xi).

Migrations can be classified a number of ways.⁷ For Malaysian Muslims, the two most significant for city migrations are the contextual versus individual reasons to migrate and international versus internal migrations. Early migration literature linked migration with urbanization, as mass movements to towns or cities⁸ (Peterson 1996, 11). Different socio-cultural, economic as well as political contexts encourage or discourage migrations. These factors may be those associated with (Lee 1996, 17): (1) area intervening obstacles⁹ (2) personal factors of origin and (3) the area of destination.

How are intervening obstacles reduced for example? Obstacle-removing factors include increasing technology, communication and migration stories (ibid, 21). The Internet has fueled globalized communication, making all of the above occur at once.

One possibility is recruitment by employers which helps overcome ‘informational and other constraints on international or national movements’ (Massey 1996, 194). They also enhance migration’s value as a strategy for income generation or risk diversification. However, negative factors may also occur at the point of origin that overcomes obstacles to moving. Through emigration, governments may export potential disturbances arising from unemployment or send settler migrants to change and domesticate composition of rebel provinces (Nikolinakos 1996, 89).¹⁰

Another is common pathways or early migrant networks that have been established. These become sets of interpersonal ties that connect ‘present migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination through ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin.’ (Massey 1996, 198) Because the city is a hub for transnational connections (Hannerz 2000, 12), once the number of these network connections in an origin area reaches a critical threshold:

Migration becomes self-perpetuating because each act of migration itself creates the social structure needed to sustain it. Every new migrant reduces the cost of subsequent migrants for a set of friends and relatives, and some of these people are thereby induced to migrate, which further expands the set of people with ties abroad, which in turn, reduces costs for a new set of people (Massey 1996, 198)

Thus, when migration becomes a social pattern, one may no longer examine individual motivations (*ibid.*, 10). When migration becomes institutionalized in this way, it becomes progressively independent of any individual or structural factors that originally caused it (ibid, 200). Such networks create a multiplier effect that reverberates across space and time.¹¹ Globalization and urbanization further hasten this process as they feed upon each other. In the past, migration often meant severing ‘ties with the home country or the creation of a separate cultural ghetto’ (Davey 1996, 381) but with globalization, it becomes less so. The migration process is reflexive, not static as there is a culture of migration in and of itself. As migration grows within a community, it ‘changes values and cultural perceptions in ways that increase the probability of future migration...as experience in an industrial economy changes tastes and motivations’ (Massey 1996, 202)

Capitalist processes also attract migrants from peripheral regions to the more developed countries because:

Globalization creates material and ideological links to the places where capital originates. The foreign investment that drives economic globalization is managed from a small number of global cities, whose structural characteristics create a strong demand for immigrant labor.¹² (Massey 1996, 196)

However, even with such processes operating at the global (e.g. macro-economic forces) or local (personal network connections, employment, etc.) level, not everyone is motivated to migrate. Though various theories of migrations can be posited to explain the movement of people, we must be cautious as all ‘laws of migrations’ remain devoid of meaning for ‘micro-level decision making occurs in both the policy framework and the institutions of the labor-supplying or refugee-generating countries and the admission regulations of receiving states.’ (Hoerder 2002, 564) Migration is still a human phenomenon and its outcome dependent on the responses of the participating migrants¹³ and their households (ibid.) (Figure 1 summarizes globalization’s effects and its influence on city migration and the interweaving of socio-economic and political dynamics). Generally, migration processes may be summarized as follows (Massey 1996, 204):

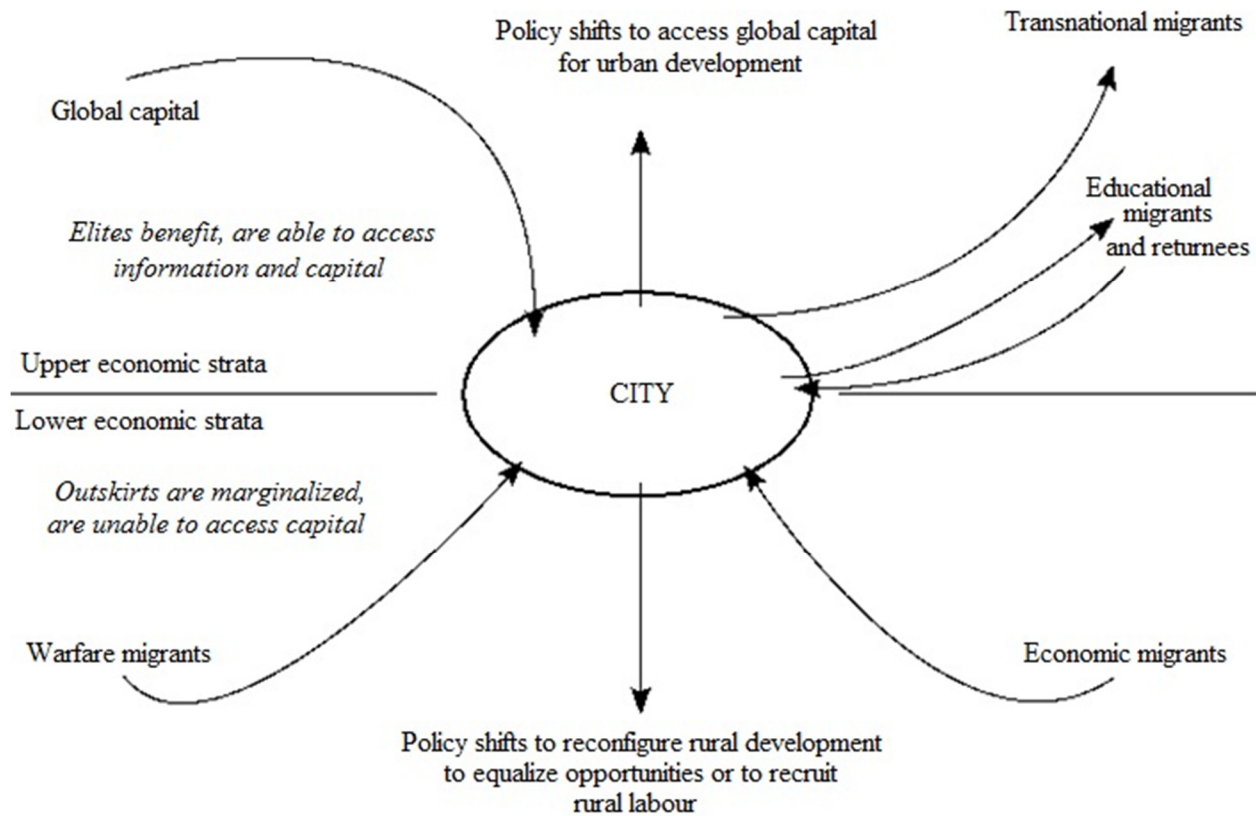


Figure: The effects of globalization on urban migration, socio-economic and political dynamics

1. Countries within a system need not be geographically close since flows reflect political and economic relationships rather than physical ones. Although proximity facilitates the

formation of exchange relationships, it does not guarantee them nor does distance preclude them.

3. Multipolar systems are possible, whereby a set of dispersed core countries receive immigrants from a set of overlapping sending nations. Nations may belong to more than one migration system, but multiple memberships are more common among sending than receiving nations.
4. As political and economic conditions change, systems evolve so that stability does not imply a fixed structure. Countries may join or drop out of a system in response to social change, economic fluctuations or political upheaval.

THE CITY: SOME TYPES AND THEORIES

City as Opportunity or Market Center

The city is a place where various social processes interact with one another in different ways influenced by globalization and migration processes (Schmidt 1998, 132). Viewed in this sense, the city can be seen as a locus of (1) production: urbanization is understood as a mode of commodity production. It provides a reason for many of the activities that take place in a city. Cities are thus spatial divisions of labor, embedded in even larger spatial divisions of labor. (2) finance and credit: money and power are manipulated. (3) consumption: the state is seen as an important progenitor of the city through its role as a provider of public goods and services (e.g. schools, hospitals, etc.) (4) reproduction of subjects: the socialization of people is the result of complex interactions and other unquantifiable influences not easily reduced to theory. (5) meaning: it is a source of understanding, means of representation or anchor of culture.

Because the city is alive and inhabited by people, in all of the above, it is crucial to capture the idea of the city in a way that the active, social nature of its creation is stressed. One way to do so is to examine urban socio-cultural or political movements, how they ascribe the city with their presence and how the city also inscribes them (ibid.).

Socially, in order for cities to be successful, its policies need to be conducive to 'sustainability.' (ibid., 128) When social problems, contradictions in city management and economy appear, instability arises. Some sources of instability may be traced to the failures of high-growth and the emerging inequalities produced in global capitalism.

Politically, cities as a paradigm of the country center have had to live in the tension between nationalist goals and its own self-autonomy. When nation-building takes the lead, cities become increasingly subordinated to the needs of national governments and strong states (Schmidt 1998, 128). However, globalization may weaken the state and open the door for stronger and more autonomous urban agents and institutions (ibid). At this point, we can now examine a case where the influences of globalization, city dynamics and migration factors among Malay Muslims occur in urban Malaysia.

GLOBALIZATION AMONG MUSLIMS IN URBAN MALAYSIA

The Educational-religious Migration of Malaysian Muslims

When Malaysia gained independence from Britain in 1957, it formed itself into a modern democratic, Islamic country. As part of its post-independence drive to modernize and prepare the native Malays¹⁴ (i.e. Muslims) into a literate and technologically skilled class, Malaysia financed their overseas education. While many were sent to the West (i.e. Britain, Australia or the U.S.), others went to Egypt, Pakistan or India. Egypt's Al-Azhar was one such popular place for those studying to become *ulama* (preachers) or *ustaz* (teachers) as well as Pakistan, where their *madarasses* (Islamic schools) were cheaper. Conservatively, 1,500 Malaysian

Muslims study in Pakistani *madrassas* (Tan 2004, 228). However, those who study in Egypt or Pakistan are potentially exposed to variants of Islam or pan-Islamic ideologies. Some, such as the Wahhabi-type, were alien to the moderate Sunni Islam version in Malaysia.

Around the 1970s, Wahhabism,¹⁵ an Islamic reform movement that started in Saudi Arabia (Williams 2004, 70) began to make waves. Financed by Saudi petrodollars, it spread its version of Islam internationally by building mosques and madrassas (*ibid.*) in places where Malays coincidentally studied. Such students overseas also established transnational links during their stays in Pakistan or Afghanistan. Some even left for Afghanistan to train in al-Qaeda camps at some stage (*ibid.*). These exposures radicalized some numbers of these Malaysian Muslims. Upon returning, they brought a more fundamentalist¹⁶ reading of the Quran along with zeal for the Islamization of the Malaysian state. Though they left as educational migrants, they returned as religious migrants. Such was the 'globalization' of the some highly educated Malays, though it did not totally displace all nationalistic values nor was every Malay Muslim 'Islamicized' by their overseas studies (Ong 1996, 388). It did however heighten perceptions of their own identity as Malay *Muslims* vis-à-vis the Chinese and Indians in Malaysia.¹⁷ These educational-religious migrants became heralds of a new transnational Islamic professional class subculture in Malaysia as they:

Form[ed] a transnational subculture that serve[d] as a foundation for an integrated labor market. The global integration of higher education and the formation of an international class of labor minimize[d] the cultural and social barriers that would otherwise impede international migration. This integration [took] its highest form for those in the [professional] fields...because their skills are least bounded by cultural contents... [therefore] it is this internationalization of professionals...that biases global migration towards [such people]... (*ibid.*).

These returnees also saw the benefits of the recruitment of an elite Islamic scholar class overseas by Malaysia. For example, Malaysia financed the building of an Islamic International University (UIA in the local acronym) by inviting outside Muslim scholars to teach locally (Huff 2004, 151). This facilitated the migration of overseas Islamic scholars and linked Malaysia into a global Islamic network of such scholars which she could now draw upon (In the recent decade, Islamic scholars from the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in the U.S. have visited Malaysia as advisors). Interestingly, though UIA 'Islamized' its curriculum, it in fact conforms to the American model with English as the primary language of instruction. By using English, the

vernacular of globalization, it was able to draw many foreign students to the capital. Such means helped overcome any constraints on their international movements to the point that:

A growing number of non-Malaysian *ulama* from countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh develop[ed] new careers in the UIA as informal consultants serving all shades of local public religious opinion... [making]...[p]rofessional religious consultancy...a growth industry... (Nagata 1994, 73)

However, the influx of overseas Muslims into Malaysia is not unidirectional. Other Muslim groups such as Darul Arqam (a local fundamentalist Islamic group) has forged its own connections overseas to countries such as Uzbekistan, restoring mosques and resocializing their youths in the university (Nagata 1994, 83).

Through one particular migratory inflow of overseas consultants in 1983, the Tabung Haji (Pilgrim Saving's Fund) was established to financially assist Muslims going overseas to perform the hajj as well as the founding of the first Islamic bank in the capital (ibid., 74). When these institutions were established, it introduced another system of migration – that of global Islamic capital. Though overseas consultants brought Islamic monetary capital to Malaysia, it does not remain in the country but also re-circulates back to the Middle East through another form of migration – the hajj. These pilgrimages are financed by the Malaysian government through the Tabung Haji. From its place in heart of the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, it gathers the country-wide resources of Malaysian Muslim zakat (tithe contributions).¹⁸ Although Malaysia invests and assists its Muslim populace to help them fulfill their religious duties, the government also engages in socioeconomic methods more typical of the Western free-market economy that clashes with a traditional Islamic worldview. For example, the Tabung Haji maintains the financial trust of its pilgrims by investing the funds in the secular stock market (ibid). Paradoxically, the government also engages and uses Islamic rhetoric to coopt Islamists in the midst of this socio-economic and political experimentation in a free-market democracy. This may be traced to early Malay proletariat reactions to capitalist development. The roots of these reactions are worth examining in the following section.

GLOBALIZING ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM: FROM THE RURAL TO THE CITY

In the 1970s, an industrialization program created industrial estates in major urban centers on Malaysia's west coast, multiplying employment opportunities. The exodus of Malay Muslim rural migrants to these centers resulted in housing shortages, forcing the rise of squatter settlements representing 'traditional Malay villages' illegally sited on the outskirts of the city. Despite this illegality, the government turned a blind eye to it because they were a source of cheap labor for industry but also because they provided significant electoral support to the ruling Malay party, UMNO (Tong 2003, 53-54). When these rural, underclass Malays migrated to the city, it bred a 'parochialism of ethnic identity.' (ibid.) This occurred because while the city was a rich environment for the intermixing of people of various races and religions, Malay Muslim exposure to other races there heightened their religious and racial consciousness when they encountered a sea of Chinese and Indian multiculturalism (Ackerman 1988, 155). This dynamic was also experienced by returning overseas Malay students besides a variety of transnational connections that sustained their heightened states of self-identity, especially religiousness¹⁹

(Jones 2004, 3). The ‘decontextualizing proclivities of globalization’ (with its emphasis on material consumption) which dehumanizes individuals and communities produced this sense of homelessness for the urbanites (Davey 2002).

The socio-religious disorientation of the Malay Muslims was also joined by global political and economic forces in Malaysia’s economic globalization. This dynamic can be traced to a global capitalism that began with her independence in 1957. In some ways, a gradual movement towards a stricter Islam already begun then as the full effects of a long-term Malaysian pro-capitalist industrial plan began to mature. As more Malays became inducted into the capitalist economy, the *dakwah* (Islamic revival) movement occurred simultaneously. This movement occurred in the context of the 1970s Gulf oil crisis and the Iranian revolution. Both events inspired promoters of *dakwah* (Nagata 1994, 83) as returning Malay students who had absorbed radical ideas of Islam overseas led Malaysian Islam into two directions. Some sided with PAS (Islamic Party of Malaysia), a religious-political party which draws its support from the peasant class while others backed a movement from the more educated, professional, urban middle class and younger population (Tong 2003, 52). The total effect of *dakwah*, through their networks of Muslims overseas, was to universalize the Malays’ experience with the international religious community (Nagata 1994, 84).

The growing worldwide resurgence of Islam in the 1970-80s was exacerbated by globalization and an accompanying ethnic homelessness in the feeling of Muslim community. This resulted in some Malaysian Muslims responding to modernization and globalization by focusing on Islamization, fostering schisms which separated the moderate, modernist Muslims and the more pious radicalists (Tan 2004, 208). The 1997 Asian financial crisis and deepening socio-economic disparities deepened the split. It became a *causus Belli* of the radicalists, asserting that globalization fostered inequality, Western economic and cultural domination of Malaysian Muslims. Their answer was a call to return to the religious purity of an Islamic state with *sharia* (Islamic law) that would administer justice and ameliorate poverty.

Although revivalist movements may be said to be reactions against modernity (and in spite of such rhetoric above), PAS does not fit this mold. As an Islamic opposition party contending with the secular Malay party UMNO (United Malays National Organization, which is the lead coalition member of the multi-racial BN or National Front party in Malaysia) for political power in the country, the PAS versus UMNO dynamic is an interesting case study of the effects of globalization and its effect on the split between traditional (i.e. rural) and modern (urban) communities.

PAS is of interest because it is an Islamist (or radicalist) party which supports city modernization within the framework of the nation-state, using words such as ‘people’ and ‘democracy’ in its politicking (Mahli 2003, 255).²⁰ What PAS opposes is the extent of Malaysia’s market-oriented modernization by UMNO which created pools of rural and urban poverty while only a small group of elite Malays prospered immensely. PAS uses Islam to argue that true Islamic development would focus more on uplifting the poor and orphans in both rural and urban areas (ibid., 253). The thrust of their argument goes to the heart of globalization and its interplay with modern capitalism and notions of development. Modernization theory holds that the transition from a traditional to a modern society is carried out through a series of stages. This process begins as a rule of a ‘shock’ which brings a set of ideas which then filter through society

so that economic progress is a necessary condition for some other purpose, judged to be good.²¹ PAS successfully indigenized this Islamic knowledge in the Malaysian context so that their articulation addressed both traditional and modern concerns of inequality and social justice, appealing the urbanites towards them. This indigenization of knowledge can be seen as a kind of resistance to globalization (Schäbler 2004, xvi). Thus, while both parties utilize rhetoric that refers to global happenings and its implications for local politics, each has framed it within the context that appeals to their particular audience. For example, a late PAS parliamentary leader stated that as a conscious strategy, 'PAS shall continue to assess and address the impact of globalization, in so far as it affects the development of a better Malaysia and a better world' (Mahli 2003, 253).

In this light then, PAS cannot be described in any way as being anti-modern. However, because PAS has never assumed national political power in Malaysia, UMNO has had unfettered freedom to push Malaysia towards greater integration into the global free-market economy, which produces increasing inequality in the country. This however strengthens PAS' ideological arguments. However, should they some day come to full power, PAS would find themselves managing a complex economy well integrated with global capitalism and would have to reconcile this reality with its history of voicing popular opposition to the inequalities created by Malaysia's transformation into such an economy. They would likely undermine PAS' ideological credibility in the long run (ibid, 257).

Besides this particular challenge for PAS, they would also have to grapple with Malaysia's version of Islam, called Islam Hadhari. It is an attempt by moderate Muslims to formulate an expression of the religion that is compatible with the modern world and contextualizes many existing features of the global economic system on its own terms (Chong 2006, 37-46). While economics and Islamic banking is only one feature of this expression, other issues that have caused great consternation among traditional Islam's clash with modernity such as female Muslim wearing of the *purdah* (head covering), the place of *sharia* (Islamic law) and its relationship to modern law in a nation-state are all elements which Islamic Hadari strives to harmonize with the present global order. However, it remains to be seen whether Malaysia can successfully integrate these contentious strands in the decade ahead.

MISSIONS, GLOBALIZATION AND CITY MIGRATIONS

Global City Migrations: the City as Koinonia

The church must judge globalization and not be captive to it. Yet, at the same time, she can utilize aspects of globalization processes to further the kingdom of God also. When cities become strange places for migrants without connections or friendship overseas, their social and cultural disorientation may make them more susceptible to alternate versions and practices of religious communities that may be religiously beneficial or destructive for them. If Christians take the initiative to meet Muslims and receive them in the name of Christ, positive impressions can be imprinted in their minds. Strategically following up on them by helping them to find affordable places to stay in the city²² as well as helping them navigate the particularities of the city are necessary. However, such ministries must integrate the spiritual with the services they provide. The church plays a key role in the multi-ethnic dimension of a city as it is often the only organization

that includes a diversity of cultures (Davey 1999, 389). Although the globalized world is awash in informational networks and students may communicate via e-mail or Internet phones, information is not the same as communication nor community. Communication and community in *koinonia* needs to be restored to the islands of people that do not have bridges to one another (Hunermann 2001:145). Mission means building such bridges to bring people to people²³ but also people to Christ so they are no longer mere virtual communities nor wired Netizens but a *koinonia* of a transformed people in Christ. Such *koinonia* means the shared presence, shared resources and shared worship that we see in Acts 2:42-44. Such sharing of the ‘diversity of cultures must give the church its entrée...into the global city where neighborhoods no longer end at main roads or rivers or centre on the pub or corner shop.’ (Davey 1999, 387) Such migrations of people brought about by globalization is also opportune for well-placed mission agencies to assist churches through their knowledge of people’s homelands²⁴ (Valerio 2003, 20).

Globalized Cities, Migrant Identity and Christian Formation

What place and shape can Christian mission look when Malays embrace religious identities or beliefs alien to the local religious scene, be it Wahhabism or Christ-centered Christianity? To what degree does such an engagement with globalization’s impact on the urban migration of Malay Muslims overseas and their returning look like?

Firstly, we must recognize that not all migrant movements come with positive motivations or feelings. Some are pushed because they became liabilities to their governments politically, socially, religiously or economically. For others, globalization brings connectedness and privilege but for the disadvantaged, its downside is exclusion (Schreiter 2001, 125). The channels that globalization promotes may lead to greater concentrations of wealth or power among those who have access and resources but for those who do not, they either stagnate or fall behind economically. In a globalized world, new social movements and networks that can instantly emerge often exploit the infrastructure of ‘informational capitalism’ – the Internet, the urban habitat, travel or what emerges in new spatial arrangements in urban areas or new nations.²⁵ For Christians ministering in such environments, it is helpful to know of migrant networks that students may utilize to build or maintain identity or community. The message of a life-affirming and transformational gospel can resonate in educational or economic migrants confronted by urban elites or wielders of power created by globalization processes that create a lifestyle and value system that dominates and reduces them to an inferior status (Abraham 1996, 89). It can uplift economic migrants that fill stigmatized ‘migrant jobs’ (Massey 1996, 203) or divinely change educational migrants investigating chauvinistic ideologies or philosophies. When migrants do embrace the gospel, we need holistic discipleship emphasizes the Christian community as the agent of identity transformation *par excellence* in obedience to the Holy Spirit. For nationals who must compete with overseas migrants in the global economy, the church can minister by lifting them spiritually with a sense of a ‘struggle for justice and participation [that strives] for a renewed community which allows space for different identities to flourish’ so that neither religious nor ethnic conflicts arise (Abraham 1996, 90). This does not excuse an engagement of the church in the political arena as well. While the past decade has seen increased Evangelical engagement in this arena, few have written on Christian political ethics and the church’s role and influence in shaping a global social order (Stackhouse 2008, 59) where the Gospel of the kingdom takes root. While theological dialogue and ecclesial partnerships with Christians across the denominational

spectrum has occurred, Evangelical seminaries should consider courses in Christian political ethics and law as part of seminary training (ibid.). Because the Gospel has the power to transform society, it should also drive us to engage our culture and politics in its fullest sense as well.

GLOBALIZATION AND MIGRANT CITY DISCIPLESHIP

How does the church minister to people who move internationally from city to city? When such people are deterritorialized, the church needs to minister in the mono-cultural and bi-cultural spheres as these transnationals and international migrants are not easily served by heterogeneous or homogeneous churches (Leonard 2004, 67). Churches that are culturally and linguistically contextualized for such people have the advantage that ‘through the many webs of association, the gospel can spread back into their homeland which are more closed to outreach.’ (ibid.) Church denominations with an international presence (i.e. Baptists, Methodists) should recognize these potential crossings and connect workers utilizing their global denominational networks. By contacting overseas churches, they are better prepared to receive such migrants, ensuring continuity of ministry across borders. Campus ministries such as Campus Crusade for Christ and InterVarsity can benefit from such a paradigm. Typically such ministries evangelize international students at the universities, discipling them throughout the span of their student life. However, upon graduation, little plans are made to continue such ministry towards most students that return to their homeland. Great potential lies ahead for the partnership of such ministries with national churches or denominations with a global presence, handing off newly discipled students to nationals in their homeland.

A ‘transnational anthropology’ (Appadurai 1990) is also needed to study the life of transnationals where globalization has deterritorialized space among them, most especially the diasporas (Hannerz 1990, 237).²⁶ The importance of the diaspora and transnationals are seen in the increased focus and establishment of diaspora studies among major universities in the past decade. Mission agencies need to consider how to recruitment, partnership and the mobilization of Christian transnationals can play a role in their mission strategies in this paradigm.

GLOBALIZATION AND THE MISSIONARY’S IN-BETWEEN WORLDS

Missionaries have opportunities to act as agents of intervention or mediation for transnationals, educational or religious migrants that encounter the global marketplace of ideas, finance and its intersection with the local economy when the rise of global capitalism has made it the seeming answer to many underdeveloped nations’ economic problems. When missionaries minister in such places, it is tempting to encourage and tout the free-market system and need (or imperative), for locals to link and tap into this system in order to access capital and investment that may improve local fortunes. However, if locals are encouraged to accept the free-market economy uncritically, the entry of globalization not only disrupts but may also destroy local markets by the mass purchasing powers of MNCs, forcing poorer countries to liberalize trade without proper safeguards. This may lower the asking price of local products, depressing wages that locals may ask of the global markets. If the locals cannot lower their costs, global capital is free to seek greater profit margins elsewhere and use this power as leverage to force prices down in local markets.

Missionaries that work in such environments must be knowledgeable and critical of the global market forces versus local economy dynamics and how it impacts the nationals. At present, we already have efforts by workers partnering with nationals to formulate or raise institutions that can engage powerful globalization forces. Christians have helped form cooperatives or NGOs that protect local interest and that coordinates with outside forces by specializing in handling the intricacies of the global market economy, advising locals to set up laws or regulations that channel capital or trade equitably.²⁷ While there is much to commend in this, I believe we should also critically re-examine the accepted nature of many business transactions that involve the charging of interests Why is this important? In the past decade, Muslims have trumpeted an alternative to the Western financial system of charging interest, constructing an Islamic banking system that is 'interest-free' banking.²⁸ While Christians might protest that the practical impossibilities of such an economic model, how should we understand Exodus 22:25 and Lev 25:35-36, where we find injunctions to treat the fellow believer without charging interest when money is loaned? Should Christians continue plying their mission utilizing and accepting the present Western economic system in light of this biblical precedent? If Muslims can do this, why not Christians also? (Amerding, 2001). What does lack of Christian motivation to pursue a Christian banking system say about our concern for justice for the poor and equity for our fellow believers? Such actions can challenge free-market capitalism as being absolute and that 'competition is the only possible action and...profit is the ultimate value and are transcendental claims meant to reconfigure the world for the sake of those who want to make money.' (Schreiter 2001, 128). People do not need greater market friendliness but 'people-friendly markets.' (Abraham 1996, 90)

CONCLUSION

In a globalized world, missions must address the disparities of wealth created when the forces of globalization impact a country and its urban inhabitants. It should engage with transnationals and the frequent, multi-sided migrations of people across borders. Today, the search is on for a global order where life-affirming values are preserved and strengthened (Abraham 1996, 90). What paradigms might be helpful in formulating such mission in a globalized world? One is that of mission as transformation, a definition of mission in orthodox Christian circles, especially in the Two-Thirds World and among those ministering with the poor. Vinay Samuel has played a leading role in this understanding of mission which he defines as 'transformation [that enables] God's vision of society to be actualized in all relationships, social, economic and spiritual, so that God's will may be reflected in human society and his love be experienced by all communities, especially the poor.' (Sugden, 2000, vii citing Samuel)

Mission as reconciliation is another possibility – of peacemaking, seeking justice, healing memories and rebuilding societies (Schreiter 2001, 139). Such a ministry creates reconciled communities (2 Cor 5:19). In an atmosphere of safety, people can rebuild trust and prepare themselves to receive God's grace of reconciliation and empowerment in a world that preys and exploits the disadvantage and their trust for profit. Such ministries also engage in the moral reconstruction of broken societies – an activity that takes place on a variety of levels, such as conflict resolution, helping to mend institutions that are weakened by the power of globalization, lending one's credibility as individuals and institutions to the strengthening of society or using one's own network resources to reconnect isolated society within a larger world (ibid., 142).

This type of mission reconciles God's vision of the *imago Dei* in *koinonia* with God, humans and society versus the distorting effects of globalized migrations and fragmentation of urban living. Reconciliation also means that the church gives meaning, testifying to a greater identity among urban dwelling migrants that lies beyond the attractions of this world. Because globalization increases the de-linking of culture and geography, providing migrants with a more fluid base of identity in which to establish or construct in host destinations, the Christian community can become powerful anchors to shape and witness the kingdom life for the migrants. They testify to an alternative, a new and transformed identity in which migrants can construct their life upon in Christ. Such an identity can resonate in Jesus who was a migrant-inhabitant himself between two worlds. He was human, yet divine. His place of ministry was earth, yet his calling was heavenly. Jesus' straddling between both worlds is the model of the mystery of the incarnation. Perhaps, we should re-examine what incarnational ministry can mean in light of a globalized world – that of a ministry that does not merely focus on an emic view of the insider but an actual straddling of the etic and emic, a dynamic living of the mystery of being in between two worlds, yet being faithful to serve God and people in these worlds. How we can faithfully do so may offer fresh possibilities towards ministering to global migrants who seem neither here nor there in the twenty-first century.

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Notes

- 1 Although I discuss globalization in this paper, it is useful to also note that 'glocali-zation,' a term discussed by Roland Robertson is also useful. Yamashita (2003:6) notes that this term 'glocal' and 'glocalization' may be defined as being 'formed by the telescoping global and local to make a blend.' It is the 'rediscovery of the local in relation to the global, or the global subject to local conditions.' (Davey 1996, 386).
- 2 Although it is not within the scope of this paper to detail each of the above proposals, for my discussion, I use the second of the three.
- 3 For example, Schmidt (1998, 129) notes that it was the principle element of the colonial enterprise, especially in Southeast Asia where colonized territories had their economies distorted to serve the requirements of the colonial metropolises, creating economic and political patterns of dependence.
- 4 The basis of the globalization process is the liberalization of the economy, both at the international and national levels (Ho 1997, 105).

- 5 Yamashita (2003, 3), citing Appadurai comments that this 'global ethnoscape' is one of five dimensions of the 'global cultural flow'.
- 6 There are exceptions. Shanghai for example is the true capital center for China, not Beijing, while Frankfurt is Germany's economic center rather than its capital Berlin.
- 7 There are nine dyads associated with the study of migration (see Cohen. 1996:xiixv). See also, See also Portes 1996, 175.
- 8 Although a variety of theoretical models has been proposed to explain why international migration (at the macro level) begins, four can be discussed: (1) neo-classical economics (2) the new economics of migration (3) dual labor market theory (4) world systems theory (Massey 1996, 182).
- 9 Entry and exit rules are important variables that also influence the magnitude, composition and direction of international migration.
- 10 An example is Aceh, Indonesia where the government resettled thousands of Javanese in an effort to outnumber the intransigent locals agitating against Indonesian political stability. Though such methods may work to shift economic problems, they may sometimes radicalize coerced religious migrants as they are free to explore alternative ideologies that may not be within the purview of their original culture. However, what often may pass as settlement or migration policy designed to control the inflow or outflow of people may be just a mechanism for preserving the way of life for the privileged few, which runs counter to the demand for labor (Hoerder 2002, 572).
- 11 Thus, while most theories of international labor migration is basically an outcome of economic decisions governed by the law of supply and demand, the phenomenon can also be seen as social in nature. See Portes (1996, 162).
- 12 International flows of labor tend to follow international flows of capital paradoxically, in the opposite direction. This is because emigrants are 'created by direct foreign investment in developing countries and the disruptions that such investment brings.' (Massey 1996, 209)
- 13 Types of migrants and of migration are often difficult to draw firm and clear boundaries as typologies tend to be time-bound (Skeldon 1996, 409).
- 14 The Malaysian constitution defines a Malay as a 'person who continually practices the habits, customs and practices of Islam.' Because the constitution linked ethnicity with religion, all Malays are generally assumed to be Muslims in the local context as does this article.
- 15 This movement has typically sought to eliminate elements from Islam that has accreted over history and corrupted its beliefs and to return Islam to the purity of its roots (Williams 2004, 70).
- 16 I try to avoid the term 'fundamentalist' with its overtones of resistance and rejection of things modern with implications of archaic thinking as in Malaysia, students who returned did not exhibit such tendencies.
- 17 Little attention has been paid though, to these interpersonal aspects of migration and the reactions of migrants to prolonged exposure to alien cultures and political systems and to radically different living circumstances [or] international migration for education (Antoun 1994, 161).
- 18 *Zakat* is one of the pillars of Islam. The Muslim tithe of about 2.5% of income is normally gathered by Muslim authorities for purposes of Muslim welfare such as distribution to the poor.
- 19 Tong (2003, 46) observes that because identities are only meaningful in an 'enunci-ated context, as a consequence, while the nation-state is committed to development, [it must also] moderate the 'homelessness' inherent in globalization.
- 20 PAS leader, Nik Aziz stated that 'if Islam is split apart, democracy is also split apart.' (Mahli 2003, 255).
- 21 This allows the rise of entrepreneurs to overcome traditional ideas as they engage in activities of modernity that allows economic growth to become the normal condition of that society.
- 22 The YMCA still does retain some vestiges of this concept today worldwide although it has thoroughly secularized and caters mostly students or budget travelers seeking cheap lodging.
- 23 Immigration/migration laws are the biggest obstacle for the legal movement of migrants between borders. Most theories of migrations pay little attention to state interventions, while the literature on international relations comment little on population movements, except for refugee movements generated as a result of conflicts (Weiner 1996, 297).
- 24 This however omits another phenomenon, church-to-church missions, which eliminates the role of the mission agency as churches link to other churches in overseas cities to do missions (see Johnson 2003).
- 25 Those who do not know how to utilize this 'informational capitalism' may end up in informational black holes and be shut out of the global economy (Davey 1999:384-385 citing Castells).
- 26 According to Appadurai (1990, 11), it is the de-territorialization which is 'now at the core of a variety of global fundamentalisms...'
- 27 The Catholic Relief Services for example works to connect overseas Third World coffee farmers to Catholic consumers in Chicago and across the U.S.A. in partnership with twelve fair-trade coffee companies.
- 28 See Trofimov 2007