VALUES
DREAMS
IDEALS

MUSLIM YOUTH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

SURVEYS IN MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA

IMPRINT

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PREFACE

The future of the country – any country – will be shaped by its youth. Youngsters set trends and change societies. In Malaysia and Indonesia, countries with Muslim majorities, young generations are huge: more than half of the population is less than 30 years old, about one third is younger than 14. In Indonesia, 200 million Muslims – 88% of the population – constitute the largest Muslim population world-wide. In Malaysia, 16 million Muslims account for 60% of the population. Far away from Islam's region of origin, Muslims in these two South East Asian states have their own customs and traditions, distinguishing them culturally and linguistically from Muslims in the Middle East.

How does Indonesia's and Malaysia's Muslim Youth feel about their respective country, their family, their society? Do youngsters care about politics? How religious are they? What are their needs, their problems? Who do they turn to? Are they happy? Optimistic? We don't know much. That's why we asked young people in both countries what they think, feel, believe, fear, aspire to and hope for. We cooperated with the authors of the Shell Youth Study, which has been conducted in Germany since 1953 .

Young people face peer pressure from social groups they are part of in schools, universities or work places. In Indonesia and in Malaysia, most youngsters grow up in conservative households, where religious values are stressed. At the same time, many young Muslims live in and embrace a globalised world. In Malaysia, modern technology - readily available and unrestricted – has become part of youth culture. Almost 85% of young people use the internet, taking them beyond borders and exposing them to different cultures, views and value-systems. While youngsters in both countries grow up in societies that have adopted seemingly liberal political systems and a culture of consumption, they are also courted by fundamentalists, who believe that democracy, individual rights and open markets are not reconcilable with their Islamic values. With so many different influences at work, we wonder were these young people are heading.

This Muslim Youth Survey – envisioned to be the start of a periodic poll – was conducted in both countries in October and in November 2010. 1,060 people aged 15 to 25 were surveyed in Malaysia, 1,496 in Indonesia. Both surveys were conducted by trained interviewers, whose face-to-face conversations with the respondents took more than an hour. We focused on personal development, family orientation, religion, politics, social environment, lifestyle and values. Respondents provided generous information about their family life, their recreational activities, their professional and personal goals and their political orientation. They also told us about the role of Islam in their lives.

We hope that this survey will draw attention to the concerns of youngsters and lead to wider public discourse.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

COUNTRY
INFORMATION

COUNTRY INFORMATION
MALAYSIA

WEST MALAYSIA IS A PENINSULA SOUTH OF THAILAND, STRETCHING DOWN TO SINGAPORE AND EAST MALAYSIA COMPRISES THE PROVINCES SARAWAK AND SABAH ON THE ISLAND OF BORNEO. MALAYSIA NEIGHBOURS BRUNEI, INDONESIA AND THAILAND.

AGE STRUCTURE

- 0-14 yrs: 29.6%
- 15-64 yrs: 65.4%
- 65 yrs & over: 5%
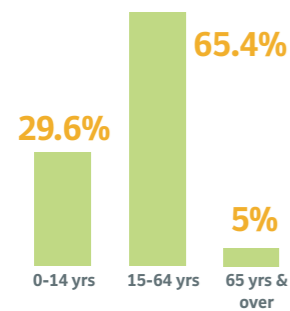
- Population: 28.7 Million
- Median age: 26.8 Jahre
- Population Growth Rate: 1.6 % *(estimate 2011)*

URBANIZATION

- Kuala Lumpur: 1.5 mill.
- Klang: 1.1 mill.
- Johor Bahru: 0.9 mill.
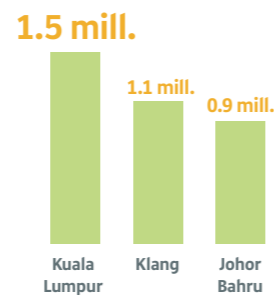
- 72 % of the population lives in cities. *(2010)*
- Urbanization Rate: 1.7 % *(estimate 2010-2015)*

POLITICAL SYSTEM

Malaysia is a federal, parliamentary monarchy, based on the Westminster-system. The country consists of 13 states and 3 federal territories (Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and the island Labuan). Nine states are ruled by Sultans and four (Malakka, Penang, Sabah and Sarawak) by elected governors. The king is elected every five years out of the sultans. Since 2007 King Mizan Zainal Abidin is the official head of state, present Prime Minister is Najib Tun Razak. The two-chamber parliament consists of the House of Representatives Dewan Rakyat and the Senate Dewan Negara.

Malaysia's predominant political party, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) has held power in a coalition known as the Barisan Nasional with a shifting number of other parties – 13 at present – since Malaysia's independence from the UK in 1957. The Prime Minister of Malaysia, his deputy and the heads of the most important political departments have always been members of the UMNO.

Election age in Malaysia is 21 years.

DEVELOPMENT OF GDP

Year	GDP (US$)	
2009	225 billion	
2010	219 billion	*(estimate)*
2011	219 billion	*(estimate)*

- GDP per Capita: 14.700 US $ *(2010)*
- GDP-Real Growth Rate: 7.1 % *(estimate 2010)*
- Population below poverty line: 5.1 % *(estimate 2007)*

GDP - COMPOSITION BY SECTORS
(estimate 2010)

- 49.3%
- 41.6%
- 9.1%

- Industry
- Agriculture
- Service
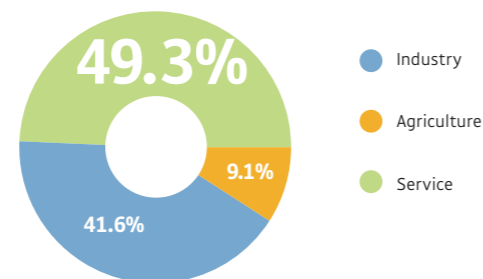
COUNTRY INFORMATION
INDONESIA

ARCHIPELAGO WITH 17,508 ISLANDS (6,000 UNINHABITED). INDONESIA IS A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY WITH THE WORLD'S LARGEST MUSLIM POPULATION. A DIRECT NEIGHBOR OF MALAYSIA, TIMOR-LESTE, AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA, INDONESIA IS THE FOURTH MOST POPULATED COUNTRY IN THE WORLD.

AGE STRUCTURE

- 0-14 yrs: 27.3%
- 15-64 yrs: 66.5%
- 65 yrs & over: 6.1%
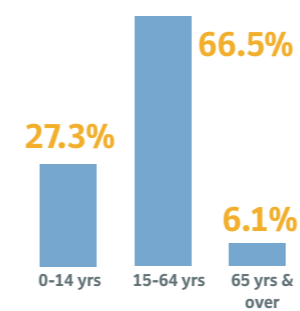
- Total population: approx. **238 million** people
- Population Growth Rate: 1,1 %
- Median age: 28.2 years

URBANIZATION

- Jakarta: 9.1 mill.
- Surabaya: 2.5 mill.
- Bandung: 2.4 mill.
- Medan: 2.1 mill.
- Semarang: 1.3 mill.
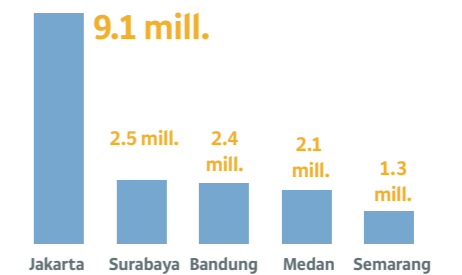
- Urban population: 44 % of the population lives in cities.
- Urbanization rate: 1.7 %

POLITICAL SYSTEM

Indonesia is a presidential republic. The president is chief of state and chief executive and is directly elected by the people every five years. Current president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was elected in 2009 with a majority of 61 %. The Indonesian parliament, Majelis Permusyawaratan (MPR), consists of the House of Representatives, Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (DPR) and the Senate, Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (DPD).

There are 560 representatives in the parliament, who are elected by proportional representation in 77 electoral districts. The 33 provinces of Indonesia are represented in the province, every province can send up to four representatives, depending on its size. There is a 2.5 % hurdle to be elected to parliament. The secular parties have received a majority over the religious parties in each election since 2009. Voting right is automatically acquired when Indonesians turn 17 years old.

DEVELOPMENT OF GDP

Year	GDP (US$)	
2009	511.8 billion	
2010	539.4 billion	*(estimate)*
2011	695.1 billion	*(estimate)*

- GDP per capita: 4.300 US $ *(estimate 2010)*
- Population below the poverty line: 13.3 % *(estimate 2010)*

GDP - COMPOSITION BY SECTORS
(estimate 2010)

- 46.4%
- 16.5%
- 37.1%

- Industry
- Agriculture
- Service
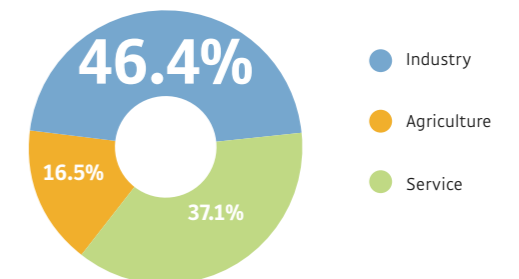
COUNTRY INFORMATION
MALAYSIA

RELIGION
(2010)

60.4%

- Muslims (Sunni)
- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Confucianism, Taoism and other Christians
- others
- none

0.8%
1.5%
2.6%
6.3%
9.1%
19.2%

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

PRIMARY ENROLLMENT

94% **94%**

94% of girls and boys are in primary school

SECONDARY ENROLLMENT

71% **66%**
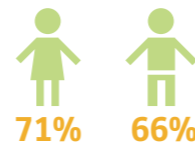
71% of girls and 66% of boys are in secondary school

TERTIARY ENROLLMENT

36%

36% of the population of tertiary age are in tertiary education

LITERACY RATE

92%
98%

92 % of adults and 98 % of youth are literate *(2006)*

ETHNICITIES
The three largest ethnic groups in Malaysia are Malays (50.4 %), Chinese (23.7 %) and Indian (7.1 %). Moreover, there are various indigenous groups and ethnic sub-groups.

SCHOOL SYSTEM
The Malaysian school system consists of two stages: From 7 until 12 years old, Malaysian children go to Elementary School. There are two types: the public *Sekolah Kebangsaan* and the traditional *Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan*. Lessons are held in Malay in the public elementary schools, and in Chinese or Tamil in the traditional schools.

Secondary school in Malaysia, *Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan*, is divided into five one-year terms.

There are public, private and state-funded schools.

UNIVERSITIES
The public and numerous private universities in Malaysia offer good studying conditions for Malaysias 600.000 students. There is a special focus on technical degrees.

The Bumiputra-policy of the Malaysian government – high privileges for the Malay and indigenous population groups – is dominating the public education sy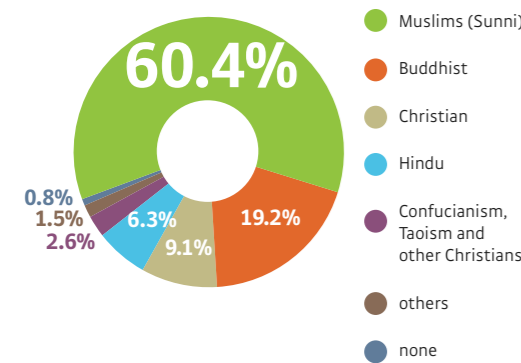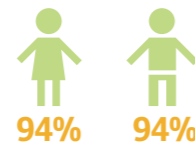stem. Access to public universities is facilitated for Malays through various scholarships. Chinese and Indian students have to rely more on private schools or on studies abroad.

TELECOMMUNICATION

30.4 mill.
Number of mobile phones *(2009)*

64.6 %
of the population have internet access

5 mill.

1.1 mill.

LABOUR FORCE (BY OCCUPATION)
(estimate 2010)

49%

36%
13%

- Industry
- Agriculture
- Service
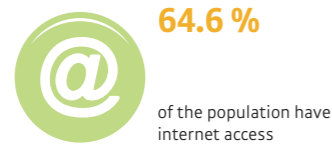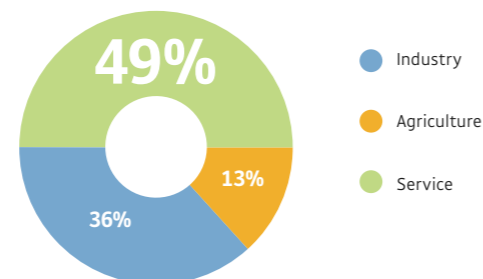
■ Unemployment: 3.4% *(2011)*

COUNTRY INFORMATION
INDONESIA

RELIGION
(2010)

88%

8%
2%
1%
1%

- Islam
- Protestant and Catholic Christians
- Hindu
- Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism
- Interreligious and others

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

PRIMARY ENROLLMENT

94% **97%**
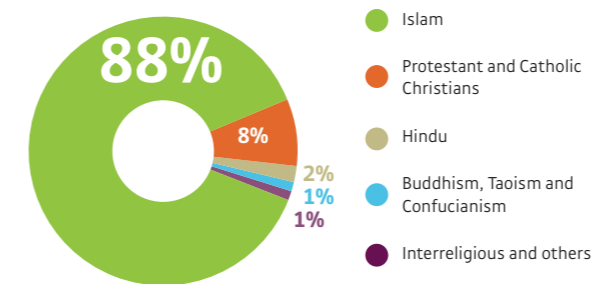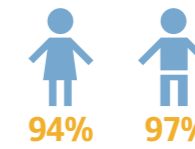
94% of girls and 97% of boys are in primary school

SECONDARY ENROLLMENT

68% **69%**
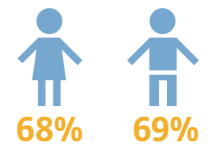
68% of girls and 69% of boys are in secondary school

TERTIARY ENROLLMENT

21%

of the population of tertiary age are in tertiary education

LITERACY RATE

92%
97%
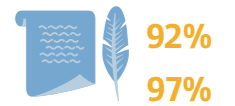
92 % of adults and 97 % of youth are literate *(2006)*

ETHNICITIES
More than 30 larger ethnic groups, largest minorities: Indonesians of Chinese, Indian, Arabic and Melanesian origin. In total more than 500 ethnic sub-groups. Besides the official language Bahasa Indonesia there are between 150 and 250 dialects spoken.

SCHOOL SYSTEM
Indonesian children in the age of 7-12 go to elementary school, *Sekolah Dasar* (*SD*). High School is then composed of three years *Sekolah Menengah Pertama* (*SMP*) (13-15 years) and three years *Sekolah Menengah Atas* (*SMA*) or *Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan* (*SMK*) (16-18 years). The *SMA* is preparing the students for University, the *SMK* puts a focus on professional life.

The Ministry of Education is in charge of the public schools. The large network of religious schools, *Madrasah*, is run by the Ministry of Religion. The *Madrasah*-schools have basically the same curriculum as public schools, but they have a strong focus on religious issues.

Momentarily, approximately 17.5 % of Indonesian students go to *Madrasah*-schools.

Moreover, there are private schools and boarding schools, among the latter are the *Pesantren*, whose students get a religious education but are also taught in conventional subjects. Momentarily, approximately 3.1 million Indonesian are enrolled in the 14.067 Indonesian *Pesantren*.

UNIVERSITIES
There are around 80 state Universities in Indonesia and more than 2.200 private schools.

TELECOMMUNICATION

159.2 mill.
Number of mobile phones *(2009)*

12.3%
of the population have internet access
9 mill. mobile internet users (almost quintupled since 2007)

33 mill.
the third-largest number of Facebook users after the US and the UK *(2010)*

5.6 mill.
about 21 percent of Indonesian internet users tweet on a regular basis - *2010*

LABOUR FORCE (BY OCCUPATION)
(estimate 2010)

48.9%

12.8%
38.3%

- Industry
- Agriculture
- Service
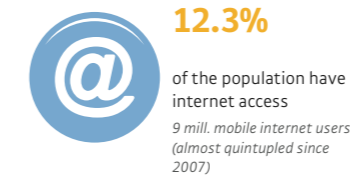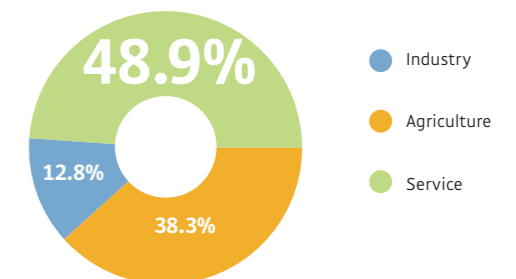
■ Unemployment rate: 7.1 % *(estimate 2010)*

COUNTRY REPORT

MALAYSIA

COUNTRY REPORT: MALAYSIA

INTRODUCTION

Youth, as defined to cover the ages of 15-25 years in this survey, is a period of high energy and enthusiasm coupled with idealism and invincibility. The environment and society in which youths dwell have a very significant impact on how they utilize their talents, strengths, energy and idealism.

The milieu of the youths in Malaysia, the home environment, the media, education, government policies and societal values all have a profound effect on shaping them. Since they grow up in the post independence era of Malaysia, the youths are brought up in a period of rapid economic growth and modernization, fast changing technologies, globalization and international developments, changing family structures and rising individualism. These surroundings and knowledge influence the lifestyle, values, religious belief, social relations, political affiliations as well as personal and social visions.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

THE MUSLIM YOUTHS IN MALAYSIA ARE A GENERALLY HAPPY AND CONTENTED GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ARE RATHER OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THEIR FUTURE AND THE FUTURE OF MALAYSIA.

Their contentment is understandable as they have not suffered hardships on a major scale in this young country. Malaysia is in general politically stable, economically sound in spite of the usual share of economic downturns and it has not suffered any devastating natural and social calamities. Education up to tertiary level is accessible to and used by the vast majority of youths, largely facilitated for Malay (and therefore Muslim) youth on the basis of Malaysia's New Economic Policy since the 1970s.

Besides encouraging the private sector to provide skill training for the youth, the government has implemented several programmes such as community colleges for vocational training and skill training centres for the unemployed and new job seeking graduates. The skill training is not only meant to help them qualify for employment in the various industries but also to initiate their own businesses.

With the availability of educational and skill training opportunities for Muslim youths and the economic wellbeing in the country, it is therefore not unexpected that the majority of them are sure to be able to study or work in their desired field. That said, such confidence is tempered for some by fear of losing jobs or not finding jobs quickly and staying unemployed for some time.

FIGURE 1

A few years from now, your economic situation will be:
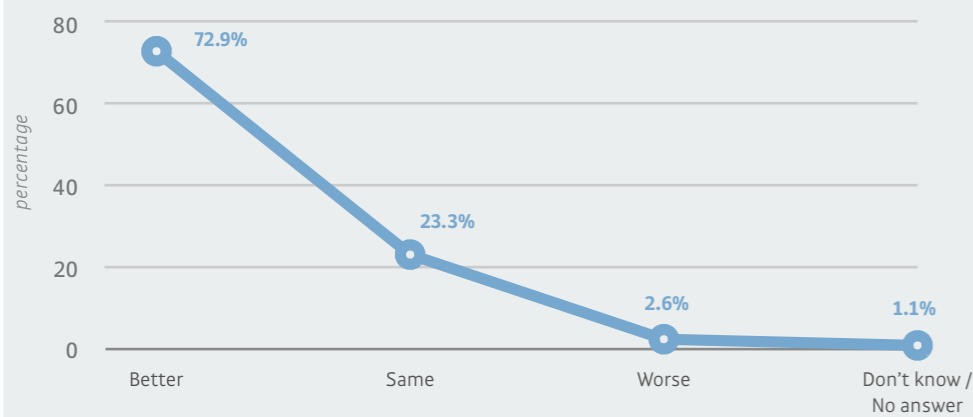
Owing to the high profile, power, and wealth of many politicians in Malaysia, one would expect the youths to aspire to become politicians. But being a politician is at the bottom of the list of goals and dreams in the life of the youths while being a good parent ranks second and being an entrepreneur tops the list.

FIGURE 2

What do you aspire to be in your life ?

Author	Tailor
Doctor	Psychiatrist
Engineer	Accountant
Lecturer	Astronaut
Teacher	Programmer
Nurse	Scientist
Fashion designer	Success in life
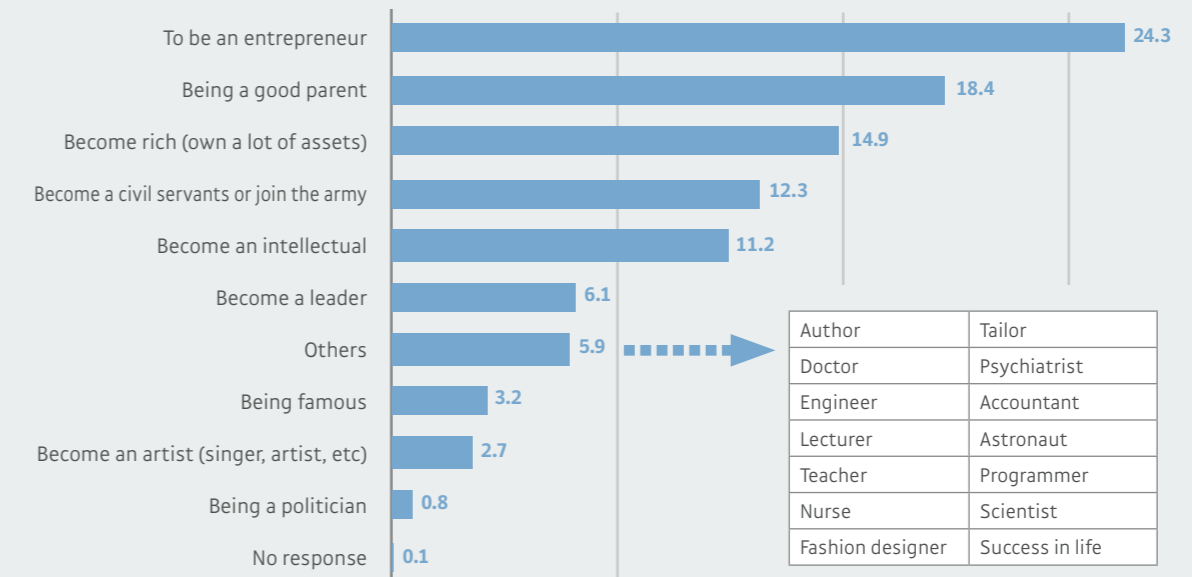
However, Muslim youths are not immune to the good things in life. Becoming rich or having lots of assets ranks in third place on their list of priorities. The way to wealth shows an interesting mix of modern and collectivist or traditional attitudes when we consider that 94.9% of the youth believe that hard work will pay off, 82.1% believe that the wealth gap is warranted due to hard work. But a large minority of 48.4% still take a fatalistic approach on wealth and success; this fatalistic approach, however, may also be due to the fact that the state is known "to provide", and especially so for the overwhelmingly Muslim Bumiputra population which currently still receives economic favours due to the continuation of the economic policies mentioned before. On the other hand differences between age groups are also reflecting experience in the workforce without necessarily exposing attitudes towards religion (fatalism). The experience of individual responsibility seems to have resulted in a clear pattern for questions involving attitudes towards one's career: Answers to "How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? – Hard work does pay off" shows that those more in the bottom age ranges (15-17 and 18-19) disagree while those in the upper age ranges (20-22 and 23-25) agree.

Another striking change is the general appeal for jobs in the civil service. Generations before the current group of youths- and starting with the privileges during British colonial rule – working positions in the public sector had been the fulfilment of aspirations with high social appeal. Though a fair number of youth today would still want to work for the government, it is not on the top list of their goals and dreams in life; it ranks in fourth place for them.

FIGURE 3

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the importance of the following items?

A - Living in a democratic country
B - Having good Infrastructure
C - Getting quality education
D - Being paid a fair wage
E - Living in a safe neighborhood
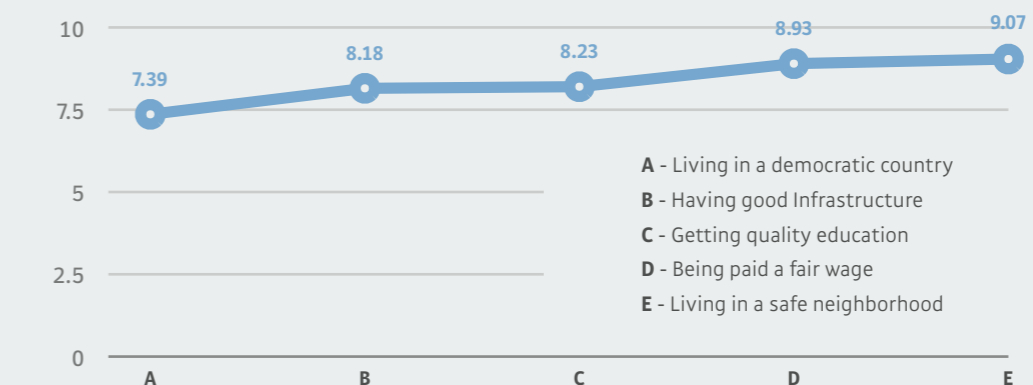
COUNTRY REPORT: MALAYSIA

Education is a very important vehicle for social mobility, particularly understood and used as such by the Malays in Malaysia, and the government gives great importance to this; thus the youths are in general well educated: only 2.6% drop out of school and have just primary school education. The rest has attained secondary diplomas (mainly O-Level certificates), vocational diplomas or university education.

The importance of getting quality education is fully acknowledged by the youth as it is just below the first-ranked item, "living in a safe neighbourhood". More females consider getting quality education as important and this could account for the significantly higher percentage of females in tertiary education in Malaysia today. As would be expected: the higher the education level of the respondents is, the higher is the rating for the importance of quality education.

FAMILY ORIENTATION

TODAY'S YOUTHS IN MALAYSIA BELIEVE THAT A PERSON WITH A FAMILY IS HAPPIER THAN SINGLES.

Muslim youths consider marrying and having children as very important. 94.2% believe that living with a family makes one happier than otherwise. They (73.3%) want at least two children. There is no gender preference, which shows an appreciation of gender equality in family values. Polygamy is rejected by 60.5% of all male and by 85.1% of all female respondents, which is remarkable considering otherwise overwhelmingly favourable attitudes towards social and religious conservatism (see below).

FIGURE 4

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
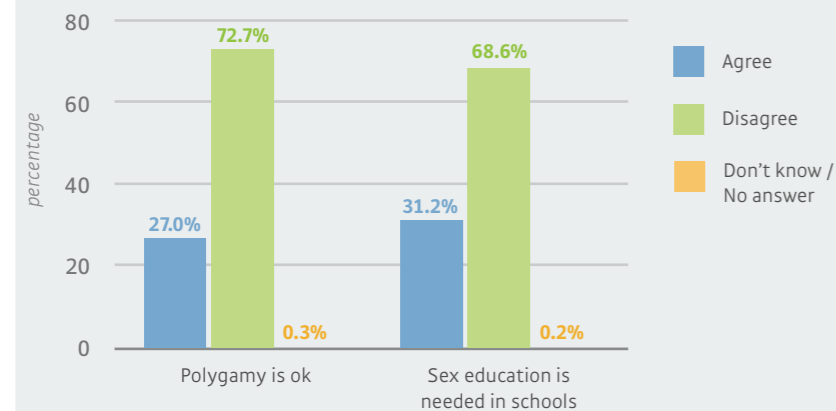
Today's youth in Malaysia believe that a person with a family is happier than singles. This belief may be influenced by the good relationship the youths have with their parents and siblings. More than 90% of respondents get along well with their families and often share the same opinions. Their parents care for them and give them guidance. They indicate that their parents tell them what to do and that this does not bother them. This acceptance of advice from their parents may be due to the traditional reverence towards older people, but it may also reflect more of a social and traditional desirability. 97.2% claim that "we get along splendidly". Overall, 47.5% would turn to their parents for advice, and the parents do care about them and give them guidance. Interestingly, a majority states that in the end of the day "most of the time the children do get their way". Of all the respondents 24.2% would follow

FIGURE 5

How is your relationship with your parents? Are the following statements rather right or rather wrong?
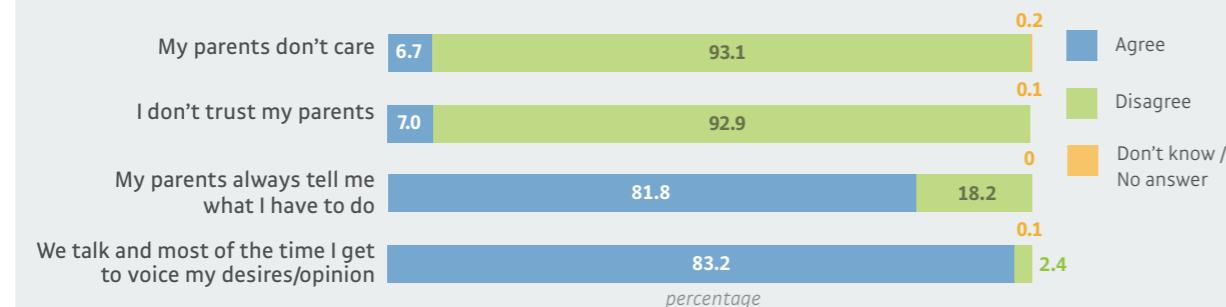
their parents' educational styles when raising their own children, 20.1% would be stricter than their parents, 20.2% would be more loving, but less religious than their parents. 55.6% would opt for a more religious upbringing of their own children; among those there are more males than females, and more professionals, employers or managers than those of lower occupational status. As the level of education increases, the percentage of those intending a more religious upbringing for their own children also increases. It seems that their heightened consciousness may have created the need to adhere more strictly to their religious practices and obligations. But overall, it may be argued that these findings show a near balance of views between authoritatively conservative and liberally democratic trends among all youngsters.

RELIGION

YOUNG MUSLIMS ARE BROUGHT UP WITH A STRONG BELIEF IN GOD AS A MOST IMPORTANT AND OBLIGATORY FACT.

In the last few decades the idea that Malaysia is an "Islamic state" has gained much currency. This was not always so. Whilst the first and third Prime Ministers – Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra and Tun Hussein Onn respectively – openly declared that Malaysia was a secular state with Islam as the official religion – the fourth Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad declared that Malaysia was an Islamic state. This correlates with the strong support for the premiership of Tun Abdullah Badawi in 2004. Although he was not as authoritarian a leader as his predecessor Tun Mahathir, he was from a religiously conservative family, had studied theology and been an Imam himself.

Despite some semantic confusion in the difference between "official religion" and "state religion", further compounded by the fact that Malaysia is a federation of states in which Islam may or may not be the state religion, the federal constitution makes it clear that the Rulers (i.e. Sultans) are Heads of Islam in their respective states. The eighteen point agreement states that is was one of Sabah's conditions on entering the "Malaysia Agreement" that there would be no state religion. Therefore, perceptions of religious laws are bound to differ from state to state. However, the breakdown of the findings in this survey does not reveal differences that go beyond the distinction of East and West Malaysia.

Muslims in Malaysia obtain their religious instruction from a wide variety of sources – at home from their parents and siblings; in school from agama (=religion) classes, school assemblies, Muslim teachers and friends; from radio, television, the internet; from the public daily call to pray; from the print media such as books, magazines and newspapers; and also from government policies. Muslim youths are constantly reminded of what they need to do and how to be good Muslims.

Indeed, a "local teacher" or "parent" represents the majority of answers to "From where did you know about Islam?"; this implies that different interpretations could have taken root; which fully agrees with the historical development of Islam, in the sense that while the Quran itself has not changed, interpretations have changed and are changing.

FIGURE 6

From where did you know about Islam?
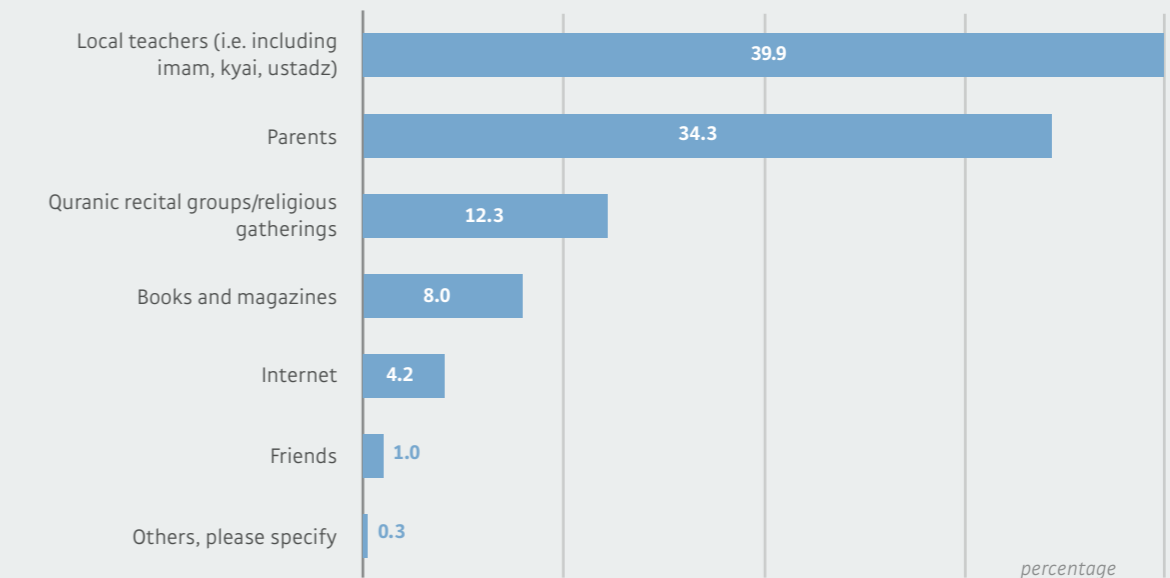
COUNTRY REPORT: MALAYSIA

From a young age at home, in school and in their social and religious surroundings, Muslims are brought up with a strong belief in God as a most important and obligatory "fact". The coexistence of other religions has always been tolerated in Malaysia. Becoming better Muslims is what good Muslims should always aspire to do. Almost naturally, Muslim youths consider these two perceptions and concepts as utterly important for themselves. 88.2% of Muslim youths are brought up in homes that they consider very or rather religious. Few are brought up in homes that they consider less religious (9.2%) or non-religious (2.4%).

In spite of the religiosity in their homes and half of the youths attending religious schools, some are rather relaxed about their daily obligations such as praying and reading the Quran: just 28.7% always pray five times a day.

FIGURE 7

How often are you able to fulfill all five daily prayers?

FIGURE 8

Do you fast during Ramadhan?
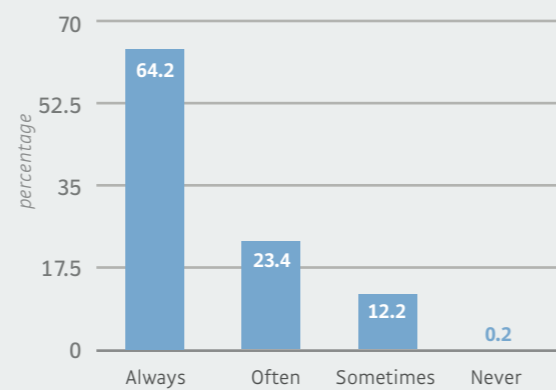
Just 18.1% read the Quran often, 8.6% never do so and the rest of them read it sometimes. Their low understanding of the Quranic verses could be a factor for the rather low reading rate which necessitates the knowledge of Arabic, which is taught at rather low proficiency levels in High School. Only 0.9% of youths understand all the verses and 11.7% understand most of them, while the vast majority (78.4%) understand rather little.. Age makes little difference to their ability to understand the Quran. Rural youths appear to experience more difficulties than urban youths.

Less than two thirds of the Muslim youths always fast during Ramadan. The rest does not always do so, even though it is compulsory for Muslims to fast during Ramadan and punishment is possible for those caught breaking this obligation without good reason. More females than males comply. The few (0.2%) who never fast during Ramadan are all males.

FIGURE 9

What do you think about the headscarf?

A It is compulsory
B It is up to the women to decide
C It protects women from glares
D It raises the status of the women
E It is fashionable
F It depends on the situation (home, workplace, gathering, university)
G It oppresses women
H It is up to the husband/father to decide
I Women should not wear headscarves
J Others
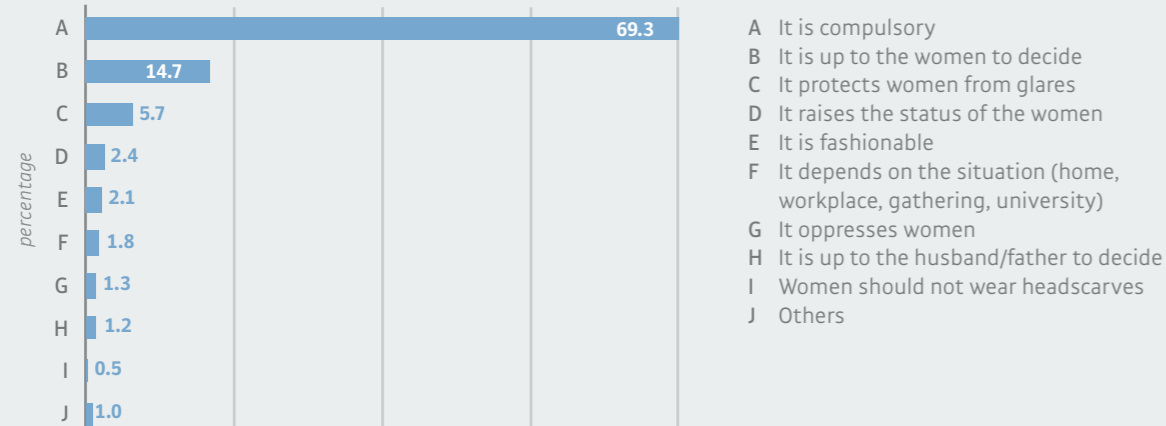
In Malaysia, women began to wear headscarves in the 1980s and it became the norm in the last two and a half decades. Today, just 0.5% of the Muslim youth believe that women should not wear a headscarf. 14.8% think it is up to the women to decide and 70% - slightly more males (72.1%) than females (66.6%) - consider wearing headscarves to be compulsory. The higher their educational level, the more respondents consider wearing headscarves compulsory (81.3% of university graduates). This might be a result of tertiary educational institutions exerting a strong peer pressure on their students to follow suit. There is little difference in the percentage between urban and rural youths who think wearing headscarves is compulsory for females.

It is important here to note shifts in such dominant outward social attitudes. It has often been remarked that movies produced in the 50s, which often featured Muslim women without headscarves, could not be made in a similar manner today. Back then, the late film director Tan Sri P. Ramlee, who tackled social issues such as competing value systems was revered equally by all Malaysian ethnic groups.
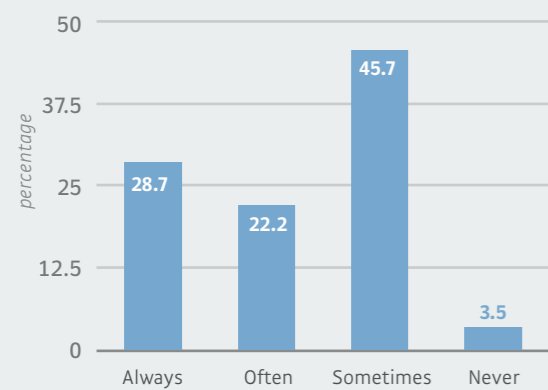
FIGURE 10

Do you agree or disagree with the following regulations?
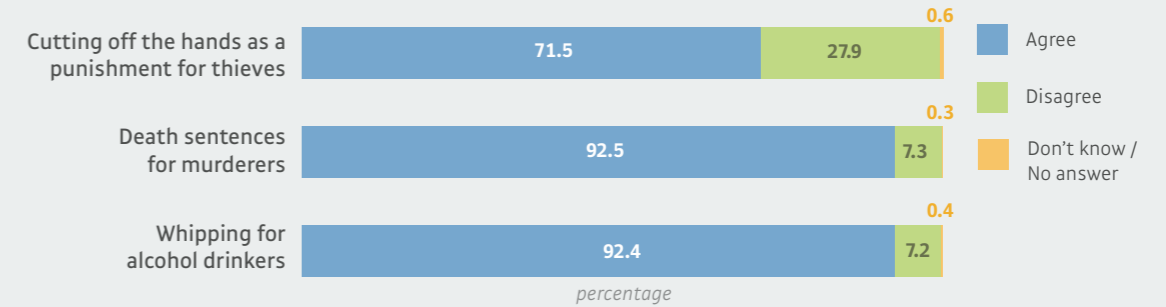
More than 70% - among them slightly more males than females - want the Quran to replace the Federal Constitution of Malaysia. Muslims in Sabah and Sarawide less so; only half of them want the replacement of the Federal Constitution by the Quran. Nationwide, objection to apostasy is almost unanimous at 98.3%. Asked to choose, almost 80% define themselves as Muslims while less than 15% define themselves as Malaysians. 5.5% define themselves according to their ethnicity.

The apparent social conservatism might be a cause of concern amongst observers who support a liberal democratic society. However, it is important to differentiate between social conservatism and support for authoritarianism. At first glance, the answers might suggest widespread support amongst Malaysian Muslim youth for social conservatism. But the apparent preference of Syariah Law over the Federal Constitution may not necessarily indicate unabashed support for the Syariah, but may also reflect great dissatisfaction with the Federal Constitution. It must be remembered that in recent years many books and opinion pieces have mentioned that the Federal Constitution has been amended many times, with many implying that the legal environment has suffered as a result, or giving the impression that the Federal Constitution does not have sufficient inbuilt protections against governments with large majorities.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, LIFESTYLE AND VALUES

MALAYSIAN MUSLIM YOUTHS ARE SOCIALLY MORE DIVERSE THAN THE SEEMINGLY CONSERVATIVE OUTLOOK ON MORAL AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES MAY SUGGEST.

It is common to see popular cafés, shopping complexes, mamak (food) stalls and sidewalks full of young people during weekends, holidays and in the evenings. Mobile phones are their constant companions whether they are at work or enjoying their leisure time. Apart from the girls who are wearing their often very fashionable headscarves – Muslim clothing has become a fashion item and part of a commercially extremely profitable business - observation suggests that the Muslim youths in Malaysia do not differ much from their non-Muslim peer groups or from youths in western countries.

In eastern Malaysia - Sarawak and Sabah – the mobile phone is a part of the youngsters´ lifestyle as well, with the possible exception of those who live in the interior of Sarawak and Sabah because there would be no satellite connections.

FIGURE 11

Do you own or have exclusive use of the following:
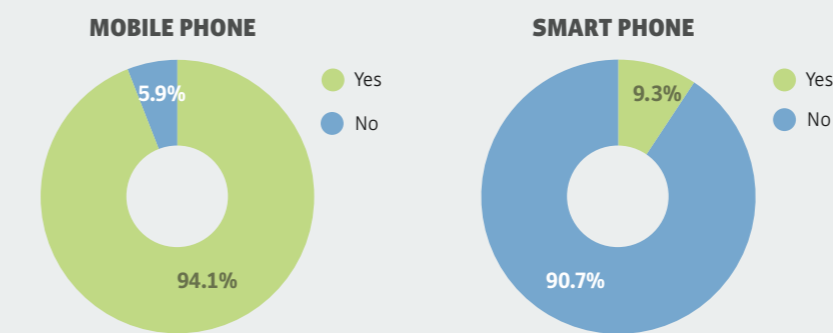
COUNTRY REPORT: MALAYSIA

Communication technology is – and has always been – very important for young people. Their mobile phones, smart-phones, i-pads and laptops enable them to keep in touch with their friends and provide entertainment through music and games. Gadgets are trendy and a significant part of youth culture; they seem to have become sheer necessities to many Muslim youths. Technology is even more important to rural youths and equally important to various age groups and on different levels of education

Asked about their five favourite leisure activities, "watching television" (75%), "listening to music" (61.7%), "surfing the internet"(52.3%) are mentioned most often by Malaysia's Muslim youth. Less than 15% choose" going to the mosque" as one of their five favourite leisure activities.

FIGURE 12

What do you usually do in your leisure time? Please name 5 activities, which you do most often and regularly during the week.

Activities	First rank	Second rank	Third rank	Fourth rank	Fifth rank	Total
Watching TV	69.0%	2.5%	1.3%	1.3%	0.9%	75.0%
Listening to music	12.9%	43.9%	1.9%	0.9%	2.1%	61.7%
Surfing the internet	9.4%	16.1%	21.1%	4.8%	0.9%	52.5%
Reading books, magazines or newspapers	2.4%	10.4%	17.2%	12.5%	4.5%	47.0%
Sight seeing	0.5%	0.8%	2.4%	4.3%	31.9%	39.8%
Doing something together with the family	0.8%	1.4%	5.8%	16.7%	11.4%	36.0%
Exercise/sport	1.4%	3.3%	9.6%	12.7%	5.3%	32.4%
Meeting people	0.3%	2.8%	9.2%	10.8%	5.1%	28.2%
Shopping, buying things for oneself	0.1%	0.8%	2.5%	9.9%	9.5%	22.7%
Watching videos/ dvds	1.2%	7.3%	10.0%	1.4%	1.0%	20.9%
Playing playstation, nintendo or computer games	0.4%	3.7%	5.1%	6.0%	3.9%	19.1%
Going to the mosque	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%	3.7%	9.7%	14.4%
Doing Nothing	0.6%	3.1%	4.3%	2.9%	1.6%	12.5%
Being involved in a group, a project or an organization.	0.1%	0.6%	2.3%	4.6%	3.2%	10.8%
Doing something creative or artistic	0.2%	0.3%	0.8%	3.2%	3.9%	8.4%
Going to the pub/café/mamak stall	0.1%	1.4%	2.5%	1.3%	0.8%	6.1%
Visiting a youth centre	-	0.7%	1.8%	1.1%	0.8%	4.3%
Going to disco, to parties or clubbing	0.4%	0.3%	1.1%	0.5%	0.1%	2.4%
Others, mention	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	-	1.2%	1.8%
No response	-	0.3%	0.6%	1.0%	2.1%	4.0%

This allocation of down-time clashes with the youths' statement that "becoming a better Muslim" is their second most important aspiration in life. "Belief in God", they state, is most important to them, "to have friends" less so, "to become rich" ranks last. Aspiring to become rich or not - 60% of the respondents consider wearing designer clothes as 'in'. The younger youths (more than 70%) and those with university education (78.1%) appear to be even more inclined towards such commercial fashion items.

Youths like everyone else encounter problems, frustrations and stress in their daily lives. The management of emotions, especially stress, has an influential impact on their mental and physical health. How youths handle stress is therefore important. Telling a friend is most commonly used but there are some gender differences. Female youths, being more communicative, also tell family members their problems while male youths, being either less verbal or having to appear more stoic, tend to use escapism such as letting the stress go away on its own or listening to music for relaxation. Hardly any (0.9%) males and females say that they are using sedatives or drugs.

FIGURE 13

What do you consider important in your life?
Please grade on a scale of 1 (not important) to 10 (very important)

A - To become rich
B - To have a good reputation in my professional life
C - To enjoy my life to the fullest
D - To accept ethnic and religious minorities
E - To hold on to traditions & customs
F - To become a better Muslim
G - To marry and have children
H - To have a partner one can trust
I - To have friends
J - To believe in God
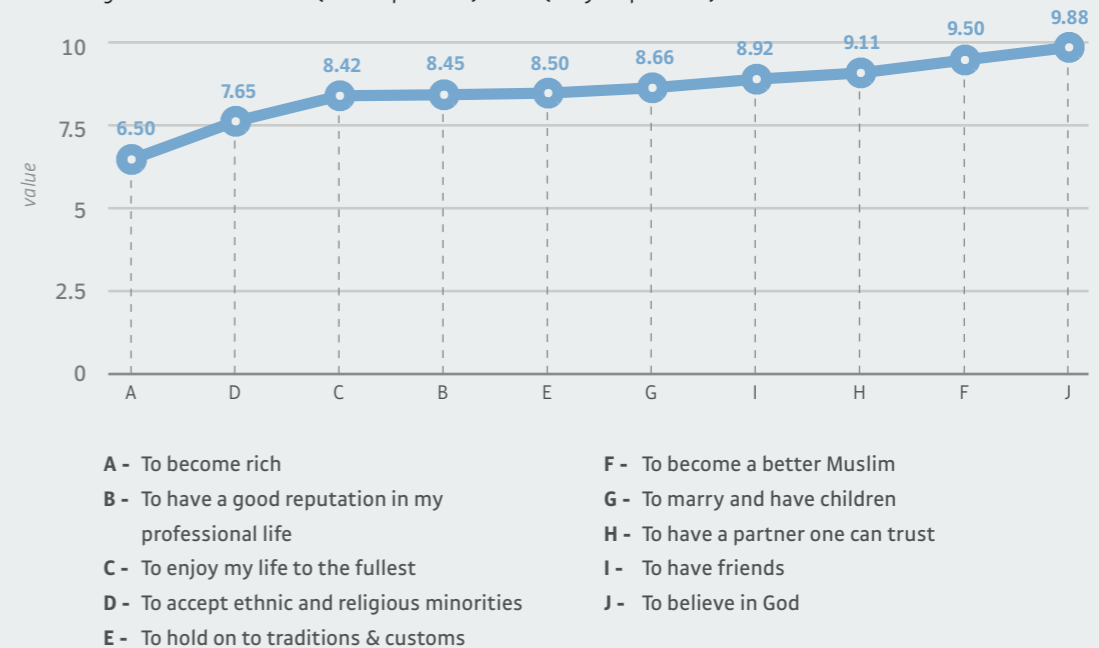
If doing nothing about personal problems becomes more normal with age the reverse holds true for telling a friend about such problems or for listening to music in order to relax. Getting counselling from experts is not common in Malaysia even though the 15-17 year age group, students and executives use this option more than any of the other groups. Stigmatism or lack of trust in counsellors could be the main reasons for not reverting to such psychological methods.

Malaysian Muslim youth virtually unanimously rejects un-Islamic lifestyles such as occasional beer drinking, consumption of soft drugs, pre-marital sex, watching pornographic movies and homosexuality.

FIGURE 14

When you are stressed, what do you do about it?
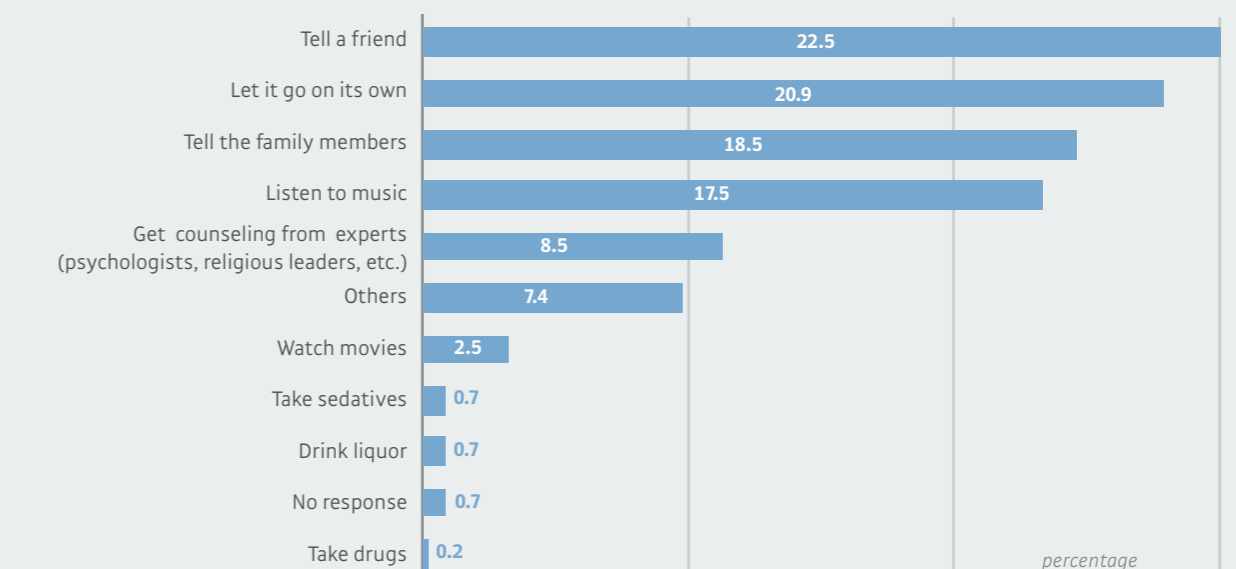
COUNTRY REPORT: MALAYSIA

FIGURE 15

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Legend:
- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know / No answer

It's ok to have sex before marriage: Agree 1.6%, Disagree 98.4%, Don't know 0%
It's ok to watch pornographic movies: Agree 2.5%, Disagree 97.5%, Don't know 0%
It's ok to be gay or lesbian: Agree 0.5%, Disagree 99.4%, Don't know 0.1%

In consequence it might be deduced that the cultural preference of Malaysian Muslim Youth is largely shaped by (indeed highly-controlled) broadcast media, local religious teachers and parents along with, perhaps to a lesser extent, social interaction with their peers or other autonomous social groupings. In addition, almost 85% use the internet, taking youngsters beyond borders, exposing them to different cultures, views and value-systems. This might explain the simultaneous presence of a strong minority (40.7%) who feel that "the western music, movies and clothes are cooler than ours".

FIGURE 16

In your opinion, what do young people today consider in or out?

A - Faithfulness
B - Being successful in your career
C - Getting involved in politics
D - European Union

Legend:
- Popular
- Not popular
- Don't know / No answer

A: Popular 53.3, Not popular 46.5, Don't know 0.2
B: Popular 74.7, Not popular 24.9, Don't know 0.4
C: Popular 33.4, Not popular 66.1, Don't know 0.5
D: Popular 32.3, Not popular 61.3, Don't know 6.4
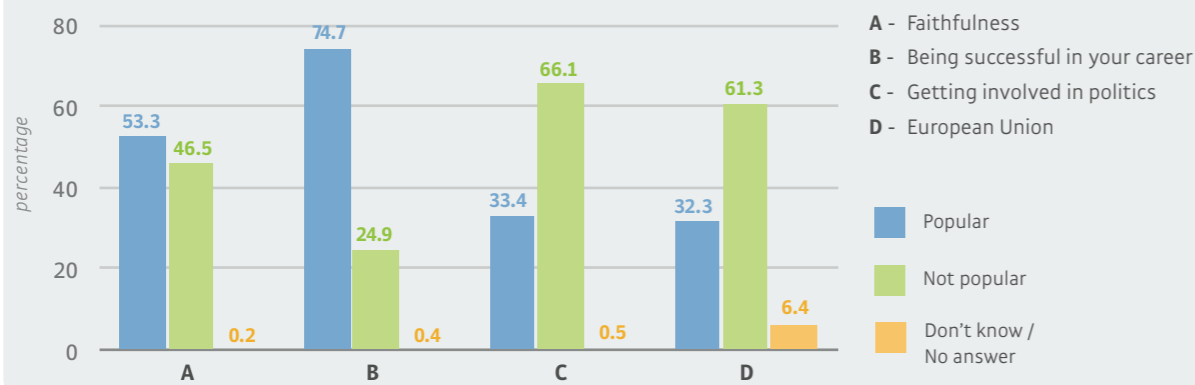
FIGURE 17

In your opinion, what do young people today consider in or out?

E - Technology
F - Becoming self employed
G - Wearing of designer clothes
H - Healthy food

Legend:
- Popular
- Not popular
- Don't know / No answer

E: Popular 85.3, Not popular 14.6, Don't know 0.1
F: Popular 68.8, Not popular 30.9, Don't know 0.3
G: Popular 65.4, Not popular 34.5, Don't know 0.1
H: Popular 63.9, Not popular 35.9, Don't know 0.2
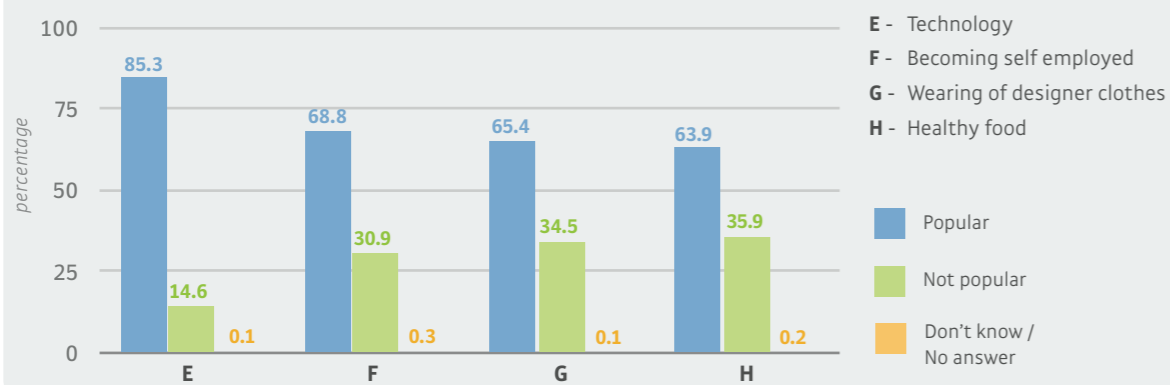
FIGURE 18

In your opinion, what do young people today consider in or out?

I - Taking responsibility for others
J - University education
K - Getting married
L - Taking drugs

Legend:
- Popular
- Not popular
- Don't know / No answer

I: Popular 52.5, Not popular 47.1, Don't know 0.5
J: Popular 78.5, Not popular 21.0, Don't know 0.5
K: Popular 68.1, Not popular 31.3, Don't know 0.6
L: Popular 37.2, Not popular 62.1, Don't know 0.8
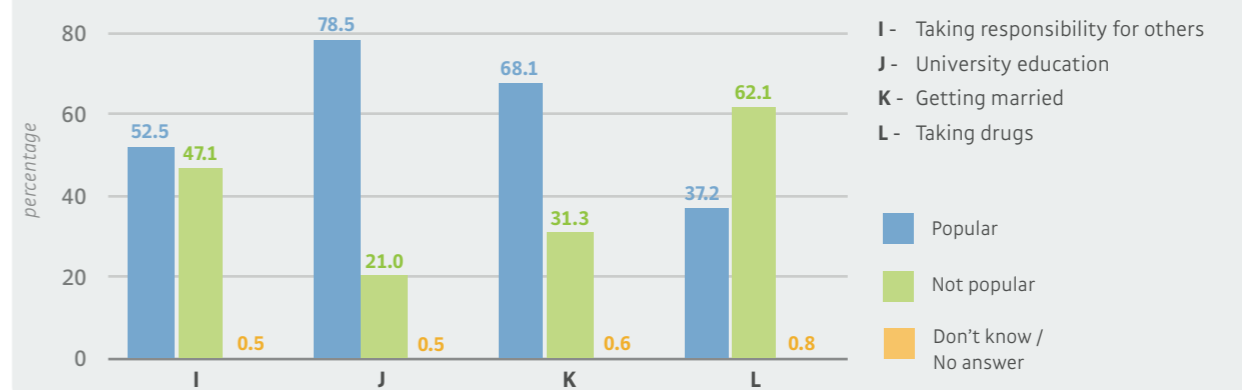
A good measure of the Muslim youths' social outlook may therefore be what they themselves consider "in" and "out" for the youth today, which arguably may reflect the respondents' reading of the objective reality and what their peers actually think rather than their own subjective values.

While there is a near consensus to see "communication technology", "university education" and "success in career" as "in", the respondents differ substantially on whether "self-employment", "marriage", "political involvement", "designer clothes", "European Union", "healthy food" and "taking drugs" are supposed to be "in" or "out". There is an almost even split over "faithfulness" and "taking responsibility for others" as being "in" or "out". Interestingly, more than a third of the respondents feel that taking drugs is "in" while less than 1% say that they are taking drugs themselves.

It may rightly be concluded that the Malaysian Muslim youth are socially more diverse than meets the eye beneath the seemingly conservative and authoritarian outlook on religious and moral issues.

Some Muslim youths are involved in civil society. While nearly three quarters of the respondents claim to be "active in groups, in an office or function at school, college or university" only about one in four are reportedly active in youth organizations, NGOs, clubs or societies. The reported participation in political parties stands at 14.2%.

FIGURE 19

Social engagement - Where or rather how would you do that?

A - I am active in a group, in the office or at a school, college or university
B - I am active in a youth organization
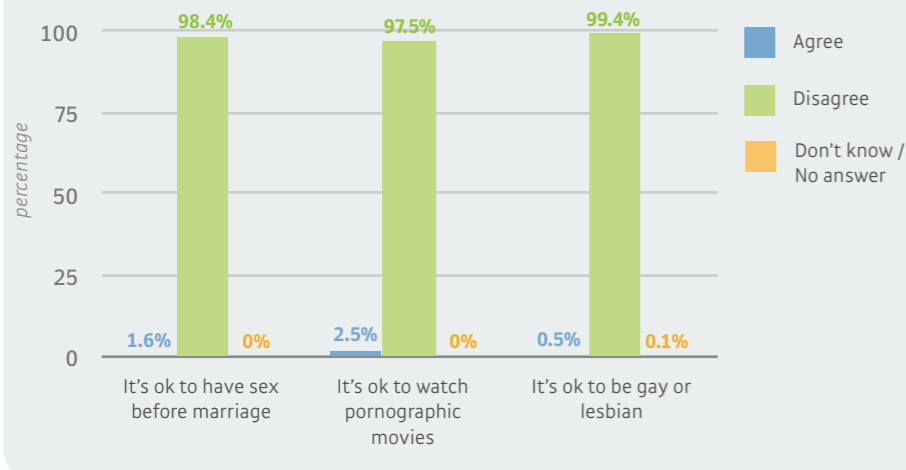C - I am active in an NGO, club or society
D - I am active in a political party

Legend:
- Yes
- No
- Don't know / No answer

A: Yes 70.6, No 28.2, Don't know 0.4
B: Yes 43.9, No 55.9, Don't know 0.2
C: Yes 43.0, No 56.4, Don't know 0.6
D: Yes 14.2, No 85.3, Don't know 0.5
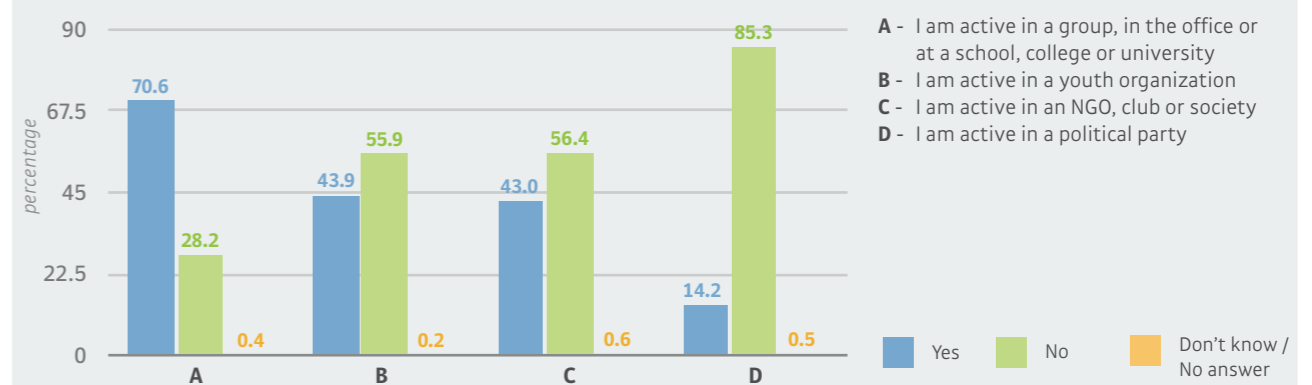
POLITICS

THREE QUARTERS OF THE MALAYSIAN MUSLIM YOUTHS DECLARE THAT THEY HAVE LITTLE OR NO INTEREST IN POLITICS.

Distance from politics can be derived from their apathy towards exercising their voting rights. Of those eligible for voting, as many as 66.3% have not registered as voters, and another 20.0% have never voted in spite of having their names registered on the electoral lists. Whereas females are more conscious in exercising their voting rights than males, it is employers, managers, non-office workers and the unemployed who are the most apathetic towards registering to vote.

COUNTRY REPORT: MALAYSIA

FIGURE 20

Only for respondents age 21 years and above.
Have you ever voted?
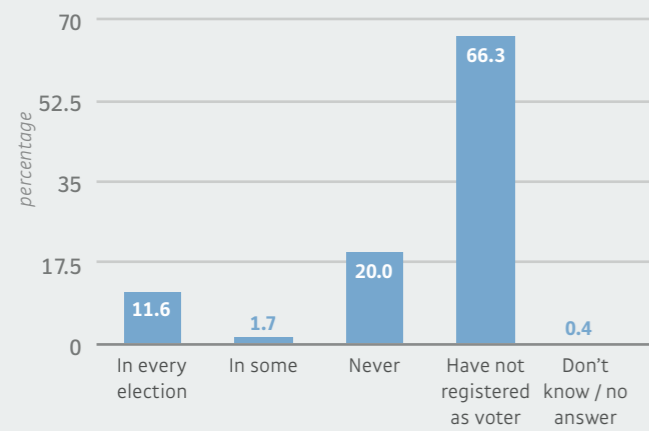
Political abstinence of youth at tertiary age level could be due to the Universities and University Colleges Act of 1971 that prohibits active participation of tertiary students in political activities. Individual students can join the National Union of Malaysian Muslim Students which holds motivational and tutoring classes for students or they can individually join the Peninsular Malaysia for Malay Students Federation which assists Malay students in pursuing academic excellence. Students' associations, however, cannot be affiliated to any of these two associations.

FIGURE 21

What do you think about politics and democracy?

A - Everyone should be interested in politics
B - Politics bore me
C - Only people with money are successful in politics
D - People have the power to change a government they don't like

FIGURE 22

What do you think about politics and democracy?

E - A good democracy needs opposition parties
F - A strong man should bring order to our country
G - A woman cannot become a good leader of our country
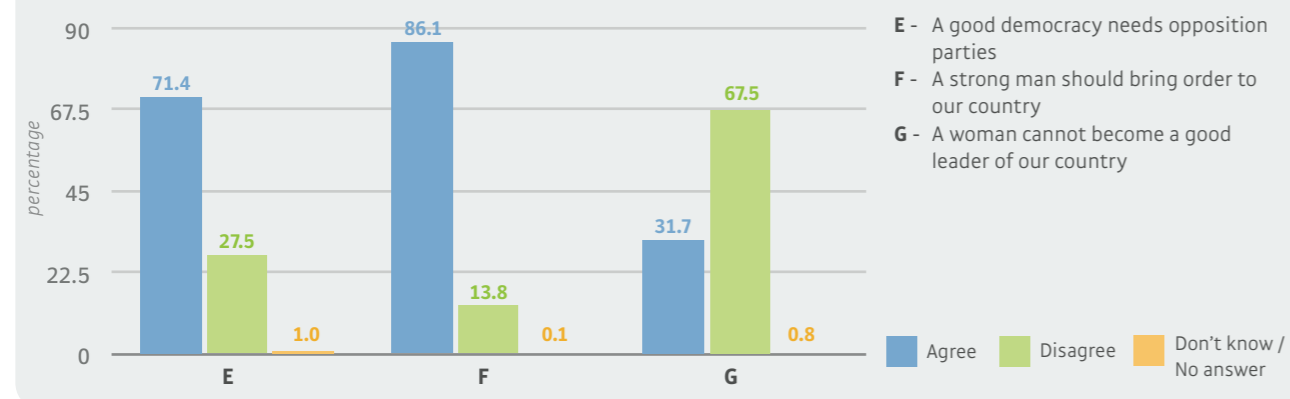
The aversion of the government towards students' political activities certainly stifles young people's interest in politics, except for those who are intrinsically compassionate about democracy and justice. Consequently, for the majority of them - particularly the youths in Sabah and Sarawak - getting involved in politics is not at all "cool". Older respondents with the highest education show the least appreciation for involvement in politics.

Most Muslim youths share the belief that "a strong man should bring order to our country". People's power is, however, generally acknowledged as such: 73.7% believe that people have the power to change a government that they don't like, 71.4% feel that a good democracy needs opposition parties. More than two thirds are convinced that women could become good leaders of the country.

Relative political apathy may pose questions about the Muslim youths' commitment to democracy. Four related issues can provide some possible answers: the youth's attitude towards violence in society, their specification of politicians as religious or secular authorities, freedom of speech and the question of leadership.

On a scale of 1 (not true at all) to 10 (absolutely true) the notion that there are problems in every society which can only be solved by violence scores low (3.44). Most young people believe that violence can and should be avoided. The idea that politicians should be replaced by clergymen to run the country is acceptable for many (6.1). Almost all believe that people should be free to speak up and to demonstrate their convictions without fear (8.2).

FIGURE 23

On a scale 1 (not true at all) to 10 (absolutely true), how far do you agree with these statements. Please grade based on your opinion

A - The government treats all races/ ethnic groups equally
B - Politicians are only interested in getting votes
C - Corruption is decreasing
D - There are problems in every society which can only be resolved through/ with violence
E - Religious leaders should replace politicians to run our country
F - People should be free to speak up and to demonstrate their convictions without fear
G - Politicians care about young people like me

Democratic attitudes are nourished on an elementary basis among youngsters, but their answers show that decades of authoritative government have left their mark. Moreover, it needs to be considered that Muslim youths have acquired their political knowledge largely through the conventional media which are controlled by the ruling coalition of Barisan Nasional (National Front): television is the top source of information (30.4%), followed by radio (23.1%), newspapers (12.1%), internet (9.7%), school (8.0%) and people around them (16.6%). And yet, the most recent (2008) general election in Malaysia has given credible testimony to the strength of people's power: five of the sixteen federal states turned their backs on the ruling government party and voted opposition parties into power. This election result is by no means a victory of Malaysian youth alone. But it has commonly been agreed that young voters and social networking through blogs have had a considerable effect on the outcome of those elections.

FIGURE 24

Are you concerned about the following issues?

A - Islamic radicalism in politics
B - Corruption
C - Not enough freedom of expression
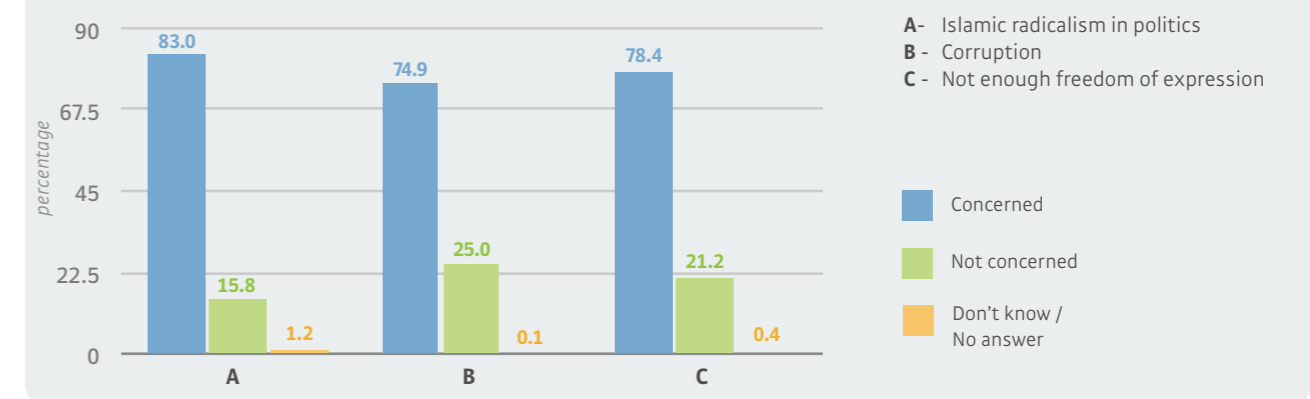
COUNTRY REPORT: MALAYSIA

Though female Muslim youths are more conscientious in exercising their voting rights than their male peers, they are less knowledgeable of politics and democracy; such knowledge increases in general with age and level of education.
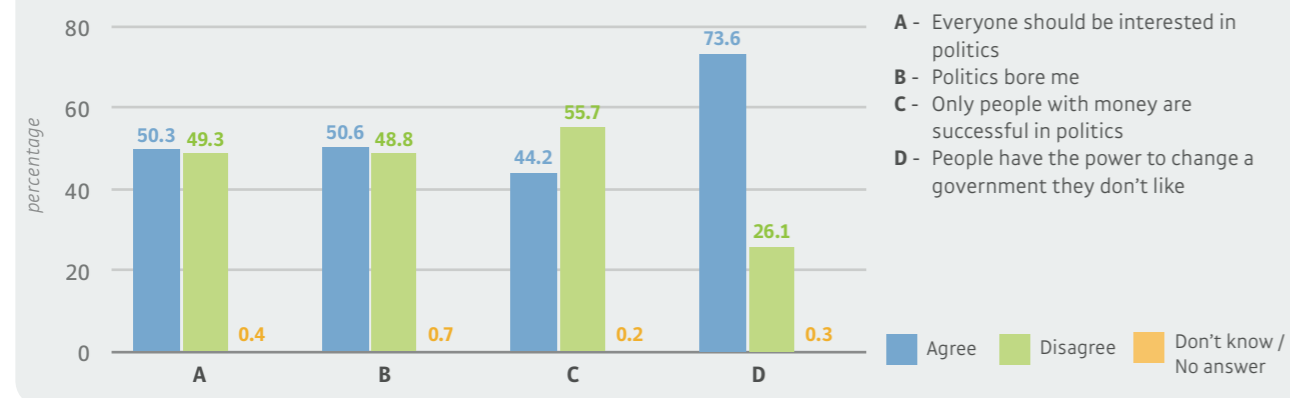
While, again, three quarters of the Malaysian Muslim youths declare that they have little or no interest in politics, when asked about specific domestic and international issues, most respondents are in fact concerned.

FIGURE 25

Are you concerned about the following issues?

D - A serious disease, such as cancer or AIDS
E - Too many immigrants and refugess in this country
F - Human right abuses by the state

- Concerned
- Not concerned
- Don't know / No answer

FIGURE 26

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

A - The US invasion of Afghanistan was justified
B - Terrorism gives Islam a bad name
C - Osama bin Laden is a freedom fighter
D - As soon as the Israel-Palestine conflict is solved, there will be peace in the world

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know / No answer

CONCLUSION

The survey-findings show many contradictory statements and they are full of ambivalences.

While taking a very conservative stand on religious and moral issues, Malaysia's Muslim youths are not rigorous in fulfilling their religious obligations such as praying five times a day, reading the Quran or fasting during Ramadan. While stating that belief in God and becoming a better Muslim are most important in their lives, they rather watch television, listen to music or surf the internet in their leisure-time than go to a mosque.

While highly appreciating their parents and turning to them for guidance, Muslim youths feel like they do get their way at the end of the day, indicating that they make their own decisions more often than not.

While stating that they have little interest in politics, Malaysia's Muslim youths believe in "Peoples' Power": They do regard opposition parties as an integral part of a democracy and value freedom of expression and assembly.

Though Malaysia's Muslim youths regard Osama bin Laden as a freedom fighter (62.4 % of the respondents), they denounce violence.
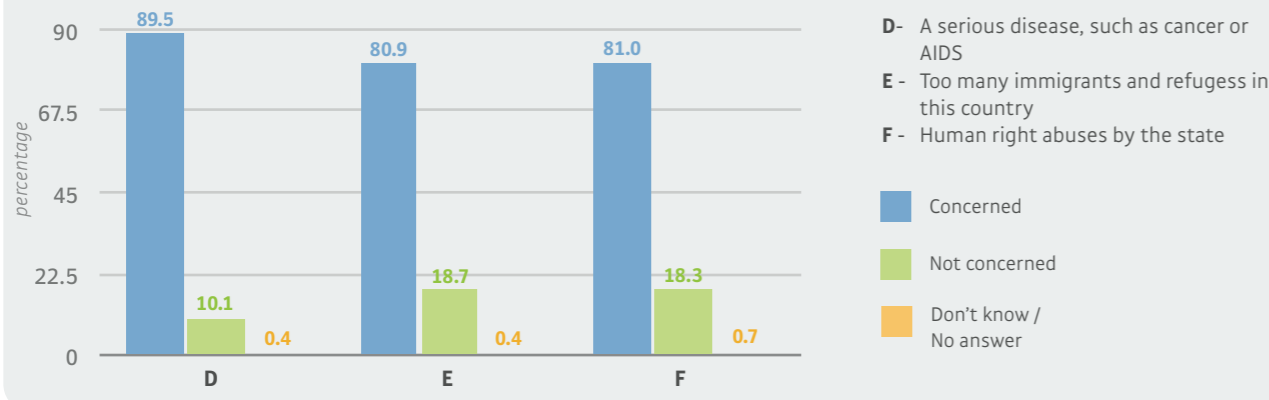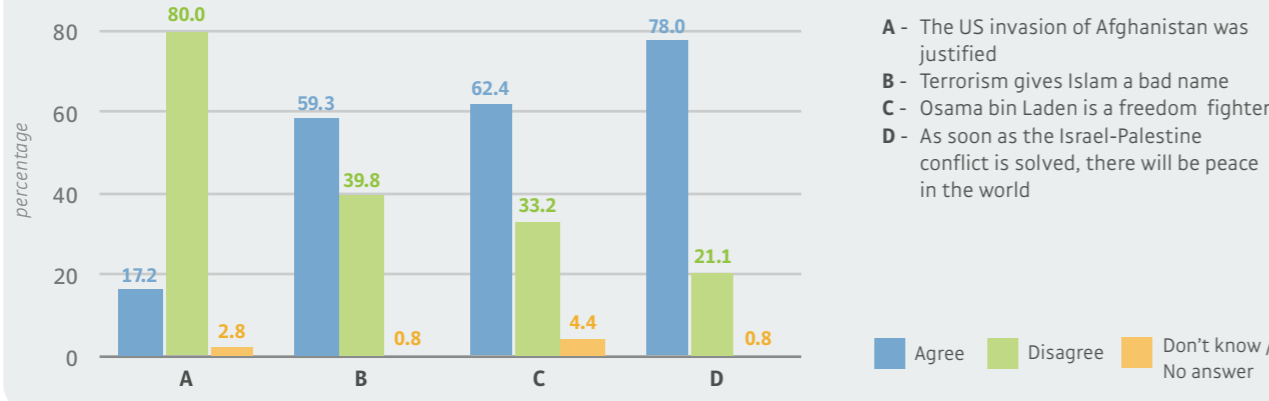
It is important to consider that growing up in Malaysia, Muslim youths are constantly reminded of what they need to do and how to be good Muslims by parents, religious leaders, government-controlled media, teachers and others. In addition, youngsters face peer pressure from social groups they are part of in schools, universities or work places. At the same time, Malaysia's Muslim youth lives in and embraces a globalized world. Modern technology - readily available and unrestricted in Malaysia - has become a significant part of youth culture. Almost 85% of young people use the internet, taking youngsters beyond borders and exposing them to different cultures, views and value-systems.

Focusing on single questions and answers, many of the survey results - particularly the apparent social conservatism - might be a cause of concern amongst observers who support a liberal democratic society. However, it is important to consider all questions and answers. Malaysia's Muslim youths are socially more diverse than meets the eye. Taken as a whole, the findings show both authoritatively conservative and liberally democratic trends among Muslim youngsters – which may possibly be due to the obvious juxtaposition of pressure and freedom young Muslims grow up with in Malaysia.

The character of the schools the Muslim youths attend to do not seem to have much impact on them since there are hardly any differences to be noticed in lifestyle and values between those who attend religious and those who attend non-religious schools. Rural youths seem to be politically more discerning, even though the survey shows very little difference between rural and urban results in general. Historically, all but a few Malay Muslims of the aristocratic classes would have lived in cities, apart from the merchant classes who might have resided in port towns. For the majority of Malay Muslims however, the phenomenon of urban living is not much older than the nation itself.

DEMOGRAPHICS & METHODOLOGY
MALAYSIA

GENDER

- Male
- Female

50% 50%

AGE

	15-17	18-19	20-22	23-25
percentage	31.9	12.6	30.3	25.2

ETHNICITY

	Melayu	Other Bumi-putra (Sabah & Sarawak)	Others	Don't know / No answer
percentage	91.4	8.2	0.3	0.1

SETTING

- Urban 57.8%
- Rural 42.2%

ATTENDANCE OF RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

- Yes 47.9%
- No 52.1%
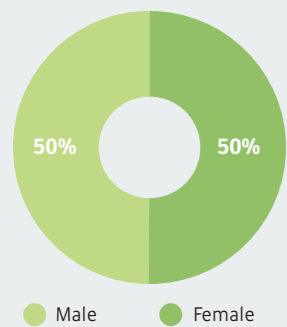
52.1%
of the questioned youths attended a religious school.

The data collection for this survey was carried out from October 21st until November 4th, 2010 by the Merdeka Center for Opinion Research.

1.060 Malaysian citizens aged between 15 and 25 years were questioned.

The sample was selected randomly from households across Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia, in proportion with updated Malaysian Census tables published in 2003.
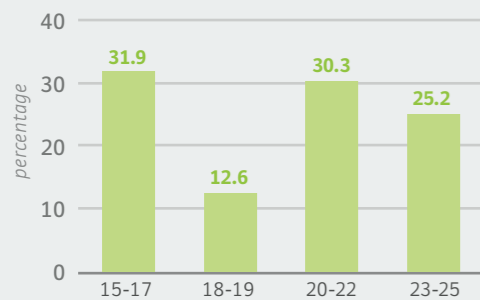
LEVEL OF EDUCATION

A No formal education
B Primary school
C Secondary school
D Diploma & equivalent
E University Degree

	A	B	C	D	E
percentage	0.1	2.6	68.5	22.7	6.0

OCCUPATION

- Student 44%
- Working 36.2%
- Not working 19.6%
- Don't know / No answer 0.2%
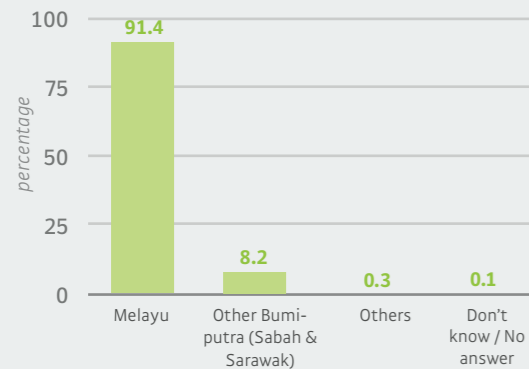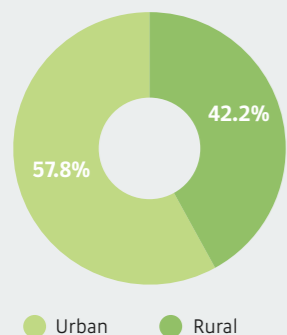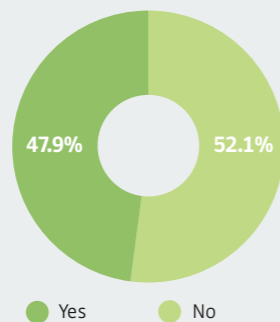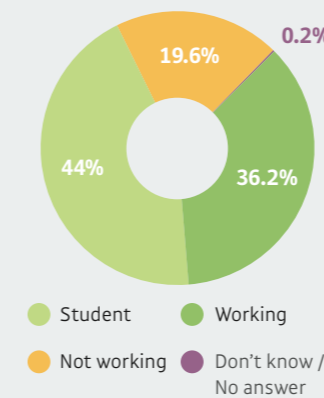
68.5%
of the questioned youths are senior high school graduates.

Within the localities, households were chosen using a 5-household skip pattern – i.e. every 6th household is sampled. Each interviewer was to continue visiting every 6th household until his or her quota (that responds to the pre-determined demographic characteristics) was achieved.

The respondents were interviewed face to face by trained interviewers.

Slightly about 23.8% of the respondents were inspected and their feedback obtained through direct observation of the supervisors and verifiers, post-survey in person inspection and telephone calls for quality control purposes.

FAMILY SITUATION
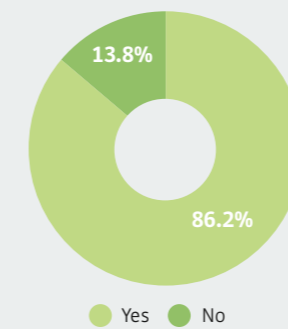
Are both of your parents still alive?

- Yes 86.2%
- No 13.8%

If "Yes". do your parents live together and not divorced. live together but divorced. live separately and divorced. or separated but not divorced?

A Live together
B Separated
C Divorced

	A	B	C
percentage	88.5	6.8	4.7

REVIEWS
AND ANALYSES

MUSLIM YOUTH SURVEY:
A Socio-psychological Perspective

by: Dr. Chiam Heng Keng

Youth, defined to cover the ages of 15 to 25 years, is a period of high energy and enthusiasm, coupled with idealism and invincibility. These qualities of our youth need to be properly nurtured and harnessed as they are the up-and-coming workforce and the next echelon of leaders. The environment and society in which youth dwell have a very significant impact on how they utilise their talents, strengths, energy and idealism.

The milieu of youth in Malaysia, their home environment, the media, education, government policies and societal values all have a profound effect on shaping them. Since they grow up in the post-independence era of Malaysia, today's youth are brought up in a period of rapid economic growth and modernisation, fast changing technologies, globalisation, changing family structure and rising individualism. In addition, through the print and electronic media, they are exposed to the rise of religious fundamentalism, the conflict between Palestine and Israel and tensions between Muslim and Western developed countries. These surroundings and knowledge influence the lifestyle, values, beliefs and affiliations of Muslim youth in Malaysia. This article attempts to look at the personal development, family orientation, religious beliefs, values and attitudes to social environment and politics of Muslim youth in Malaysia based on a recent survey of Muslim youth and is seen from a socio-psychological perspective.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
Muslim youth in Malaysia are generally a happy and contented group of people who are rather optimistic about their future and the future of Malaysia, notwithstanding that some of them do feel gloomy at times. Their contentment is understandable as they have not suffered hardships on a major scale. Malaysia is generally politically stable, economically sound—though it has its share of economic downturns—and, importantly, it has not suffered any devastating natural calamities. Education up to tertiary level is accessible to the vast majority. Besides encouraging the private sector to provide skill training for youth, the government has implemented several programmes, such as setting up community colleges for vocational training and skill training centres for the unemployed and new job-seeking graduates. The skill training is not only to help them qualify for employment in the various industries, but also to initiate their own businesses.

With the availability of educational and skill training opportunities for Muslim youth and the economic wellbeing in the country, it is therefore not unexpected that the majority of them are sure to be able to study or work in their desired field. This confidence is however tempered by fear of losing their job or not finding one.

Owing to the high profile, power and wealth of many politicians, one would expect the youth of today to aspire to be politicians. But being a politician is at the bottom of the list of goals and dreams in life for the young survey respondents, while being a good parent ranks second and being an entrepreneur tops the list. More females than males aspire to be good parents. However,

Muslim youth are not totally immune to the good things in life because becoming rich or having lots of assets ranks third. Another striking change is the appeal of the civil service; the generations before the current set of youth usually opted for work in the public sector. Though a fair number of them would still want to work for the government, it is not at the top of the list of goals and dreams in life; it ranks fourth.

Education is a very important vehicle for social mobility, particularly among the Malays in Malaysia, and the government gives great importance to it. Thus our youth are well educated as only 2.6% drop out of school and only have a primary school education. The rest have attained secondary, diploma or its equivalent or university education.

The importance of getting quality education is acknowledged as it is just below the first-ranked item, "living in a safe neighbourhood". On a scale of 10 of how important is education is, more than 70% gave 9 or 10 for getting quality education. More females consider getting quality education important and this could account for the higher percentage of females in tertiary education. The higher the education level of the respondents, the higher is the rating for the importance of getting quality education. More divorced youth than singles or still married youth rank getting quality education important. But many non-office supervisors do not share the same sentiments. The percentage of them perceiving quality education as important is well below the percentage of those in other occupations, such as executives/non-executives in offices, professionals, homemakers, students or even non-office workers. Perhaps the non-office supervisors see quality education having little relevance to their work, success and promotion.

FAMILY ORIENTATION
Muslim youth consider marrying and having children as important, with more males than females having this view and it becomes increasingly important with age. Overwhelmingly they believe that a person with a family is happier. This belief of the bliss of family life may be influenced by the good relationship these youth have with their families. More than 90% of them get along splendidly with their families and they do not often have differing opinions. Their parents care for them and give them guidance. They also indicate that their parents always tell them what to do and this does not seem to bother them. This attitude of acceptance of advice from their parents may be due to the practice of revering older people.

Though the relationship with their parents is good, only 24.2% would raise their children more or less the same way; 35.5% would be more religious, 2.5% less religiousl, 20.1% would be stricter while 15.9% would be more loving. More males than females want to be more religious in bringing up their children and more Malays than Bumiputra in Sabah and Sarawak. Among types of occupation, professionals and those who are employers/in management of organisations of more than ten employees want a more religious upbringing for their children. In addition, as the level of education increases, the percentage of those

wanting this type of upbringing of their children also increases. What is the reason for better educated and more successful Muslim youth to have this attitude towards the upbringing of their children?

The heightened consciousness of their religious beliefs may have created in them the need to adhere more strictly to their religious practices and obligations. Women in Malaysia began to wear the headscarf in the 1980s and it became the norm in the last two and a half decades. Only quite recently have girls in primary school worn headscarves and young boys worn long pants.

In keeping with the trend of their day, their parents or grandparents might have practised family planning and opted for smaller families. Present day youth are unlikely to follow their parents or grandparents as none of the respondents plan to have only one child and more than half of them want to have more than two children. This is probably in keeping with their religious belief of letting destiny determine the number of children.

RELIGION
In Malaysia, Muslims obtain their religious instruction from a wide variety of sources: at home from their parents and siblings; in school from agama classes, school assemblies, Muslim teachers and friends; from radio, television, the internet; from the public daily call to prayer; from print media such as books, magazines and newspapers; and government policies. Muslim youth are constantly reminded by messages of what they need to do and how to be a good Muslim.

From a young age at home, in school and in their surroundings, Muslims are brought up with believing that God is important and religion is obligatory; becoming better Muslims is what good Muslims should aspire to. Naturally, Muslim youth consider these two precepts important.

Muslim youth are brought up in homes which are very religious (42.4%) or rather religious (45.8%). Only 2.4% of them are brought up in a non-religious home and 9.2% in homes that are less religious. Despite the religiosity in their homes and half of them attending religious schools, these youth are rather lax in their daily obligations such as praying and reading the Quran. Only 28.7% always pray five times a day and 3.5% never do so while the rest either pray often (22.2%) or sometimes (45.7%).

Only 18.1% read the Quran often, 8.6% never do so and the rest of them read it sometimes. Their understanding of the Quranic verses could be a factor for the rather low reading rate. Only 0.9% understand all of the verses, while 78.4% admit to understanding rather little and 11.7% rather much. Age makes little difference to their ability in understanding the Quran but rural youth appear to experience more difficulty.

Generally, Muslim youth fast during Ramadan – either always (64.2%) or often (23.4%). Though it is compulsory for Muslims to fast during Ramadan and they will be punished if they are found to break this obligation, 0.2% admit that they have never fasted and 12.2% fast sometimes. More females comply with this obligation and those who never fast during Ramadan are male.

Though many Muslim youth do not practise their religious obligations, such as praying and reading the Quran, almost 70% of them want wearing the headscarf to be compulsory for

women. More males (72.1%) compared with females (66.6%) want this regulation. It is surprising that those with a secondary education (66.9%) are more liberal than those with a university degree (81.3%) or with adiploma or its equivalent (73.0%). There is little difference in the percentage between urban and rural youth who want wearing headscarf to be compulsory for females.

Despite the laxity of many Muslim youth in fulfilling their religious obligations, they display a preference for Syariah and Hudud laws. More than 70% of them want the Quran to replace the Federal Constitution. Muslims in Sabah and Sarawak are less keen for the Syariah laws; only half of them want the replacement of the Federal Constitution with the Quran. A slightly higher percentage of males, compared with females are in favour of Syariah laws.

The lean towards Hudud laws is indicated by their agreement to the cutting of hands of convicted thieves, the death sentence for murderers and the caning of those who drink alcohol. More than 70% of them want the hands of convicted thieves to be cut off and over 90% of them want those who consume alcohol to be caned. A higher percentage of females than males want such punishment for convicted thieves. This could be due to more of them being victims of snatch thieves. The percentage of those who demand this form of punishment increases with age, meaning the older the group, the higher the percentage wanting this form of punishing convicted thieves. The percentage of youth who want those who drink to be caned also increases with age. The number of high profile cases, especially that of a part-time Malaysian model who was working in Singapore, could have aroused their interest and influenced their thinking.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, LIFESTYLE AND VALUES
It is a common sight to see popular cafes, shopping complexes, mamak stalls and sidewalks to be full of young people during weekends, holidays and in the evenings. Mobile phones are their constant companion whether they are at work or enjoying their leisure. Other than the girls wearing headscarves, Muslim youth in Malaysia do not seem to differ much from youth in developed countries.

Typifying how youth in rural areas spend their leisure time is difficult. But the mobile phone is definitely a part of their lifestyle, except for those in the country's interior. Technology is very important to young people. The mobile phone, computer and other gadgets enable them to keep in touch with their friends and provide entertainment through movies, music and games. As watching television, listening to music and surfing the internet are the main leisure activities, electronic gadgets are necessities to them. Some are addicted to sms and twittering. Technology appears to be more important to rural youth as more of them than urban youth consider technology to be "in". Technology is equally important to youth in the various age groups and the different levels of education.

Reading books is not a very popular pastime among Malaysians though reading magazines and newspapers is . Though more of those with a university education read as a pastime, reading is not popular even among them. The majority of university graduates watch television although the percentage of them that engage in this activity is lower than the groups with a lower education level. Watching television is such a popular leisure activity that the other activities do not come near to it. Except for listening to music and surfing the internet, the other activities have less than 2% of the respondents engaging in

them for leisure. This includes going to the mosque even for those attending religious schools.

Technology broadens a youngster's knowledge and this applies to youth in other countries as well. This knowledge, coupled with psychologically enticing advertising, whets their appetite for luxurious and branded items. Possessing designer clothes, shoes and accessories is a status symbol. Muslim youth have the same need as more than 60% of the respondents consider wearing designer clothes is "in". The younger ones (more than 70%) and those with a university education (78.1%) appear to be more inclined towards designer clothes.

Young people, just like everyone else, encounter problems, frustrations and stress. The management of emotions, especially stress, has an influential impact on their mental and physical health. How they handle stress is therefore important. Telling a friend is the most commonly used method but there are some gender differences. Females, being more communicative, also confide in family members, while males, being either less verbal or having to appear stoic, tend to use escapism such as letting the stress go on its own or listening to music. A few males and females use sedatives and a few males turn to drugs. Letting it go on its own tends to become increasingly popular with increasing age. The reverse holds true for telling a friend and listening to music. Getting counselling from experts is not common though the 15 to 17 age group/students and executives use it more than any of the other groups. Stigma, a dearth of good counsellors and lack of trust in counsellors could be among the reasons for not using this method even though it is one of the best ways of dealing with stress.

POLITICS

The Universities and University Colleges Act of 1971 prohibits active participation of tertiary students in political activities. Students can join the National Union of Malaysian Muslim Students, which holds motivational and tutoring classes for students, and the Peninsular Malaysia for Malay Students Federation, which assists Malay students in pursuing academic excellence as individuals. Students' associations cannot be affiliated to these two associations. The aversion of the government to students' participation in political activities probably stifles young people's interest in politics, except for those who are compassionate about democracy and justice. Consequently, the majority of them, especially the Bumiputra youth in Sabah and Sarawak, consider getting involved in politics to be uncool. The older that one becomes and the higher the education one gets the lower is the percentage of those who think involvement in politics is cool.

Distancing themselves from politics is translated into their apathy towards exercising their voting rights. About 66.3% who are eligible to vote have not done so, 20% have never voted and only 11.6% have voted in every election. Females are more conscious in exercising their voting rights than males. Employers/those in management in small enterprises, non-office workers and the unemployed/lost ability are the most apathetic towards registering to vote.

Though they are not interested in politics they are cognizant of politics and democracy. The vast majority of them know that people have the power to change a government they do not like, that a good democracy needs opposition parties, and that the importance of good leadership is gender independent. Though female Muslim youth are more conscientious in exercising their voting rights than their male peers, they are less knowledgeable

of politics and democracy. Knowledge of politics and democracy also increases with age and level of education. Rural youth seem to be politically more discerning.

CONCLUSION

Muslim youth in Malaysia seem to be just like any other youth in the country in their lifestyle. This includes the use of technology for communication and leisure, a partiality for designer apparel, their management of stress and a disinterest in politics by being laid-back in fulfilling responsibilities as citizens in a democratic country. But a very different lifestyle is displayed pertaining to their religious belief. They disapprove of clothes that expose the female body, want the wearing of the headscarf to be mandatory for females and the consumption of alcohol to be forbidden. Generally, they favour Syariah and Hudud laws such as cutting off the hands of convicted thieves, the death penalty for murderers and caning those who drink alcohol. This is despite not being rigorous in fulfilling their religious obligations themselves, such as praying five times a day, reading the Quran and fasting during Ramadan—they understand rather little of the Quran. The influence of television on their values, attitudes and lifestyle must be rather great since they spend so much of their leisure time watching it. Parents and families are important to them but their influence may not be as strong as shown by their failure to fulfil their religious obligations even in very religious homes. Schools too do not seem to make much impact on these youth since there are hardly any differences in lifestyle and values between those who attend religious schools and those who attend non-religious schools.

MUSLIM YOUTH SURVEY IN MALAYSIA (2010-2011)

by: Dr. Shamsul Amri Baharuddin

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a Muslim majority country with about 60.4 per cent of its 28 million total population (2010) being Muslim. The largest group within the Muslim category is ethnic Malays[1]. It constitutes 50.4 per cent of the total population[2]. Other Muslim natives, much smaller in number, belong to the Melanau of Sarawak, Bajau and Dusun of Sabah and Orang Asli of Peninsula Malaysia. A smaller number are Chinese (converts and Muslim-born), Indian (Muslim-born and converts) and expatriates.

The exact statistics of youths-- those between 15-25 years -- in Malaysia, Muslims and non-Muslims, is not available; however, official statistics indicate that those in the 15-64 year old category constitute 68 per cent of the population. From this figure it has been extrapolated that the size of those between 15-25 years old is about 40 per cent of the total population (about 11.2 million). How many per cent of these are Muslims and non-Muslims? No one has really tried to count.

If the 'guesstimate' is correct, then the number of young Malaysians, Muslims and non-Muslims, between 15-25 years is about 11.2 million. This makes up a very large section of the total population. If 50 per cent of the total youth population is Malay, which is then 5.6 million, it means Muslim youth is a rather large and potentially influential group in the Malaysian context, especially in the political arena. With the current 'democratic' political outpourings in traditionally repressive Middle East and North Africa, spearheaded by the Muslim youth in the said region, the world's focus has now shifted from the Muslim extremist, jihadist and suicide bombers of the Ben Laden kind to the more peace- and democracy-loving young Muslims.

At first, what the Muslim youths did and achieved was welcomed and celebrated in the developed countries with a certain measure of euphoria. But now the euphoria is fading in the light of the rising popular concern in the same countries that the Muslim youths could be the new 'enemy', 'challenge' or 'problem' of unknown and unfathomable quantity. They could actually be the force that finally achieved what Ben Laden has failed to do, namely, the 'Syariahization' of the societies in the Middle East and North Africa. In short, there was a brief period of switching-off of Islamophobia, but now it seems to be switched-on again!

In these unexpected global circumstances, with the Muslim youths at centre stage, it appears that discussing the results of a nation-wide survey on Malay-Muslim youths in Malaysia - conducted by the Malaysian Merdeka Center on behalf of the Goethe Institute and the German Friedrich Nauman Foundation

for Freedom in October and November of 2010 - is timely and indeed relevant.

Perhaps, before interpreting the results from the survey, a brief analysis on Malaysia, as a society, is in order. It may provide the context within which the findings ought to be read and understood.

MALAYSIA: MANAGING AND SUSTAINING A SOCIAL COHESION

Everybody knows that Malaysia has many ethnic groups of various religious, linguistic and cultural backgrounds and that Malaysians are always striving to survive in one peaceful nation. This is the most striking and positive feature of Malaysian society in the last 40 years or so. It is very clear that in Malaysia, violence is not an option.

Malaysians will no doubt continue in the future to discuss openly or in private about matters concerning their personal ethnic woes, intra- and inter-ethnic difficulties, in the search for a middle ground in order to safeguard their lifestyles and allow them to continue to enjoy the quality of life the country is blessed with.

They also accept the fact that they do need to conduct continuous public discourse on matters they are unhappy about rather than keeping them within, which in turn, remind them that they are living in a state of 'social cohesion' but not without conflict, contradiction and contestation. Therefore Malaysians work very hard to maintain peace and stability in the country hence Malaysia's well-known capacity at social sustainability.

Like citizens in many other countries that have embarked on the modernization project, Malaysians have to remind themselves of the fact that there are two major components in such an endeavour, namely, economic and political factors. Finding and maintaining a balance between them is the both a necessity and also the greatest challenge.

To measure the success of the economic component is relatively easy. Growth figures help us to ascertain where we are heading in our industrialization push. GNP figures and the poverty line indicate the economic spread, even or uneven. The thriving shopping malls demonstrate the healthy expansion of our middle class and our love for the globalised consumerist lifestyle.

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[1] Even though the Malays in Malaysia, anthropologically speaking, is part of the larger 'Malay race' in the Malay archipelago which is the core of the Malay world and its worldwide diaspora (that includes Indonesia, South Philippines, Brunei, Singapore, Southern Thailand, Champa in Cambodia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Syschelles), the concept of Malays in Malaysia has become more culturally-defined, hence it is an 'ethnic group', as a result of the introduction, since 31 August 1957, of Article 160 of the Federal Constitution, that defined clearly Malays as a cultural/ethnic group, with the following attributes: a Malay person professes the Islamic religion, is a habitual speaker of the Malay language and practices the Malay culture and tradition. Therefore, by default all Malays are Muslims but not all Muslims are Malays. Some are of Indian, Chinese and other ethnic origins. However, in the popular realm, the term 'Malay race' is often used interchangeably with the term 'ethnic Malay' in the popular realm. This has often brings a lot of confusion and generating interesting pseudo-anthropological debate hence adding further obfuscation.

[2] It important to note that according to Article 160 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia Malays are defined as, or by default, are Muslims, hence the popular label that Malays as 'constitutional Muslims.'

However, to achieve the political target of nation-building, by realizing national integration, to be conducted through the implementation of various national policies -- in the fields of education, language and culture -- is not an easy task. In fact, the exercise of nation-building, on the whole, is a nebulous one. The measurement of its success is equally an imprecise one.

In 1991, Malaysia's former Prime Minister, Tun Mahathir Mohamed, outlined the nine challenges in creating a united Malaysian nation, or Bangsa Malaysia, in his famous 'Vision 2020' statement. With this, he clearly implies that there exists in Malaysia a thriving 'state' but not yet a 'nation,' which he hopes could be accomplished by the year 2020.

When proposing his Vision 2020, he must have realized that Malaysians are still saddled with a number of historical-structural impediments in the nation-building process, be they in the education, socio-cultural and economic spheres or in Malaysia's modern electoral system. Perhaps the only useful method for measuring Malaysia's success in nation-building, obviously complemented by its economic achievements, is to compare its overall performance with that of other multi-ethnic countries which were once considered to be success stories, such as Sri Lanka and Yugoslavia.

That Malaysia have been perceived as a model of success by the developing countries, sufficient for them to have confidence in selecting to play the leading role as the Chair for NAM (Non-Aligned Movement which has 118 member countries), OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference which has 57 member countries) and ASEAN (Association Southeast Asian Nations which has 10 member countries), speaks volumes for its achievement.

It is important to remember that "unity is not uniformity." Total unity and absolute integration are but utopias. Crying for their absence could mislead others and would generate alienating, indeed, violent anomic consequences that must be avoided at all cost. Malaysians have to live and have lived successfully with their differences for decades, even if the situation is not completely perfect.

However, to maintain ethnic harmony at any cost is not an easy task. To ignore this is to invite unfathomable difficulties and dire consequences, such as we have witnessed in the black events of May 13, 1969. Perhaps it is against such a background that the government has recently made the effort to introduce "Ethnic Relations" as a subject to be offered to our students at institutions of higher learning. This program may not create national integration and ethnic unity overnight but it is a starting point that we all need to have access to, not only in relation to our cultural history, but concerning matters much more far reaching, such as economic equality and equity, and building a strong democratic tradition.

Malaysia will remain one of the few nations in the world today, whose experience and track record in dealing with many ethnicities, religions, and cultures is a useful one. It is not a perfect one. It is not easily replicated but it is useful for other states to study closely and perhaps for gaining some useful insights from it.

The good management and balance of economic growth and distribution is necessary to any nation, but more so it seems in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. But the case of Malaysia proves the fact that economic development and prosperity alone is not sufficient to maintain political stability. It has to turn to the realm of non-economic factors in the end. In this context, the message is very clear. In dealing with the non-economic factors there is a huge contribution made by knowledge generated within the social sciences and humanities.

The brief survey on the Malay-Muslim youths is indeed a social scientific effort and attempt at understanding the so-called non-economic factors, in this case religious and cultural, and how these factors shaped and influenced their social world and in the long-run how the Malay-Muslim youths shaped some parts of the larger social life realm of Malaysians. The result of the survey is a small window for us to get some glimpses of contemporary Malay-Muslim youths in Malaysia.

THE 'GENERATION GAP' THESIS

Based on a random survey of the discourse and debate, in the last decade, on Muslim youths in Europe, Asia, and North America, there seems to be a convergence of opinions, direct and indirect or expressed and assumed, on how to frame the analysis on Muslim youths, namely, the oft-repeated 'generation gap' thesis.[3]

It is suggested that on the one side there are two social categories, namely, the first group, the 'elders' (the grandfathers and grandmothers) who are traditional and religious as a result of their strict moral upbringing, including being educated in the religious school system. The second group, are the not-so-old-and–not-so-young group (father and mother generation). Some received traditional religious education but worked in the modern secular sector. Others pursued further education in the modern secular schools and achieved high status and accumulated substantial material wealth as a result of working in the private and public sector.

On the other, there is only one social category, namely, those 'younger ones' (grandchildren), who are totally modern and secular in their educational upbringing embellished with middle-class values, with little religious training except for some basic Islamic rituals, and a rather superficial knowledge about Islam. Often they subscribe to universal moral values such as human rights, civil society, justice and equality. Some from this category experienced 'religious awakening' and 'returned' to Islam, and became involved in the dakwah or Islamic revitalization movement while they were receiving secular education. The majority of these students have specialized in the field of physical sciences. It is not a coincidence that other radical groups around the world have been led by such young scientists, too.[4]

There is a complex relationship between the two divided sections within which those in the category 'younger ones' have grown up. Sometimes the relationship has been characterized by conflict and contestation and at other times by consensus and compromise. This ambivalent relationship has often resulted in distance and distrust between those in this category and the two older groups.

It has been argued by many who wrote on Muslim youths that 'secularization of human society' has underpinned the 'de-Islamization' process (to borrow Syed Naguib Al-Attas's concept) experienced by the youths. This so-called 'decentering' experience brought them face to face with the ulamaks and their older generations, both embracing different and opposing values, hence the 'generation gap' thesis.

One factor that has been singled out by many analysts, East and West, as most influential in the secularization of human society vis-à-vis the Muslim youths has been technological development which has been dominated by rational-scientific principles apparently without the guidance of any metaphysical values. Such technological advancement has provided the Muslim youths with an incredible amount of knowledge and information that the parents and grandparents do not possess. In other words, the grandparents and parents can no longer provide the moral guidance and advice to their younger ones.

The 'generation gap' thesis therefore suggests that the secular system has broken down the religion-based traditional familial, patron-client, wise elder-inexperienced young one, mentor-mentee relationship thus distancing the latter from the former. The so-called 'moral panic,' of the old over the 'negative' pattern behaviour of the young, that has consequently emerged, has been explained in the 'generation gap' thesis.

The moot point is if this gap can ever be closed or made to disappear. Or, if positing the relationship in a binary opposition is the best analytical frame there is. Or, if such perspective has been influenced by the 'theological imagination', namely, the divide between the 'good vs. evil', 'black vs. white' and so on.

Is it not more beneficial analytically to look at this relationship within a framework of a continuum, whereby the elder generation is at the one end of the continuum and the younger ones at the other, and the parents are in the middle, connecting and mediating between the two generations? In my opinion, adopting a 'continuum frame' as an analytical tool would represent reality a lot better because it emphasizes the social cohesion aspects of the relationship, within which conflict and contestation occur. The binary opposition principle that underpins the 'generation gap' thesis seems to over-emphasize the conflict side of the relationship at the expense of the positive side of the relationship. Perhaps the Malaysian case can provide some fresh answers.

THE MALAYSIAN CASE

Against the background narrative presented above, the survey conducted in the last quarter of 2010, involving 1060 randomly selected Muslim youths across Peninsular Malaysia (83.3% of the sample) and East Malaysian (16.7% of the sample), can only provide us, at best, with some useful glimpses on contemporary Muslim youths in the country. It definitely updates us with what is happening in Malaysia vis-à-vis its Muslim youths based on data collected from an empirical survey and not some popular extrapolation, which tends to be a common practice among NGOs, political parties (both in the ruling coalition and the opposition coalition), and the soldiers of mass media, the internet, electronic tools and print.

The survey suggests that the Muslim youths, at the level of personal development and lifestyle, are more inclined towards personal-based piety orientation in their overall religious outlook and practice. Seldom do they choose to be involved in a collective-based religious political activism. They definitely show a great liking towards technology, especially the new media (internet and sms), and they are also inclined to study technical subjects in universities. For entertainment they listen to music (modern and religious) and watch Western movies. They do strive hard to improve their personal well-being and in their effort they seek jobs with good income.

In some aspects this gives us the impression that the 'generation gap' thesis has some validity in the context of Malaysian Muslim youths, epistemologically, in the sense that overwhelming secular experience and existence has made them technologically savvy. However, they are not totally de-Islamized as the gap thesis would suggest. They may be superficial in their practice of and knowledge about Islam but even though they are concentrating mainly on the rituals without possessing real deep theological knowledge, they nevertheless perceive themselves as religious. This is particularly expressed through the set of values they find important to embrace.

Their faith in the religion is strong and having that as a compass in their life is important. Although they seem to believe that they are more materialistic, creative, hardworking and ambitious compared to their more religious-oriented parents, they remain steadfastly holding the ultimate value of believing in God. It is not surprising therefore that 'success and failure in life, in their view, is determined by fate. However, they are prepared to learn something new, to have fun in life and push their will through to achieve their ambition. In short, in terms of ethics and ethos, the young ones put hard work, ambition and creativity at the top of their list, as opposed to emphasizing religious activities and duties, which they believe were on top of their parent's list. Nonetheless, their relationship with their parents remains good from when they were much younger until at present.

Their notion and practice of sexuality is very much mainstream: no pre-marital sex, no gays and lesbians, no bikinis or tank tops.

3) See, for instance, Colette Harris, Muslim Youth: Tensions And Transitions In Tajikistan, Colorado: Westview Press, 2006; Steven E. Krauss et al., Exploring Regional Differences in Religiosity among Muslim Youth in Malaysia, Review of Religious Research, 47 (3), March 2006), pp. 238-252; Saktanber Ayse, "Cultural Dilemmas of Muslim Youth: Negotiating Muslim Identities and Being Young in Turkey", Turkish Studies, Sep 2007, 8(3), pp.417-434; Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, 'Islamist Realignments and the Rebranding of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia,' Contemporary Southeast Asia, August 2008, 30(2), pp.215-240; Deifre Michell, 'Book Review, Ferzanna Riley, Unbroken Spirit: How a Young Muslim Refused to be Enslaved by Her Culture', Feminist Theology, September 2008, 17(1), pp. 128-129; Christian Kiem, 'Re-Islamization among Muslim Youth in Ternate Town, Eastern Indonesia,' SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia, February 1993, 8(1), pp. 92-127; Selcuk Sirin and Michelle Fine, Muslim American Youth: Understanding Hyphenated Identities through Multiple Methods, New York: New York University, 2008.; Czarina Wilpert, 'National Case Study: Muslim Youth in Germany, Focus on Youth of Turkish Origin,' Working paper for a Conference on Muslim Youths in Europe, Turin, Italy, 11 June 2004; Ekram & Mohame R. Bashir, Muslim Teens: Today's Worry, Tomorrow's Hope, Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 2001.; Chris Smerecni et al., 'An exploratory study of Muslim adolesents' views on sexuality: Implications for sex education and prevention, BMC Public Health, 10, 2010, pp. 533-543

4) For the Malaysian case, see, Shamsul AB, 'A revival in the study of Islam in Malaysia' in Man, New Series, 18(2), June 1983, pp.399-404; idem, 'Inventing certainties: The dakwah persona in Malaysia' in The Pursuit of Certainty: Religious and Cultural Formulation,' edited by Wendy James, London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 111-131; idem, 'Identity construction, nation formation, and Islamic revivalism in Malaysia' in Politics and Religious Renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia, edited by Robert Hefner and Patricia Horvatich, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp.207-227.

They want to have a normal family, to get married and have children, more than two if possible. Marriage is viewed as a yardstick of happiness. If their spouse-to-be is a non-Muslim they want them to convert to Islam. However, they are divided whether, on the one hand, they should raise their children with a lot more religious components or, on the other, if they should let their children grow up like they did. All in all, they want to be a good parent.

The rather interesting finding from this survey is that overall, in terms of religious intensity and orientation, the group of the respondents cannot be categorized as extremist or fundamentalist. They have information and some knowledge about Islam. They have gone through learning to read the Quran, learning to fast and learning the rituals from their ustaz (religious teachers).

Nearly half of them (42.4%) grew up socialized by very religious parents but they turned out to be moderate ones. Remarkably, more than 60% have not seen or experienced violence in the last 12 months before the survey was conducted. They heard about the rules with regards to wearing headscarves, Hudud laws, cutting off hands of thieves, and caning for Muslims who drink beer but none ever mentioned any Quranic verses that support such rules.

Beyond the personal and family related context the youths overwhelmingly (92%) expressed their willingness to engage in some form of social activities that relate to the environment and animal protection, to helping the disabled, the poor and the aged. They are also concerned about preservation of culture and heritage and want to be involved in its preservation activities. They prefer to join such collective social engagement at the place where they study, and working with peers is high on their list. However, involving themselves in political activities is not high on their agenda, and only 73% of them are interested in change. In short, the findings reveal that the respondents only moderately participate and engage in social organizations.

The political position adopted by the respondents is a consistent one. They may not be very interested in politics but appreciate good leadership in the country. Of course, they are very aware of what is happening in Malaysia, socio-politically and in economic terms. Indeed, they express appreciation and satisfaction regarding the economic growth, political stability, good infrastructures and satisfactory governance. They wish the social problems relating to the youths could be tackled and resolved. However, 82.4% of the respondents expressed the highest level of satisfaction with the peaceful situation in Malaysia. This is clearly reflected in their preference for a safe neighbourhood.

They definitely expressed an optimistic viewpoint about Malaysia by saying (90%) that they are happy with their life - some also think that being an entrepreneur is a good aspiration.

Of course, they were not asked about their reaction to Osama Ben Laden's demise. But they do express a strong pro-Muslim worldview when it comes to international politics. Even President Obama of the USA, according to them, cannot resolve the Muslim problems in the world, such as the Palestinian issue which is very high on their list of concerns. However, some consider globalization a positive phenomenon which they identified with peace, economic prosperity and technological advancement. Others thought that globalization has brought negative impacts such as the destruction of the environment. They are concerned too about issues, such as cancer and AIDS, loss of traditional values and culture, and losing jobs or not being able to find and keep employment.

CONCLUSION

The survey provides sufficient findings for observers to support the impression that Malaysia is definitely not a 'failed state'[5] as some people would like us to believe; nor is Malaysia a little Afghanistan with Taliban-like extremists running around eking out a living from growing poppies; and, Malaysia is not suffering from an ethnic strife of a magnitude which Sri Lanka had experienced for more than two decades.

The social context within which the youths have expressed their opinions on a range of critical matters in their life and environment could only be the Malaysian context in articulating the experience of social cohesion that Malaysia has enjoyed. The moderation of Islamic life has created moderate viewpoints amongst the Muslim youths interviewed. Interestingly, in spite of the active involvement of the youths in bringing about political change in Malaysia, this group has also expressed happiness with the government. Could the forces of change have been motivated by non-Muslims? Or Muslim elites interested in the powerful political positions?

There is no sign that violence is an option in the minds of these respondents, and certainly not amongst the majority of Malaysians, whose middle class existence puts economic survival on the top of their list. The respondents show no sign of inter-religious disquiet or anxiety in spite of the fact that many such issues have been raised publicly in the media.

The social sustainability of Malaysia is certainly the result of a combination of factors, that include relatively peaceful inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations and prosperous economic existence. This however, does not mean that there is an absence of conflict and contestation. It is significant to note, however, that whatever conflict and contestation has happened it was always balanced by negotiation, consensus and compromise. This may be difficult to believe and understand because even in developed nations multiculturalism does not seem to work, and yet: Malaysians breathe and live multiculturalism!

MUSLIM YOUTH SURVEY 2010.
MALAYSIA SURVEY FINDINGS. ANALYSIS, APRIL 2011

by: Tunku 'Abidin Muhriz

BACKGROUND

In April 2011, I was asked to write a descriptive analysis of the Muslim Youth Survey 2010 commissioned by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom and the Goethe Institute implemented by the Merdeka Center for Opinion Research in October and November 2010.

INTRODUCTION

At a glance, the survey shows evidence of the following important trends:

■ Evidence of religious and social conservatism
■ Mixed support for political authoritarianism
■ Favourable attitudes towards globalisation
■ Minimal differences in answers between rural and urban respondents
■ Differences between age groups seem to reflect experience in the workforce but not attitudes towards religion

There is no need to delve into each observation here as these are self-evident in the package of findings; describing them here would be tautological. *

THE ANALYSIS
EVIDENCE OF RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL CONSERVATISM

The apparent social conservatism might be cause for concern amongst observers supporting a liberal democratic society. However, it is important to differentiate between social conservatism and support for political authoritarianism (which I will treat separately below).

At first glance, the answers might suggest widespread support amongst Malaysian Muslim youth for social conservatism, but this may be exaggerated due to weaknesses in the relevant questions, referred to above. There are several further examples apart from question 20, such as:

■ The apparent preference of Syariah Law over the Federal Constitution (Question 60) may not necessarily indicate unabashed support for the Syariah, but may also reflect dissatisfaction with the Federal Constitution. In recent years, many books and opinion pieces have derided the fact that the Federal Constitution has been amended many times, with many implying that the general legal environment has suffered as a result, or giving the impression that the Federal Constitution does not have sufficient inbuilt protections.
■ Question 54 ("How often are you able to fulfil all five daily prayers?") does not differentiate between those who are not able to as a result of choice / wilful negligence and those who are not able to as a result of physical or time constraints.

Question 56 reveals that more than three quarters of respondents admit to understanding "rather little" of the verses of the Quran. This is despite nearly 90% of respondents claiming to be from a "very religious home" or "rather religious home"

(Question 53). Indeed, a "local teacher" or "parents" represent the majority of answers to "From where did you know about Islam?" (Question 57). These collectively imply the existence of many different interpretations, which does reflect the historical development of Islam in general.

It is important here to note shifts in dominant outward social attitudes. It has often been remarked that movies produced by the likes of the late Tan Sri P. Ramlee, or the performances of the late Sudirman Arshad, would not be able to be made in like manner today. Such juxtapositions abound not only in social life but also in political attitudes towards these views. Indeed, whilst in the 1970s a former prime minister defended the holding of a concert by Sudirman at a public university, today there is very little public political defending of popular performers or arts practitioners; indeed many politicians join the choruses of disapproval when artistes deemed to be "sexy "or "immoral" wish to perform in Malaysia. The remit and role of the Film Censorship Board in removing scenes or banning movies it deems unsuitable remains in force.

The widespread use of the headscarf today provides possibly the most visible example of how outward practices have changed. Although no survey data is available, photographs of people in Malaya in the 1950s and 60s across all social backgrounds and geographic localities – including Rulers' Consorts, wives of ministers (or female ministers themselves), teachers, nurses and even rural anti-communist militias – rarely include those wearing the tudung as it is used today. In some cases, other types of headdress are seen, but these would fall short of the requirements insisted upon by religious conservatives today.

Even so, today there are many in prominent positions who do not wear the headscarf. Without further research, it is not possible to be sure how many aspire to do so one day, or are hostile to the idea outright.

Another development is the issuance of fatwa frowning upon or banning certain activities such as yoga and the poco-poco line dance. Such prominent displays of "establishment" disapproval of these activities may silence or push proponents of such activities underground where they are able to pursue their activities without drawing attention to themselves. There may be examples of young people who rebel more strongly and cease identifying themselves as Muslim altogether.

Another area that is of interest is exploring views about possible dichotomies between what is seen as "Malay culture" and "Islamic values". This is important given that nearly 80% of respondents defined themselves as "Muslim" rather than their "race" (Question 30). This pan-Muslim consciousness has sometimes been attributed to the after-effects of the 1979 Iranian Revolution in addition to domestic factors such as the rural-urban shift of Malay voters.

There are other answers that may have been formed as a response to the perceived rise of social problems. For example,

newspapers routinely report incidences of extramarital and underage sex and baby dumping that seem to involve Malaysian Muslims.

MIXED SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL AUTHORITARIANISM

Despite the clear trend towards social conservatism, when it comes to political liberties the picture is more mixed.

Whilst the first and third prime ministers – Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra and Tun Hussein Onn, respectively – openly declared that Malaysia was a secular state with Islam as the official religion – the fourth prime minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, declared that Malaysia was an Islamic state. Despite some semantic confusion in the difference between "official religion" and "state religion" (further compounded by the fact that Malaysia is a federation of states in which Islam may or may not be the state religion)[1] , the idea that Malaysia is an "Islamic state" has gained much currency.

This correlates with the apparent strong support for the premiership of Tun Abdullah Badawi in 2004. Although he was not as authoritarian a leader as his predecessor, Tun Mahathir, he was from a religiously conservative family. This would imply that Malaysian Muslim youth largely desire political freedom, but would choose to be socially conservative nonetheless.

FAVOURABLE ATTITUDES TOWARDS GLOBALISATION

A combination of increased internet penetration and government initiatives such as the Look East Policy may have played an important role in this regard. Although history (and other humanities) is not popularly studied as a discipline in Malaysian universities, vague connotations of international trade and legacies of being part of, or interacting with, world polities have survived in textbooks and the popular imagination. Iconic projects such as the Petronas Twin Towers and cultivation of the "Malaysia Boleh" attitude, particularly during world sporting events, has increased desirability of being able to compete internationally. Many rural areas also receive much international produce or even people, such as tourists participating in homestay holidays.

MINIMAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN RESULTS

Historically, only Muslims of the aristocratic classes would have lived in cities, apart from the merchants who might have resided in port towns. For the majority of Malay Muslims, however, the phenomenon of urban living is not much older than the nation itself.

Without historical data it is not possible to track whether the rural-urban difference was ever more significant in forming views than it is today, but it is tempting to speculate that an increasingly centralised and uniform education system may have played an important role in this regard.

Differences between Age Groups Seem to Reflect Experience in the Workforce but not Attitudes towards Religion

The experience of individual responsibility seems to have resulted in a clear pattern for questions involving attitudes towards one's career. Answers to "How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? – Hard work does pay off" (Question 40D) shows that those more in the bottom age ranges (15-17 and 18-19) disagree while those in the upper age ranges (20-22 and 23-25) agree.

CONCLUSION

It would be obvious that even without this survey, Malaysia as a Muslim-majority country has changed from the days when Tunku Abdul Rahman confidently asserted that his was a secular nation.

However, the results of the survey provide much material to debate why views have formed as they are. It is regrettable that similar surveys have not been conducted on a regular basis (or if they have been, they are not publicly available), for such a wealth of information would surely help inform the story of Islam in Malaysia in illuminating ways. Nonetheless, it is not too late to begin regular surveys such as this, with the caveat that the questions and presentation of data be continually improved to achieve better clarity.

COMMENTS ON THE METHODOLOGY
VAGUENESS OF QUESTIONS

Many of the questions could have been worded in ways that would have enabled much better analysis, or could have been followed by supplementary questions to achieve greater clarity. Question 20 provides one example:

> Do you agree or disagree: are Muslims allowed to change their religion?

The first weakness is that it does not define the entity or law that provides or denies the "allowance". It is possible that while some respondents answered the question based on their knowledge of the federal constitution or state laws and legal precedent, others could have answered based on their understanding of the Syariah, or some other theological or personal moral basis. The answers could have been different if the question demanded the respondent to base the answer on one of these bases.

The second weakness is in simply asking respondents to "agree or disagree" with the (ill-defined) statement. It is entirely possible for someone to "disagree" with the statement based on their understanding of the law, but at the same time feel that the law ought to be changed to enable Muslims to change their religion. A supplementary question asking, "Do you agree that Muslims should be allowed [by Malaysian law / the Syariah] to change their religion?" would have achieved this important distinction. At the moment, it is impossible to distinguish between respondents who might have interpreted the question differently.

CONSIDERATIONS OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Some categories could have been more refined. For example, no definition is given for what constitutes "urban" or "rural". A fourth generation urban resident may have a different outlook to a first generation city-dweller whose family support network remains in the kampong, necessitating frequent trips to rural areas.

DETAILS IN THE TABLE OF FINDINGS

The table of findings could have included more stratification, especially in one area that coincides with legal ramifications as well. The administration of Islam in Malaysia is a state matter, and in fact many enactments regarding religious matters differ from state to state. In Negeri Sembilan, for example, there is a legal process for apostasy.

Therefore, perceptions of religious laws may differ from state

to state and the omission of this breakdown may have hidden some interesting results.

MORE QUESTIONS

Naturally, with the benefit of hindsight, there are many more questions that could have been asked. One particularly pertinent question might have been:

> To what extent do you think Malay culture and tradition clash with Muslim values?

[1] The Federal Constitution makes it clear that the Rulers are Heads of Islam in their respective states. The 20 point agreement with Sabah declares that there is to be no state religion in that state.

MALAYSIA'S MUSLIM YOUTH SURVEY:
A NUANCED ANALYSIS

by: Dr. Wong Chin Huat

The following analysis will examine five aspects of the Muslim Youth Survey: personal development, family orientation, religion, social environment, lifestyle and politics.

In a background essay (Malaysia's Muslim Youth) it will then focus on the social and political context of religious authoritarianism amongst Muslim youth in Malaysia.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Malaysian Muslim youth are largely optimistic about themselves and the country. As many as 63.0% believe that they will be able to study or work in their desired field. [Q34] Some 43.1% are rather optimistic about their own future and more (55.6%) are optimistic about the country's future. On the other hand, 49.8% fluctuate between optimism and pessimism over their own future and 34.1% over the country's future. [Q28 and Q29] However, despite the expression of optimism, 85.2% of the respondents are concerned with the possibility of unemployment. [Q8E]

At a daily level, the youth are most often stressed by interpersonal and social relationships (24.0%), financial difficulties (21.7%), problems at school (20.8%), problems at work (19.7%), and health and physical safety (7.8%). [Q24] When stressed, most of them turn to friends or families (41.0%), "let it go on its own" (20.9%) or turn to music or movies (20.0%). Only 8.5% would get professional help, while a tiny 1.6% would turn to sedatives, alcohol or drugs. [Q25]

In terms of life goals, a significant percentage of the respondents are economically and career driven, with 14.9% simply wanting to be rich, while others wanting to be entrepreneurs (24.3%), state employees (12.3%), artists (2.7%) or various other professions. Some, 18.4%, are more family orientated and desire being good parents. Finally, some others pursue roles as intellectuals (11.2%), those with political power and influence (6.9%) and fame (3.2%). [Q26]

The values of Muslim youth on wealth seem to be somewhat contradicting. While 94.9% believe that hard work would pay off and 82.1% believe that the wealth gap due to hard work is warranted, a strong minority of 31.7% also believes strongly in equality, while a larger minority of 48.4% takes a fatalistic approach on wealth and success. [Q40]

One may conclude that the spirit of entrepreneurship and individualism is taking root but is still checked by more collectivist and traditional attitudes. This may also be perceived as a reflection on their mixed attitudes towards meritocracy and preferential policy. To perpetuate the support for Bumiputeraism, the mainstream media, especially in the Malay language, often project a backward and under-sieged image of the Bumiputera. Since the vast majority of Muslims are Bumiputera whereas the non-Bumiputera Muslim minority is often given similar treatment. Hence, the unconfident self image of Bumiputera may have been transferred to Muslim youth in Malaysia even though Muslims have a great history of commercial success and entrepreneurial spirit.

FAMILY ORIENTATION

Malaysian Muslim youth are very much family-oriented. As many as 94.2% believe that living with family makes one happier than otherwise. (Q31) All of them want at least two children. The desire for children is not driven by male preference, with 73.3% not caring at all about gender. Interestingly, the number who want a third child because they want a son is exactly the same as those who do so because they want a daughter. [Q33]

The lack of preference for son or daughter suggests an appreciation of gender equality in the family. On polygamy, 72.7% of all respondents reject it, with understandably a much higher percentage 85.1% amongst females (as compared to 60.5% amongst male). [Q15F]

The relationship between Muslim youth and their parents must be carefully interpreted as certain answers reflect more the social desirability to appear politically correct before the surveyers than reality. As many as 97.2% claim that "we get along splendidly", 20.1% also agree that "often we don't get along well, we often have different opinions". A careful analysis of all eight questions on parent-child relationships would show only about 47.5% have a complicated but consistent answer: they really get along well with their parents and would turn to their parents when in need, and they believe their parents do care about them and would give them guidance. They believe parents and children would talk and interestingly that "most of the time [the children] will get [their] way". This shows that contemporary Muslim families are perhaps more liberal and democratic than imagined. [Q37A-H]

However, such parenting style does not seem to go down as well with the younger generation. Of those who "get [their] way" after talking to parents, 30.3% would like to raise their children more religiously and 15.7% more strictly. Of all the respondents, 55.6% would opt for more religious or strict parenting, while another 24.2% would follow their parents' styles, in contrast with only 20.2% would be more loving, less religious or less strict. This finding suggests that the Muslim youth of tomorrow may be more conservative and authoritarian in outlook than today's cohort. [Q37H and Q38]

It is important to note that theoretically parenting can be simultaneously democratic and religious, where children are allowed to question religious doctrines and embrace them after critical examination, although we may not find many examples in contemporary Malaysian society. It is therefore important to further investigate in the future what factors contribute to a preference for a more closed parenting style.

RELIGION

Following the rapid Islamisation process since the 1980s, Malaysia has witnessed in recent years many controversies relating to religious freedom, lifestyle, morality and the role of Islam in policing behaviours. The survey shows that Muslim youth largely support moves to impose religious code and law in public life.

To begin with, objection to apostasy is almost unanimous at 98.3%. [Q20] A slightly lower 92.5% agree or strongly agree with caning as a punishment for Muslims who consume alcohol. [Q61C] Capital punishment for murder, which is mandatory under Common Law, is supported by exactly the same percentage, 92.5%, of Muslim youth, suggesting a huge obstacle for any campaign against the death penalty. [Q61B] Even amputation for convicted thieves, a key feature of the Islamic penal code, the Hudud Laws, which has been ruled out by the Federal Government on constitutional grounds, is supported by a significant 71.5% of youth interviewed. [Q61A] Also, 69.3% of the respondents believe that Muslim women are duty bound to wear the headscarf. [Q59] Most alarming is that nearly seven out of every ten respondents believe the Quran should replace the Federal Constitution as the highest law of the land. [Q60]

It is important to differentiate between sheer religious conservatism and religiously-informed authoritarianism. A liberal democracy must accept the former as a perfectly legitimate position. There is nothing wrong for the religious pious to believe in restrictions on individual lifestyle as long as they do not resort to the state for coercion. Hence, the 97% support for women to wear the headscarf on whatever grounds should not be seen as alarming.

Meanwhile, "religious authoritarianism" will also have to be cautiously defined and measured. From this survey, a simple 9-point "Religious Authoritarianism Index" is constructed by adding up responses on the questions on caning for alcohol consumption, amputation for theft and substitution of the Federal Constitution by the Quran . The death penalty, even though highly related, is excluded because it may reflect a cross-confessional attitude. Unsurprisingly, the graph skews rightwards, suggesting no middle ground on the matter. Interestingly, Muslim youth are actually less religious in their practice than outlook. Only 28.7% of Muslim youth surveyed claim to "always" pray five times a day while another 67.9% answer to be doing so "often" or "sometimes"
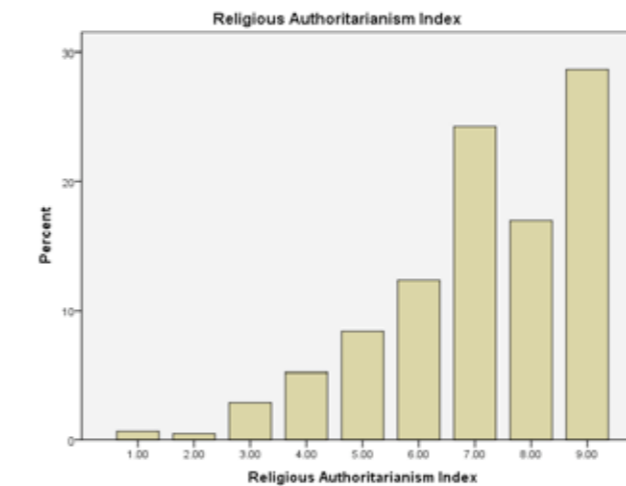
only. [Q54] Similarly, only 54.2% claim to always fast during the month of Ramadhan, while 23.4% and 12.2% answer doing so "often" and "sometimes", respectively. [Q58] This finding is particularly interesting as the failure to fast without valid grounds during Ramadhan (the fasting month) is an offence under the Syariah Law in Malaysia.

How deep is the understanding of Malaysian Muslim youth of Islam? Only 18.1% of those surveyed responded that they "often" read the Quran while 73.3% answered "sometimes" and 8.6%

"never". [Q55] Of the total, 78.4% admit that they understand "rather little" the meaning of the verses of the Quran while another 9.0% claim that they understand "none". [Q56] Even, amongst those who claim to read the Quran often, only slightly more than one third claim that they understand "rather much" or "all" of the meaning of the Quranic verses. It is unclear if the self-reported understanding reflects their actual knowledge or a sense of modesty.

While as many as 88.0% of them claim to have come from "very" or "rather religious" families, it is not clear if this reflects the demographic reality or a biased sample or the social desirability to have a religious family. [Q53] What is certain, more than half of the respondents learn about Islam from their local religious teachers (39.9%) or religious grouping (12.3%), more than those who learn from their parents (34.3%). Even for respondents from very religious families, only 40% depend on their parents as the source of religious knowledge. [Q57]

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND LIFESTYLES

Muslim youth seem to be quite modern in their lifestyle but the influence of new media may be quite limited.

Three out of every four Muslim youth list watching TV as one of their top five favourite pastimes, followed by 61.7% who choose "listening to music" and 52.3% who choose "surfing the internet". The significance of internet usage, however, must be qualified, as the respondent group are those who rank it at third (21.1%), as compared with the 9.4% who rank it top. [Q9] In fact, 36.0% of the respondents do not use it weekly while another 15.6% "never" do so. Only 23.4% surf the internet daily and 24.9% do it once or twice a week. [Q10] While 94.1% use a mobile phone, only 9.3% use a smart phone. [Q11]

In terms of social networking, many Muslim youth are not involved in civil society. While nearly three quarters of the respondents claim to be "active in group, in an office or function at school, college or university", perhaps due to social desirability, only about one in four are reportedly active in youth organisations (such as the Scouts), NGOs, clubs or societies. The reported participation in political parties is even lower at only 14.2%. As many as 36.2% of all respondents do not report any groups that they are active in. [Q13A-E]

One may therefore suggest that the cultural preference and taste of Malaysian Muslim youth may be largely shaped by highly-controlled broadcast media, local religious teachers and parents, much more than organic interaction of their peers or other autonomous social groupings. This explains their near universal reported rejection of un-Islamic lifestyles, such as occasional beer drinking (96.1%), taking soft drugs (98.9%), premarital sex (98.4%), watching pornographic movies (97.5%) and homosexuality (99.4%) [Q15] yet the simultaneous presence of a strong minority (40.7%) who agree or strongly agree that "the western music, movies and clothes are cooler than ours". [Q27]

Perhaps driven by social desirability, when asked for their importance in life, the respondents gave high average scores on most of the matters asked, from 8.42 (enjoying life to the fullest) to 9.88 (belief in God) out of a maximum of 10. Only in two matters, markedly lower marks are recorded, namely 6.50 for "becoming rich" and 7.65 for "acceptance of ethnic and religious minorities". [Q14]

A better measure of the social outlook of Muslim youth may therefore be what they consider "in" and "out" for the youth of

today, which arguably may reflect the respondents' reading of the objective reality – what their peers think – rather than their own subjective values. While there is a near consensus to see "technology", "university education" and "success in career" as "in", the respondents differ substantially on "self-employment", "marriage", "political involvement", "designer clothes", "European Union", "healthy food" and "taking drugs" by about 2:1. There is almost an even split over "faithfulness" and "taking responsibility for others" as "in" or "out". [Q6A-L]

An index of "collectivist values", as perceived by the respondents of their peers, perhaps can be formulated by adding up the answers to those divisive questions and arguably indicating an emphasis on collectivist lifestyle: "marriage", "faithfulness", "taking responsibility for others" and "political involvement" (in); "self-employment", "designer clothes" and "taking drugs" (out). "European Union" and "healthy food" are excluded even though the split on a basis of 2:1 for the former may just indicate knowledge while the latter may be equally preferred by both "individualists" and "collectivists". This generates a Collectivist Value Index from 1 to 8, meaning a person who considers "marriage", "faithfulness", "taking responsibility for others" and "political involvement" to be "in" and "self-employment", "designer clothes" and "taking drugs" to be "out" would yield a value of 8 while someone who thinks the exact opposite would yield a value of 1. Unlike the Religious Authoritarianism Index, the bar chart below shows a bell curve slightly skewed to the end of collectivism, with the extreme ends (1 and 2, 7 and 8) being around 10%.

POLITICS
Malaysian Muslim youth are generally apolitical, with three quarters of the respondents showing little or no interest at all about politics. Of those eligible for voting, as many as 66.3% of the respondents have not registered as voters, and another 20.0% have never voted despite having registered. [Q45] This is consistent with the perceived popularity of political involvement [Q6C] or self-reported party activism. [Q13D]

Such political apathy poses questions on the commitment of Muslim youth to democracy. Although the belief in the inevitability of violence in society scores only an average of 3.44 out of 10, nearly one in 10 respondents rate it at 8-10, suggesting a potential threat. The notion to replace politicians with clergies scores an average of 6.14%, but those who rate it at 8-10 exceed 30%. Interestingly, free speech is the most popular statement at an average score of 8.23%. [Q49A-G]

Overall, Muslim youth show a near-consensual belief in people power to change the government (73.7%), the need for
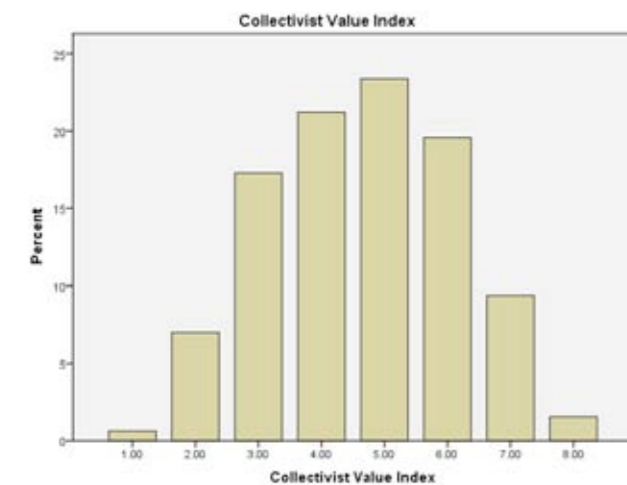
democratic opposition parties (71.4%) and a woman's ability to rule well (67.5%). However, beyond that, there is a clear-cut split over political participation and efficacy. What may form a basis for the democratic attitude of modern citizens does not yield encouraging responses in the questions "politics bore me" (No, 48.8%), "everyone should be interested in politics" (Yes, 50.3%) and "only people with money are successful in politics" (No, 55.7%). It might be tempting to interpret a "Yes" for the question "A strong man should bring order to our country" as an affirmation of authoritarianism but the question does not actually ask the respondents if such a strongman is actually desirable. With the strongman being the given, what he should do almost automatically suggests an authoritarian trait. [Q48A-G]

Excluding the strongman question, a 19-point "Democratic Value Index" may be formulated by summing up the responses to six other questions. Again, a bell curve skewed towards democratic values prevails. Not even one has provided the least democratically-inclined answer for all questions. It is also important to note that two thirds of the questions are capturing the respondents' views on political efficacy and interest, while another question tries to capture gender bias, only the question on the need of political parties aims to capture authoritarianism. Hence, a low score here should not be interpreted as an outright affirmation for authoritarianism, but moreso reflecting a sense of apathy or inefficacy. And simply because this index is not capturing political authoritarianism per se, it can be used to explain political attitude elsewhere (such as religious authoritarianism) without being tautological. Generally, Muslim youth have acquired their political knowledge largely through conventional media which are tightly controlled by the ruling coalition, BarisanNasional. Television is the top source (30.4%), followed by radio (23.1%), newspapers (12.1%), the internet (9.7%), school (8.0%) and people around them (16.6%). [Q46] Interestingly, 34% follow regularly developments in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Palestine while only 26.4% and 19.9%, respectively, follow regularly local and national news events. [Q47]

OVERALL ANALYSIS
Both the Collectivist Value and Democratic Value indices constructed from the survey data show a bell-curve distribution, markedly different from the skewed distribution of the Religious Authoritarianism Index, indicating that Muslim youth are more diverse than their monolithic outlook on the public role of Islam would suggest.

However, how do we explain their religious authoritarianism? Will changes in any variable affect some changes in their view on faith and politics? Unfortunately, there is no simple correlation between the Religious Authoritarianism Index and the two other indices. In other words, individualistic or not, believing in democracy or not, Malaysian Muslim youth seem to be equally drawn to greater fusion of religion and state. This could simply be the outcome of social desirability, that the political correctness is so high for the Islamisation of the state that even those individualists or democrats would not openly question these positions, which signals the discursive terrains amongst young Muslims in Malaysia.

What may make one less authoritarian while even being conservative? We have learned that family education does not matter as much as one may expect. Could formal education have made a difference?

As half of the respondents attended some form of religious school, could that have made a difference? The answer is negative.

Democratic Value Index (1-19)
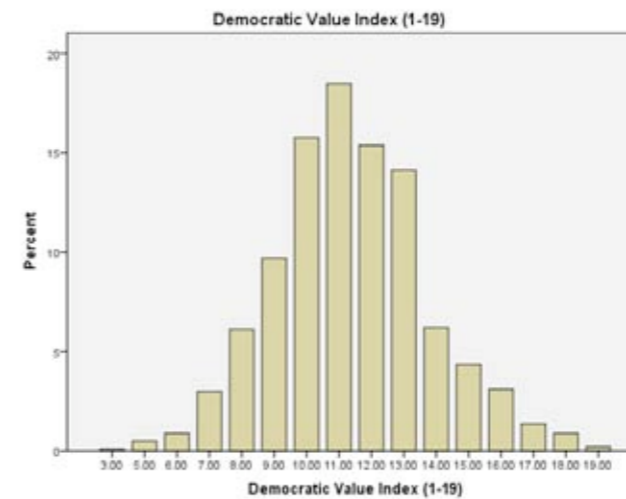
Not even the types of religious schools, whether funded by the government, community or private sector, will make a difference (not shown here).

What about the level of education? The most authoritarian position, 9, on the Religious Authoritarianism Index remains the modeforboth those with a high school education and those attending orattended non-university tertiary institutions. Only those goingto university registered a flatter distribution and 7 instead of 9 as the mode.More interestingly, students are much more authoritarian than working and non-working respondents.

Does this suggest that education, with the exception of university education to a certain extent, actually makes Malaysia's Muslim youth more authoritarian than otherwise? If so, why? Is it because of the curriculum, the teachers or the environment?

We do not have enough evidence to come to any strong conclusion. It is nevertheless a pressing question to be answered. To understand concretely what shapes the mind of Muslim youth, education or other factors, should be a focus for future studies.

MALAYSIA'S MUSLIM YOUTH: WHAT'S BENEATH RELIGIOUS AUTHORITARIANISM?
Malaysia has been widely perceived by the West as a moderate Muslim country which has been able to avoid terrorist attacks and ethnic conflicts despite having a sizeable non-Muslim minority. However, in recent years, faith-related controversies have been on the rise, from the caning of Muslim women for drinking alcohol and sexual misconduct, snatching bodies of alleged Muslim
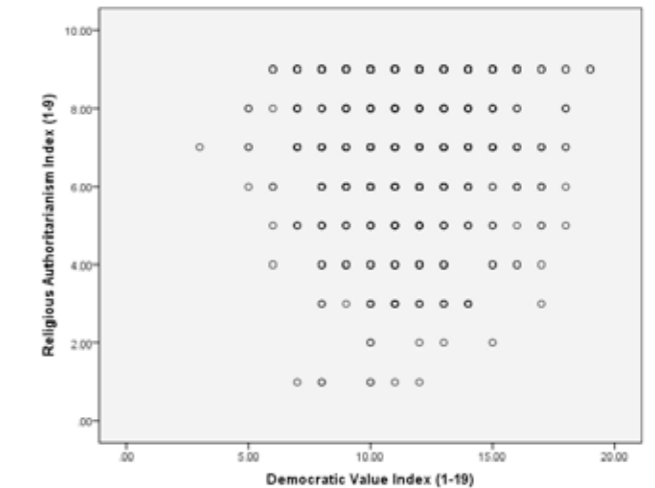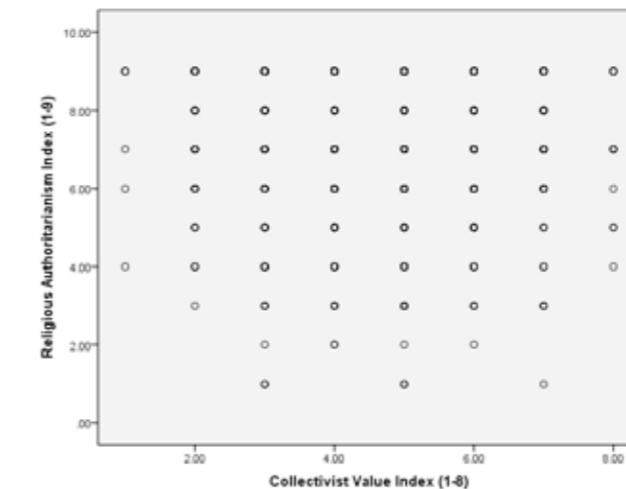
converts from their families for Islamic burials, to the prohibition of non-Muslims using the Arabic word "Allah" (the God). Some have even warned of Malaysia getting Talibanised but it would be intellectually inept and morally wrong to equate religiosity of Muslims with their rejection of inclusion and modernity.
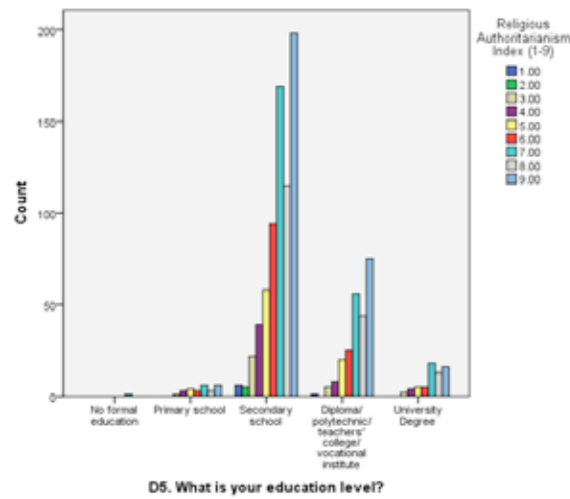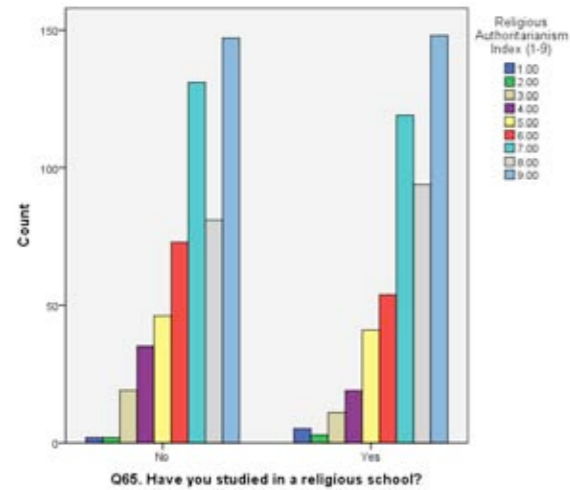
The rising dominance of Islam in public life in Malaysia must be understood in its political context beyond the global and external factors. Malaysia is an "electoral one-party state" presiding on a bi-polar society where the two rival groups have disproportional strength in different fields, where Islam emerges as an important marker of the ethnic boundary. By Constitution, Islam is one of the four defining criteria of what constitutes a Malay in Malaysia, alongside the Malay language, Malay customs and a Malayan or Singaporean origin. In practice, not only all Malays – the most numerical and politically powerful ethnic group – have to be Muslims, the political need to maintain the Malay-Muslim dominance also drives the opposite: Muslims are commonlymade synonymous with Malays. In fact, by creating theBumiputera community – the official term to lump together the Malays and other native groups – with the preferential treatment in employment, education, equity and even house purchase to compensate for their historical marginalisation, efforts have been consistently made to encourage and induce the conversion of non-Muslim Bumiputera in Sabah and Sarawak to Islam.The assimilation of Chinese Muslims and Indian Muslims into the Malay-Muslim family is similarly encouraged. On the other end of the ethnic spectrum are the non-Muslim Chinese and Indians, who are historically more powerful in the economic realm but also dissatisfied with the Bumiputeraism policy vigorously pursued by the state after the Sino-Malay riots of 1969.

The dominance and relevance of UMNO is very much grounded on the basis of Malay unity, the benefit of which is traditionally manifested in the form of preferential treatment of Malay-Muslims vis-à-vis others. The challenge by its arch-rival, the Pan-Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS), which has promoted Islam over ethno-nationalism since 1982, coupled with the influx of Islamists led by Anwar Ibrahim into UMNO, has sparked an 'out'- Islamisation competition between the two parties. While PAS alwaysvowed to establish an Islamic state until the recent replacement of such goal by a welfare state, UMNO, under former Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, had overtaken PAS in 2001, declaring Malaysia was already an Islamic state and denouncing the secular nature of the Malaysian state that Mahathir's predecessors had defended.
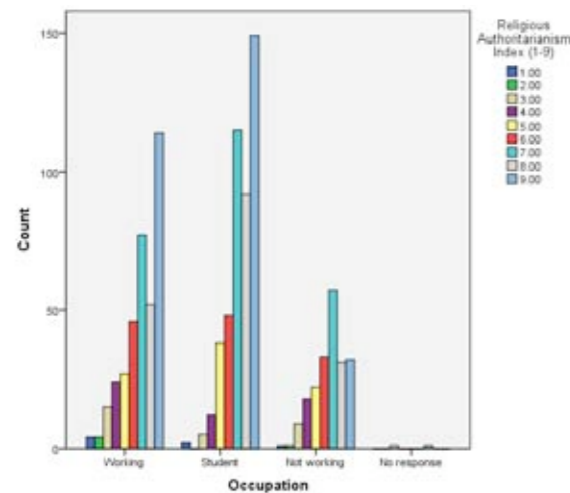

Collectivist Value Index

Given this context, the outlook for Muslim youth must not be taken as automatically informed by their religion. A strong emphasis on religion may well be a distorted expression of ethno-nationalism

Q65. Have you studied in a religious school?

D5. What is your education level?

for a community feeling under siege. As Islam serves as the most important element of the ethnic boundary for the composite majority group of Malay-Muslims, the heavily controlled mainstream media, which most Muslim youth that were surveyed depend on for information, has placed Islam – or more accurately, the official interpretations or promoted understandings of Islam – on an unquestionable pedestal. Religious conservatism and religious authoritarianism may look similar when we interpret

Occupation

a high approval of Muslim youth for substitution of the Federal Constitution by the Quran or for amputation as a penalty for theft. Measures of non-authoritarian religiosity, either more universal or Islam-specific, should be constructed for similar studies in the future.

While many of the findings in this survey may suggest a monolithically conservative and authoritarian demographic group, a more careful look has unveiled some nuanced diversity. Methodologicaly, a challenge in interpreting the data from this survey is the possible effect of social desirability, namely, to what extent are the respondents providing politically correct answers rather than their genuine answers. To overcome this, my analysisfavours questions that reveal differences rather than consensus. A related question is the representativeness of the sample. Is it a reflection or distortion of the reality when nearly 90% of respondents report that they come from very or rather religious families or half of them have attended some religious educational institution? If the answers are driven by social desirability coupled by ambiguity, then the near-consensus answers may become meaningless. On the other hand, if these are genuine answers from a biased sample, then all of the answers would have to be weighted if we can find out how an unbiased sample should be. The possibility of sampling bias ironically confirms the value of this pioneering study since a more accurate demographic profile of Muslim youth is yet to be established.

COUNTRY REPORT

INDONESIA

THE BIG PICTURE

- Indonesian Muslim youths are optimistic, happy with their lives and see their future positively.
- The nuclear family plays a key role in the personal development of young Indonesian Muslims. The influence of the family is greatest in the age group 15 to 19 years.
- Young Indonesian Muslims are very keen on raising their own family. They are determined to give their children a better life than their own.
- Indonesian Muslim youths see themselves first as Muslims and then as Indonesians.
- More than 90 percent of Indonesian Muslim youths state that it is important to believe in God, more than 60 percent that it is important to become a good Muslim.
- For young Muslims in Indonesia religion becomes an asset amid the rapid changes that are experienced by Indonesian society.
- Only 13.5 % of Muslim youths approve of polygamy. Far more young women disapprove of polygamy than young men.
- Muslim youths in Indonesia are more likely to observe religious rituals if there is an element of social control.
- Female respondents place greater emphasis on their Islamic identity and observe religious practices more regularly than their male counterparts.
- Almost 90 percent of young Indonesian Muslims have a sense of responsibility towards other people. At the same time, they appear very self-involved, ambitious and keen to reach their goals and shape their future independently.
- The dependence on technology drastically changed the lifestyle of young Indonesian Muslims, especially of those who live in the city.
- The majority of Indonesian Muslim youths have accepted the country's current political and economic situation – more than 60 percent think that Indonesia is on the right track.
- More than 70 percent of young Muslims in Indonesia think that people have the power to change governments if they do not approve of them.
- 49 percent of Indonesian Muslim youths do not think that religious leaders should replace politicians.
- More than 70 percent have no problem with women taking over leadership in society.
- Rural Muslim youths have a more idealistic view of politics, are more likely to be involved in political processes and are more optimistic about the future of Indonesia than their urban counterparts.
- The more affluent among the working Muslim youth have less trust in the government than their less wealthy counterparts.

COUNTRY REPORT: INDONESIA

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

YOUNG INDONESIAN MUSLIMS ARE OPTIMISTIC, HAPPY WITH THEIR LIVES AND SEE THEIR FUTURE POSITIVELY.

Overall, the respondents appear optimistic, content with their lives and self-confident about their present and their future: An overwhelming 93.8 % state that all in all they are happy with their lives. 83.6% of the respondents view themselves as "full of energy and ready for action" and 58% of the respondents are certain that they can choose their field of work or study. More than two-thirds state that they enjoy their life and are satisfied with their economic condition.

On the other hand there are those who assume a less active role in their lives, even adopting a rather fatalistic point of view at certain points: 51.9% view themselves as "shy and reserved", 52.5% of the survey's participants state that they do not like to debate with others and 50.8% of the respondents admit that they feel inferior to other people. 41.8% of the respondents state that they feel lonely sometimes.

The degree of optimism among the youths strongly correlates with certain social variables as will be shown throughout the report.

Interestingly, when it comes to judging the development of Indonesia in recent years, the youths appear a little less enthusiastic: 53.5 % of the respondents said that the national government's track record has neither improved nor worsened. 64% of young Indonesian Muslims who took the survey view the economic outlook as the same or even worse as compared to previous years. Overall, the respondents doubt that the government's public services can address their needs and rights, or those of the Indonesian public as a whole. There is rather low confidence in the government – a phenomenon which will be explained in greater detail later in the report.
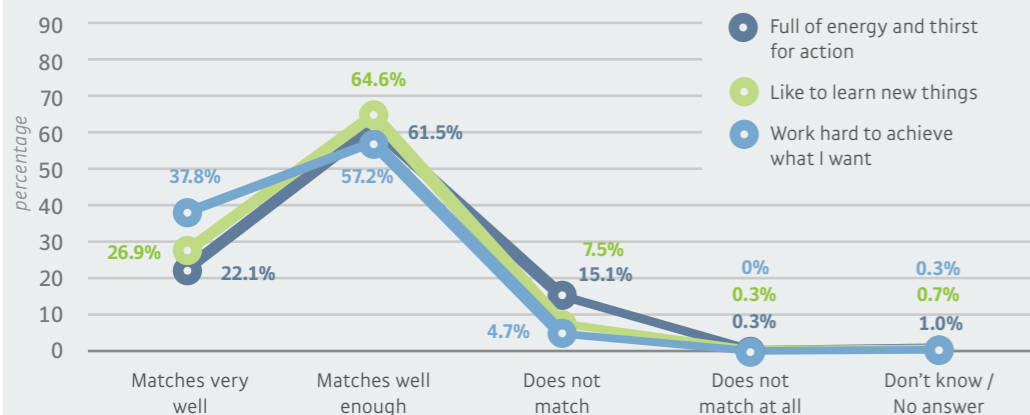
The Muslim youths questioned for this survey appear to have very clear ideas about what they want and where they want to be. Success is highly relevant to them and they are eager to learn something new, to climb up the social ladder. More than 97 % of the respondents view success in their careers as important. 61 % emphasize on the need to have quality education. 73 % of the respondents believe that hard workers deserve to be richer and 64 % of them are interested in learning new things. 57 % of the respondents believe in the importance of hard work to achieve what they want while 53 % of the participants are determined to be successful professionally. 22.3% state that it is important for them to become rich.

FIGURE 1

Generally speaking, are you happy with your life?

93.8%

5.4%
0.8%

- Yes, I'm happy
- No, I'm not happy
- DA/DK
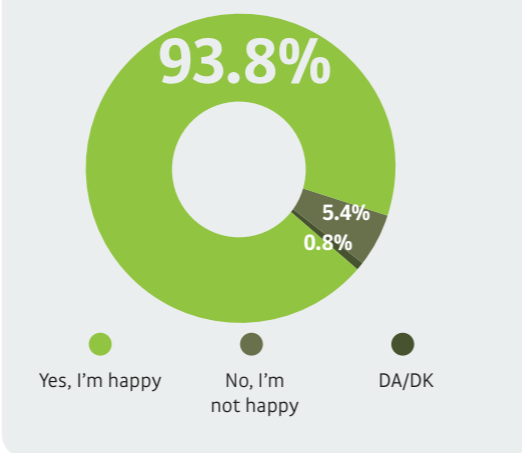
FIGURE 2

Which ones of the following characteristics most closely describes you?

- Full of energy and thirst for action
- Like to learn new things
- Work hard to achieve what I want

These notions of optimism, ambition and goal orientation vary when one takes a more differentiated look at certain social factors: gender, social environment (urban and rural), age (15-19 and 20-25), level of education and income.

Respondents between the ages of 20 and 25 are more likely to describe themselves as working hard to achieve what they want. Also, they are keener on becoming rich. This data indicates that young people's view of life becomes more realistic with age. It can be said that by the time the respondents are between 20 and 25 years old they start feeling burdened with greater social responsibilities towards their original families, current family members, as well as the families they plan to have.

RURAL YOUTHS ARE INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY EDUCATION.

Surprisingly the survey revealed that respondents from rural areas are more likely to view professional success and becoming rich as important goals than their urban counterparts. Also, they are increasingly aware of the importance of quality education. This data might contradict the commonly held view of rural life. It also reflects how the increasing integration of Indonesian society with the market economy has led to a growth in the influence of money, since the public needs money to fulfil their basic needs. Therefore rural respondents feel that they can only meet their needs if they get rich.

FIGURE 3-1

In the scale of 1 to 10, where 1 indicates not important at all, and 10 very important, how do you rate the following issues?

ENJOYING A GOOD EDUCATION
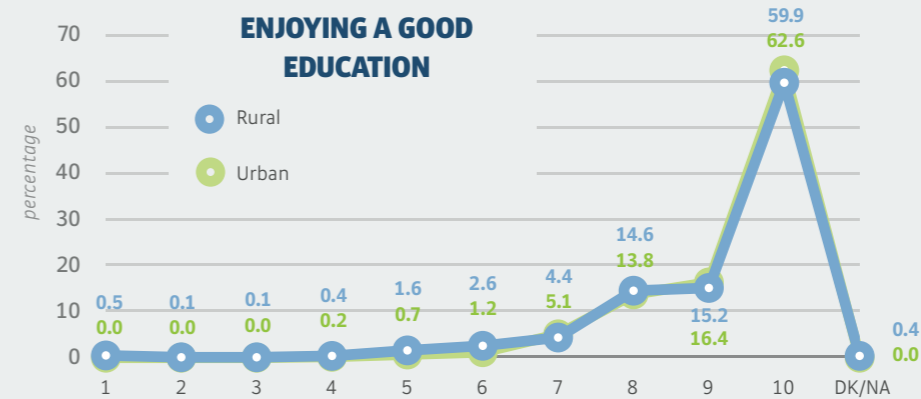
- Rural
- Urban

FIGURE 3-2

In the scale of 1 to 10, where 1 indicates not important at all, and 10 very important, how do you rate the following issues?

BECOMING WEALTHY
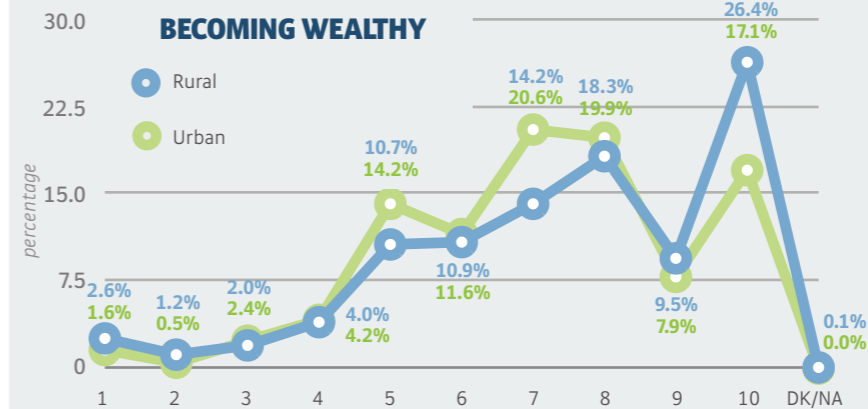
- Rural
- Urban

However, rural Muslim youths who took the survey still have an inactive and, in certain cases, fatalistic view of themselves. Rural respondents are likely to have the following characteristics: (1) they tend to be disinclined to debate with others; (2) they feel inferior to other people; (3) they tend to believe that fate determines whether they will be rich or poor as well as successful or unsuccessful and (4) they frequently feel lonely.

COUNTRY REPORT: INDONESIA

On the other hand, urban respondents are expected to be more independent financially and more capable of meeting their needs as compared to their rural counterparts. Urban respondents need to have greater financial certainty due to the higher cost of living in cities. More urban respondents feel that they are in a better economic state than those who live in villages.

Unsurprisingly, the survey shows that respondents who earn higher wages are likely to be more optimistic. Those who make over one million Rupiah per month (25.5 % of the working respondents) are more likely to be confident about their ability to work or study in the field of their choice and to describe themselves as "full of energy and thirst for action". Nevertheless, also more than 80% of the less affluent working youths characterize themselves this way.

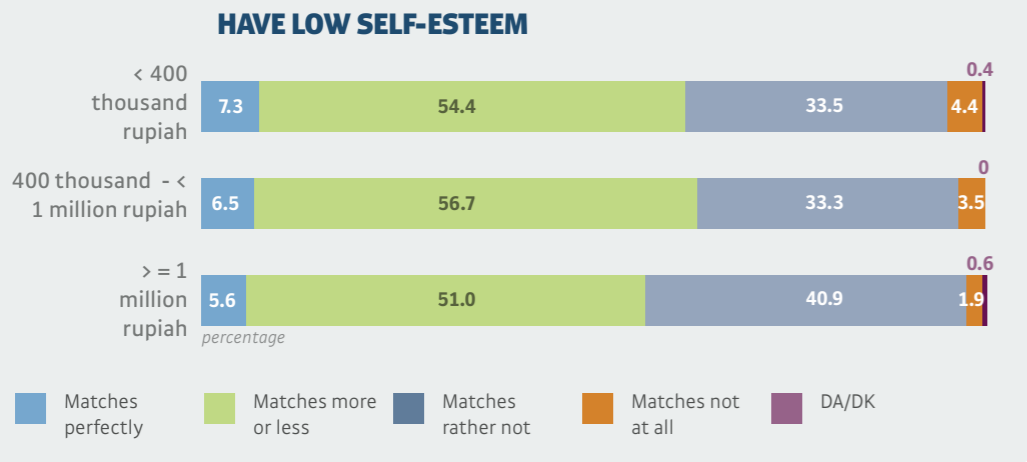Still, the young people with a lower income are more stressed out from the burden of work, and some of them won't even deal with or try to find a solution to this stress. They are also more likely to feel lonely and have a lower self-esteem than the richer youths.

FIGURE 4

Which ones of the following characteristics most closely describes you?

HAVE LOW SELF-ESTEEM

Legend: Matches perfectly | Matches more or less | Matches rather not | Matches not at all | DA/DK

The survey found that the more educated the respondents, the more critical they become. This group is also more likely to be concerned about their future. They are very afraid of the prospect of losing their jobs, perceive themselves as energetic individuals who are keen on new activities, and believe that those who work hard deserve to be rich. They also identify themselves as hard workers who are determined to attain their goals. This group adopts an aggressive stance, as reflected by data showing their tendency to debate. On the other hand, many less educated respondents are very averse to debate.

The survey also revealed that young Indonesian Muslim women simultaneously attempt to be successful at home as well as at the workplace or in studies. However, more female respondents perceive themselves as less energetic and less keen on activities than their male counterparts. Compared to the male respondents more of them feel inferior, are disinclined to debate, and view themselves as shy and quiet. On the other hand, far more women who took the survey wish to be good mothers to their children as compared to men who wish to be good fathers to their kids.
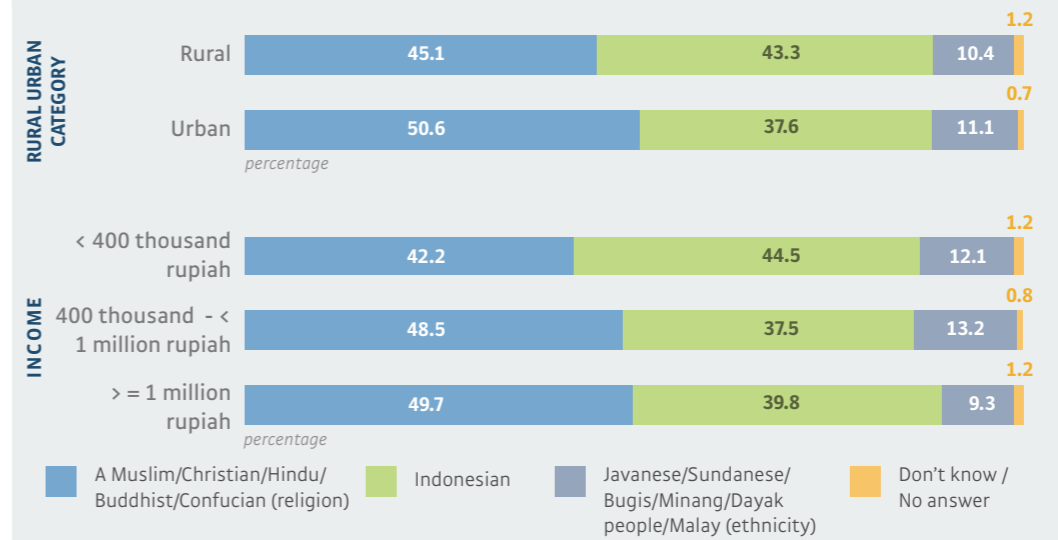
INDONESIAN MUSLIM YOUTHS SEE THEMSELVES FIRST AS MUSLIMS AND THEN AS INDONESIANS.

Interestingly, 47.5% of the respondents say that they are Muslims first in contrast to 40.8% who emphasize on their identity as Indonesians. Only 10.7% of all respondents put their ethnic identity first. Most of the respondents who emphasize on their Muslim identity live in the cities, have high income jobs and have attended university. On the other hand, male respondents from rural areas with low incomes of less than 400.000 Rupiah a month are likely to see themselves foremost as Indonesians, while women with a basic school education are more likely to put their ethnic identities first, thereby proving ethnicity's enduring power as a socio-political force.

In a sense, the large number of urban respondents (some of whom make over one million rupiah a month) putting their Muslim identity in the forefront proves the importance of Islam as a source of strength and positive energy to cope with Indonesian urban life, which is becoming tougher and more competitive.

FIGURE 5

I view myself first and foremost as:

Legend: A Muslim/Christian/Hindu/Buddhist/Confucian (religion) | Indonesian | Javanese/Sundanese/Bugis/Minang/Dayak people/Malay (ethnicity) | Don't know / No answer

FAMILY ORIENTATION

THE NUCLEAR FAMILY PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG INDONESIAN MUSLIMS.

The nuclear family plays a central role in the personal development of the Muslim Indonesian youth. As the leading agent of socialization it becomes an intermediary institution and the venue for Indonesia's Muslim youth to develop their personality in a more positive manner. The family even functions as a social shield, becoming an important constituent in the construction of the youths' self-confidence (compare with Somantri, 2007).

95.5% of the respondents said that the relationship with their parents is very good and 92.1% responded in the negative to the statement "my parents do not care". 78.1% of the respondents said that they always asked for their parents' advice, while 96.5% stated that their parents often give them advice. 78.1% of the respondents even said that it would be wrong for children not to ask their parents for advice.

FIGURE 6

How would you describe your relationship with your parents? Are these statements rather true or rather false in describing your relationship with your parents?

Legend: Rather true | Rather false | Don't know / No answer
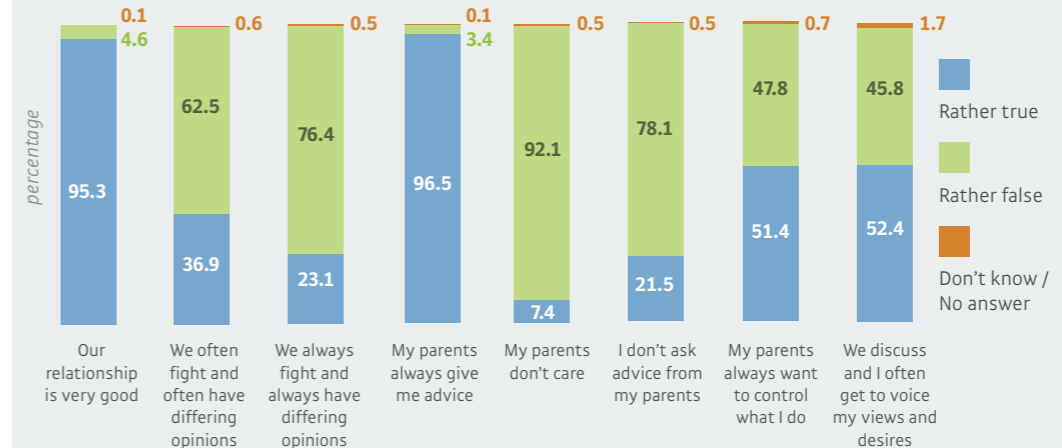
COUNTRY REPORT: INDONESIA

The survey also found that many respondents see the nuclear family as a leading example. Honoring one's parents – a tenet taught by the Al-Qur'an – seems to be a value deeply ingrained in the respondents. 30.1% of the respondents said that one of their goals in life is to be good mothers or fathers. The nuclear family is still seen as the best way of raising a child. 48.6% of the respondents said that they will raise their child in the same way in which they were raised. 25.7% of the respondents (especially the less affluent of the working youths) said that they will raise their children more strictly as compared to how they were raised by their parents.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE NUCLEAR FAMILY IS GREATEST IN THE AGE GROUP 15 – 19 YEARS.
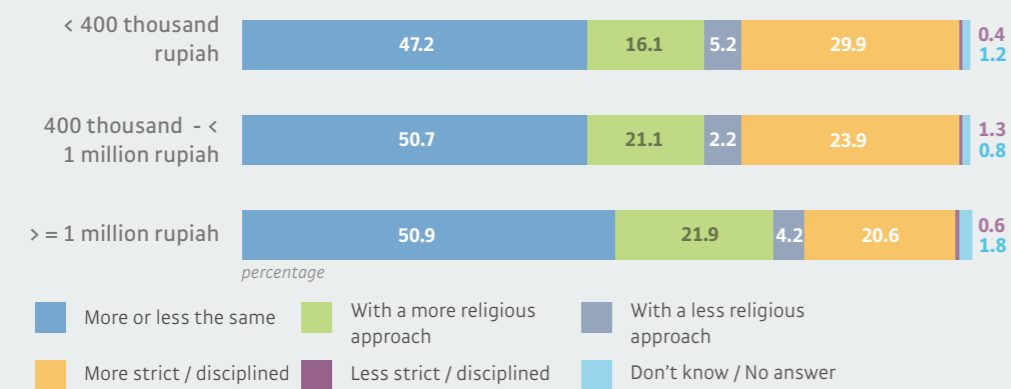
The attachment to the nuclear family varies according to age, gender, place of residence, education and income. The survey found that the younger the respondents, the more disciplined and protected they are by their families. On the other hand, older respondents receive less protection and control from their nuclear families. Out of the 51.4% respondents who felt that they are always regulated by their parents, most are of a relatively young age.

While most urban respondents said that they intend to raise their children in the same way as they were raised, their rural counterparts place a little more emphasis on religious education.

Those respondents who make more than 1 million Rupiah a month stated that they will maintain good relations with their parents, even though they might disagree with their elders. On the other hand, respondents who make less than 400,000 Rupiah a month (38.5 % of the working youths) displayed a more critical stance when questioned about the education of their own children. Members of this group said that they will be stricter in raising their children as compared to the upbringing they received from their parents. These numbers confirm an ongoing trend in Indonesian society: There is more social-vertical mobility among the younger generation of Muslims. Thus, one can say that there are a number of factors in the respondents' upbringing that did not prepare them for their current social status or careers. Therefore they plan to make up for the shortcomings they had to endure when they raise their own children.

FIGURE 7

Will you raise your children the same way you were raised?

FIGURE 8

How would you describe your relationship with your parents? Are these statements rather true or rather false in describing your relationship with your parents?

WE DISCUSS AND MOST OF THE TIME I GET MY WAY

However, respondents with a basic school education are not entirely uncritical of their parents. Respondents in this category often plan to raise their children with more discipline than was involved in their own upbringing. This might be prompted by the view that their skills and qualifications are no longer sufficient for a decent life. This group hopes that their children will not have the substandard skills and qualifications with which their basic schooling had equipped them. The data shows these respondents' determination to give their children a better life than their own.

FIGURE 9

Will you raise your children the same way you were raised?

The findings also showed that the lower the respondents' income, the higher their psychological dependence on their parents. This type of respondent is more likely to ask the parents for advice in dealing with problems that they face. On the other hand, respondents with higher incomes are more independent in decision-making.
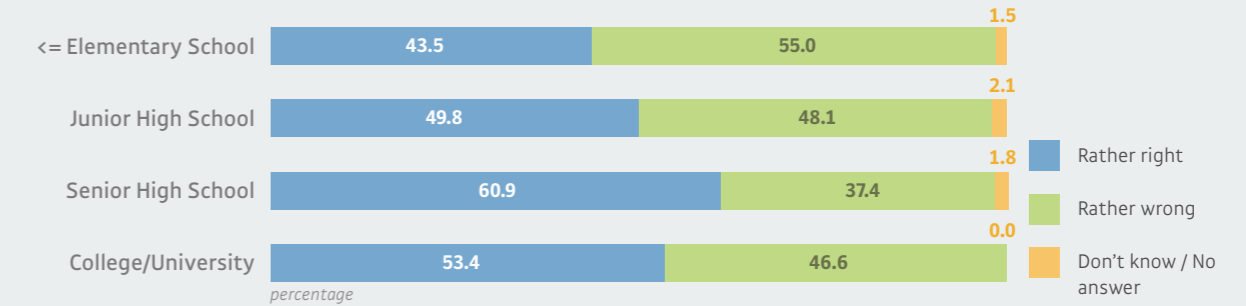
The survey showed that respondents with a basic school education are more obedient and less critical compared to their better-educated counterparts. They are also more psychologically dependent on their families. Respondents from this group are more likely to ask their parents for advice and avoid conflicts with their mothers and fathers despite disagreements. They tend to view conflicts and disagreements with parents as wrong and are averse to acting without asking for their parents' opinions.

On the other hand, respondents with a university education are relatively more critical in their approach to their parents. Their levels of obedience are not as total as those of respondents who only had an elementary school education. However, even these highly educated respondents still manage to maintain good relations with their parents in spite of differences in opinion. They are more independent, particularly in a psychological context. Compared to their less educated counterparts they are less likely to ask their parents for advice and do not spend too much time with them.

FIGURE 10

How would you describe your relationship with your parents? Are these statements rather true or rather false in describing your relationship with your parents?

I DON'T ASK ADVICE FROM MY PARENTS
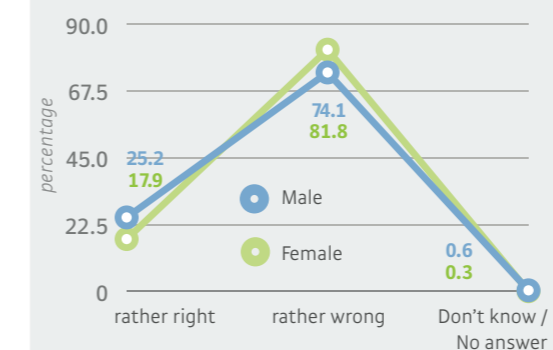
Gender has a quite significant influence on the relationship of the youths with their parents. Young men seem to seek advice from their parents more frequently on the other hand they also feel more controlled by them. 54.3 % of the young men state that their parents "always tell them what to do" compared to 48 % of the young women. When it comes to voicing their opinion, the young men appear more self-confident.

Young women seem to be closer with their parents, and they fight less. 33.9 % state that they don't get along well with their parents and often have different opinions compared to more than 40 % of young men.

COUNTRY REPORT: INDONESIA

YOUNG INDONESIAN MUSLIMS ARE VERY KEEN ON RAISING THEIR OWN FAMILY.

Overall, the survey shows that many young Indonesian Muslims are very keen on raising their own family. Their orientation towards family is a means to obtain a better life for themselves and their loved ones. The family also provides psychological warmth and becomes a way to attain individual happiness. In addition, it works as a psycho-sociological shield and a shelter from the strains and uncertainties of life in contemporary Indonesia. For many respondents raising the ideal family is also a way of fulfilling their responsibilities towards their society and nation.

An overwhelming 94.4% of all respondents said that raising a family paves the way for a happier life, while 30.1% of the participants stated that becoming a good parent is one of their primary goals in life. 57.3% said that it is important to marry and raise a family.

Children play a central role in the family structure favored by young Indonesian Muslims. 96.4% of all respondents said that they wish to have children. 71.6% of the participants stated that they want at least two kids (sons or daughters).
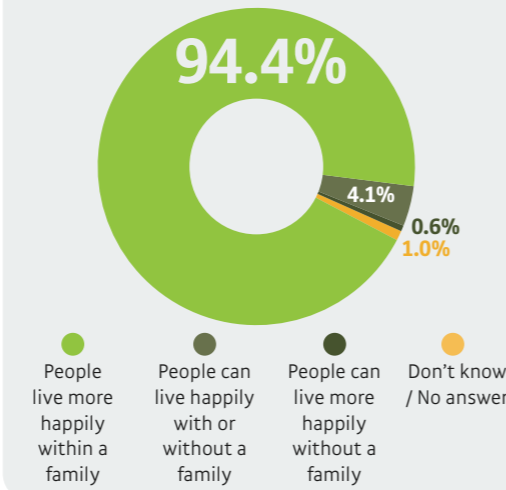
If one takes a closer look at the female respondents, it becomes evident that young Muslim women want both: a happy family and a successful career. The survey found a slightly higher number of women who put off having children in order to focus on their careers at the beginning of their marriage.

FIGURE 11

Among the following statements. which one comes closest with your own view?

94.4%

4.1%
0.6%
1.0%

- ● People live more happily within a family
- ● People can live happily with or without a family
- ● People can live more happily without a family
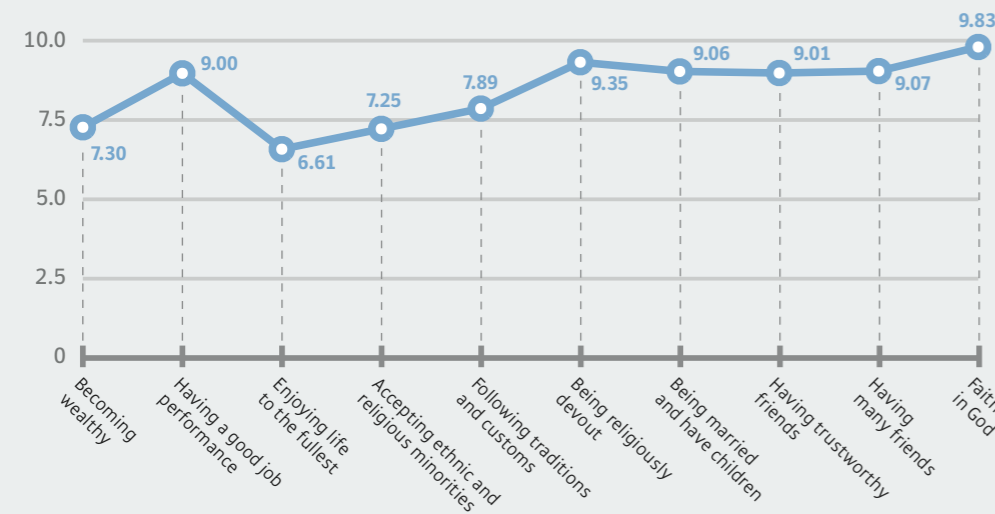- ● Don't know / No answer

RELIGION

When asked about their religious orientation, Muslim youths in Indonesia appear highly religious. They rate faith in God and being religiously devout higher than professional success, marriage, friends or enjoying life.

FIGURE 12

In the scale of 1 to 10. where 1 indicates not important at all. and 10 very important. How do you rate the following issues?

10.0

7.5

5.0

2.5

0

7.30 9.00 6.61 7.25 7.89 9.35 9.06 9.01 9.07 9.83

Becoming wealthy
Having a good job performance
Enjoying life to the fullest
Accepting ethnic and religious minorities
Following traditions and customs
Being religiously devout
Being married and have children
Having trustworthy friends
Having many friends
Faith in God

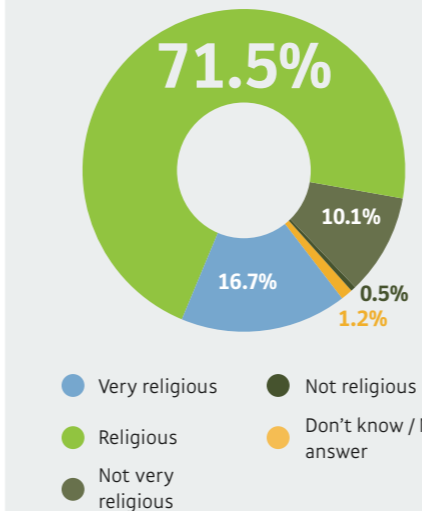### ONLY 13.5 % OF MUSLIM YOUTH APPROVE OF THE PRACTICE OF POLYGAMY.

As for actual Islamic practices, 59.6% said that they fasted during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. 28.7% of those who took the survey said they prayed five times a day, 10.8% always read the al-Quran. On a more extreme note, 38.1% of the respondents said that the headscarf is compulsory for women, while 60.1% said that Muslim youths who drink alcohol should be whipped. However, interestingly, only 13.5% of all respondents expressed their approval of the oft debated practice of polygamy.

Religion provides a foundation and positive energy for many young Indonesian Muslims which they use to achieve certainty and happiness in their lives and to secure a successful future. Many of them need this positive energy as a strong psychological pedestal amid the uncertainties caused by rapid social changes. Islam becomes an inspiring meaning of life through which Indonesia's Muslim youth can interpret their reality and a source of stability to deal with the increasing uncertainties in Indonesian life today. Islamic faith is used as a psychological shield and a shelter. Religion is also a socio-psychological asset in attaining and securing the future that the respondents aspire to. For them, Islam is the energy they need in order to pursue education, get a job and establish their careers.

RELIGION BECOMES A PSYCHO-SOCIOLOGICAL ASSET IN SECURING THE FUTURE THAT THEY ASPIRE TO.

FIGURE 13

Do you come from a home that is....?

71.5%

10.1%
0.5%
1.2%
16.7%

- ● Very religious
- ● Religious
- ● Not very religious
- ● Not religious
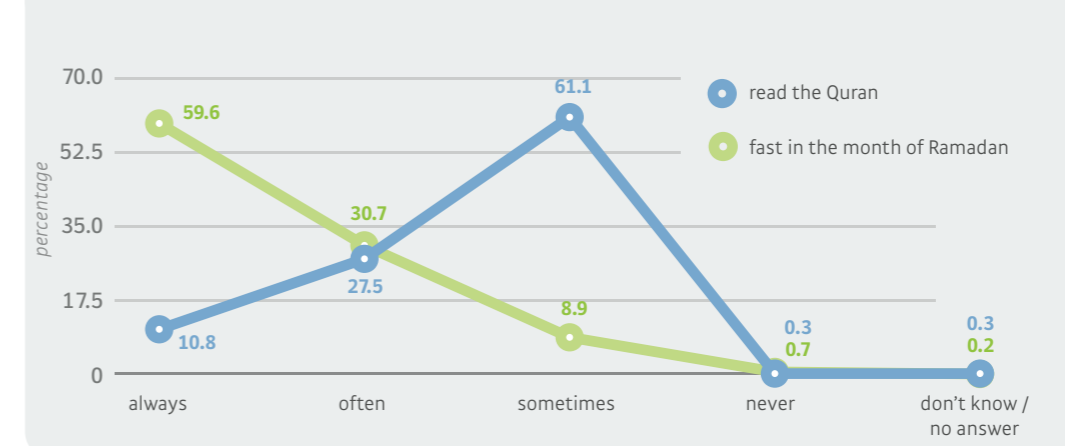- ● Don't know / No answer

The respondents constructed their religious understanding with a rather pessimistic and unclear outlook on Indonesian society today. The uncertainties that the respondents have to deal with gave them the drive to ensure that their life will be better in the future. Thus, on the one hand their religiosity developed out of a strong tendency towards individual fulfillment. This is understandable, particularly for the young respondents aged 15 to 25. Respondents in this age group tend to use their energies to prepare themselves mentally for the future and to acquire new skills that will help them live happier, more prosperous lives in the future.

On the other hand, religious upbringing plays a major role in the construction of the young Muslims' religiosity: 71.5% of the respondents come from a religious family, while 16.7% come from very devout households. Only 10.1% of the participants admitted that they come from non religious families. As pointed out earlier, the nuclear family is the main point of reference in the personal development of Muslim youths in Indonesia. Therefore the influence of the familial background cannot be underestimated.

THE YOUTHS ARE MORE LIKELY TO OBSERVE RELIGIOUS RITUALS IF THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF SOCIAL CONTROL INVOLVED.

FIGURE 14

How often do you...

70.0

52.5

35.0

17.5

0

percentage

59.6 30.7 8.9 0.7 0.2
10.8 27.5 61.1 0.3 0.3

always often sometimes never don't know / no answer

- ● read the Quran
- ● fast in the month of Ramadan

Ritual practice is not as solid as their personal, social and familial identities. When the practice of Islam involves a high level of social control, it is observed more frequently by the young Indonesian Muslims. On the other hand, when the level of social control is low, the observance of religious practice by young people is also relatively low. For example, if one takes a closer look at the practices during Ramadan: family members break their fast together and partake of the pre-dawn sahur meal before the start of the fasting day together. Conventionally devout and very religious households often hold congregational prayers in their houses, though they are more likely to do so at a mosque. These families also collectively read prayers from the Al-Qur'an during this time of the year. These kind of collective rituals are followed more frequently by the Muslim youths in Indonesia.

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As was stated earlier, 59.6% of all respondents said they fasted during the holy Muslim month of Ramadan. However, only 28.7% said that they pray five times a day, while only 10.8% admitted to regularly reading the al-Qur'an. In places where social control is relatively lax, 61% read the al-Qur'an from time to time, 39.7% said that they pray sometimes, while only 8.9% fast sometimes.

Thus, Islamic values also become a reference point for the Muslim youths in establishing their own household and building up their family's social identity later. 69.7% said that their prospective husband or wife should convert to Islam if he or she observes a different faith. 90.1% stated that they do not wish to marry anyone of a different religion.

As with other aspects of the survey, the observation of religious rituals varies according to age, gender, place of residence, educational levels, and income. The data shows that younger respondents (between 15-19 year olds) are more likely to emphasize on their personal religious identity. This category is likelier to view the importance of being a good Muslim compared to their counterparts between the ages of 20 to 25. This age group also stated that a veil is compulsory for women and more respondents from this younger age group are more likely to read the al-Qur'an.

However, when it comes to the question whether a prospective spouse of a different religion has to convert to Islam, the older respondents are much more conservative: 74.5 % against 64.5 %.

Rural respondents are more likely to affirm their religious identity in a personal context or in the context of their family's social standing. They are more observant of religious rituals and obligations. Rural respondents make up the majority of the 69.7% of participants who believe that their spouse should convert to Islam if he or she comes from a different religious background. The number of rural respondents who observe religious rituals is also higher – they constitute a substantial part of the 28.7% of respondents who said that they pray five times a day. Last but not least, this group of respondents accounts for a majority of the 60.1% of respondents who called for young Muslims who drink alcohol to be whipped. More rural respondents are well versed in the al-Qur'an than their urban counterparts.
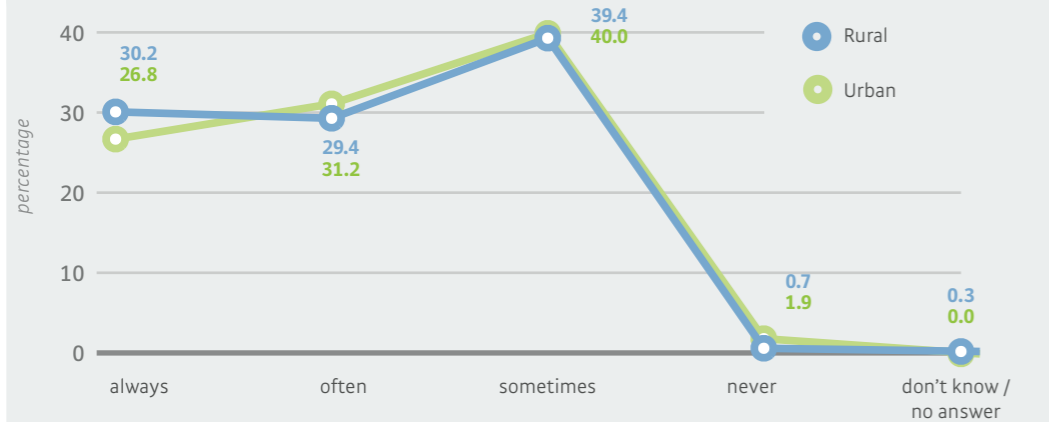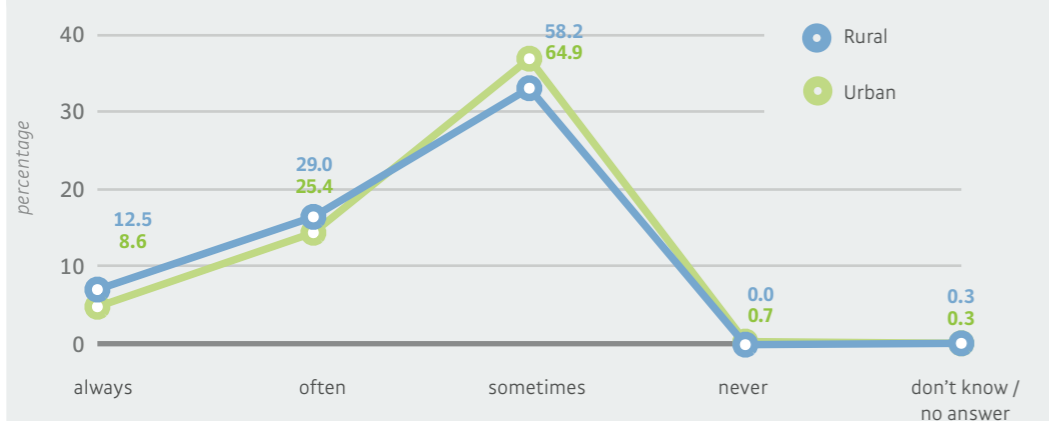
Data from the survey also indicates that the better educated the respondents the more varied are their sources of information about Islam. Furthermore, the survey found that the more educated the respondents, the stronger is their faith in observing religious rituals. The levels of affirmation and strengthening of religious identity at the personal and family levels are also relatively high.

For example, respondents with a university education got information about Islam from (1) their local clerics (kiai and ustad), (2) their parents, (3) prayer groups, (4) books and magazines, and (5) friends.
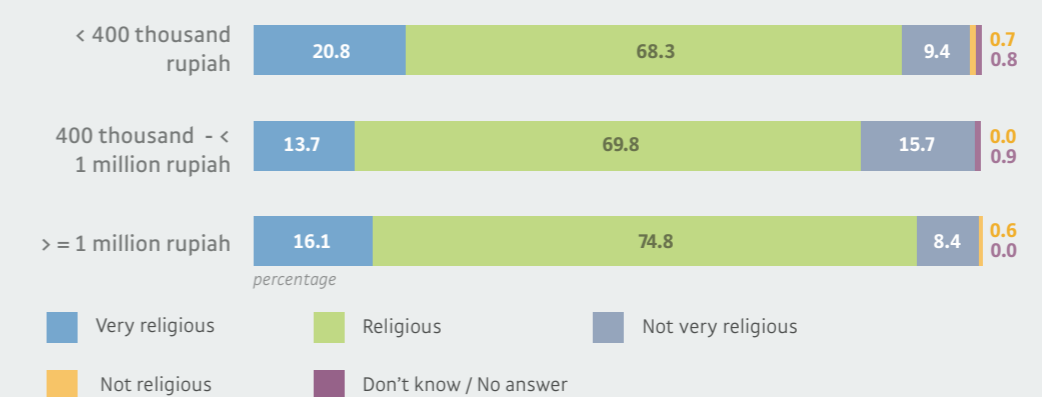
The data also shows that this group accounts for most of the 59.6% of respondents who consistently fast during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. University educated respondents are more inclined to pray five times a day, and many are likely to ask their spouse to convert to Islam. On the other hand, this group also made up most of the 13.5 % of respondents who approve of or agree with polygamy.

On their part, low-income respondents tend to strictly internalize their religious identity and that of their families. Their level of submissiveness more or less follows their pattern of worship. Most of the 90.1% of respondents who said that they do not wish to marry someone of a different faith are from the lower income groups. They also account for many of the 38.1% of respondents who view the headscarf as compulsory for women. Most of them are among the 16.7% of the participants who admitted to come from very religious households. This group also has a specific pattern concerning prayers. The study showed that the lower the respondents' income, the more likely they are to pray. On the other hand, the higher the respondents' income, the less likely they are to pray.

There are strong indications that this group is still dependent on a word-of-mouth culture to raise their religious awareness, such as prayer groups near their houses. This data shows how strong group bonds among lower income respondents are. It also reflects the significant role played by religious figures in enriching and deepening their religious awareness.

FIGURE 15-1

How often do you fulfill all of the five daily prayers?

FIGURE 15-2

How often do you read the Quran?

FIGURE 16

Do you come from a home that is...

When it comes to the issue of the headscarf, many respondents hold the view that the woman has the final say. 20.8% of the respondents said that the woman has the right to determine whether she wears the headscarf or not. Only 0.5% said that the woman's father or husband should determine whether she wears the headscarf or not. As was previously said, the data showed that the better educated the respondent the more likely he or she is to believe that the decision to wear the headscarf depends on the woman. Also, lower income respondents believed that the decision to wear the headscarf was subjective and could only be made by each individual woman, a view shared by older respondents and those who live in cities.

The purpose of a headscarf for the respondents is an aspect that needs to be brought up. 17.8% of the respondents said that the headscarf would "protect women from men's glances", while 7.1% even said that it looks attractive on a woman. Most respondents who believe the headscarf would protect women are those from rural areas with a decent wage as well as the age group of 20 to 25 years. Those who find the headscarf attractive are usually respondents with a basic education belonging to the age group of 20 to 25 year olds.

FEMALE RESPONDENTS PLACE GREATER EMPHASIS ON THEIR ISLAMIC IDENTITY AND FULFILL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES MORE REGULARLY THAN THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS.
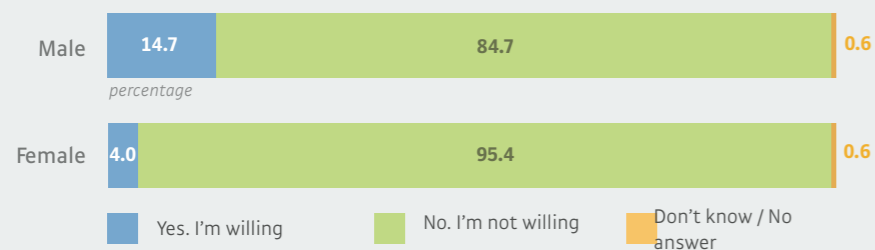
Female respondents are likelier than men to hold on to their Muslim identity. When it comes to marriage, none of the women participating in the survey intends to convert if she is married to a non-Muslim, but interestingly they said that they would let their husband retain his own beliefs. However, there are still some female respondents who hope that their husbands will convert
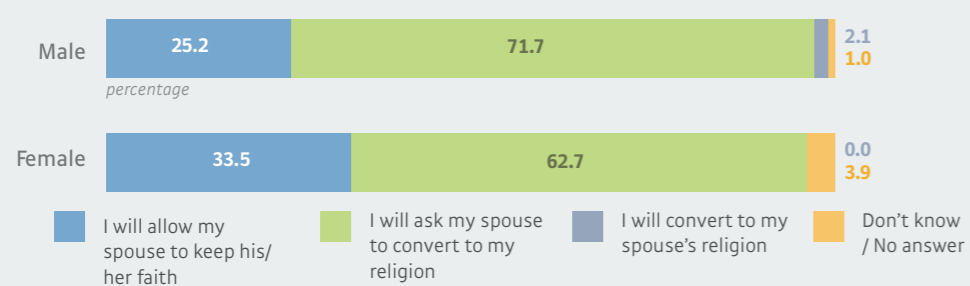
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to Islam. Even though many Indonesian Muslim women are not inclined to marry non-Muslim men, they are willing to compromise. They are willing to become good Muslims themselves and allow their husbands to continue practicing their faith.

FIGURE 17

Are you willing to marry someone who has a different religion?

Male 14.7 84.7 0.6
percentage
Female 4.0 95.4 0.6

- Yes. I'm willing
- No. I'm not willing
- Don't know / No answer

(If "Yes. I'm willing") What do you do about your spouse?

Male 25.2 71.7 2.1 1.0
percentage
Female 33.5 62.7 0.0 3.9

- I will allow my spouse to keep his/her faith
- I will ask my spouse to convert to my religion
- I will convert to my spouse's religion
- Don't know / No answer

Female respondents also tend to be more critical of the practice of polygamy. Far more women disagree with polygamy as compared to men. They feel that it is unjust and they are concerned about the question of gender equality in this context.
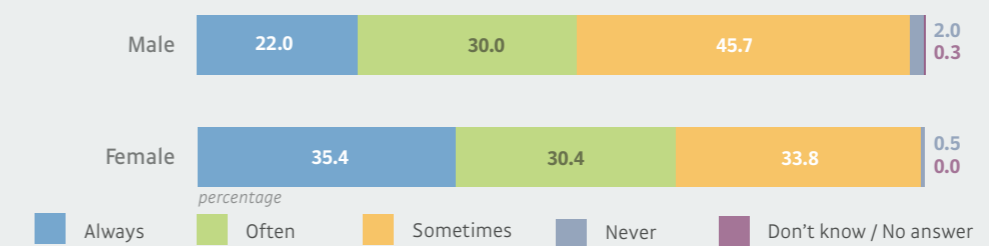
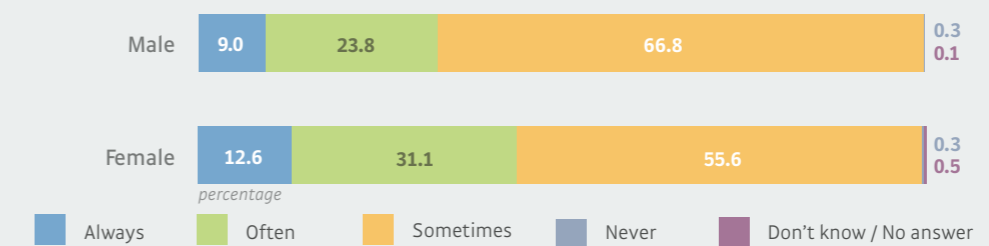### FIGURE 18

It's okay to practice polygamy
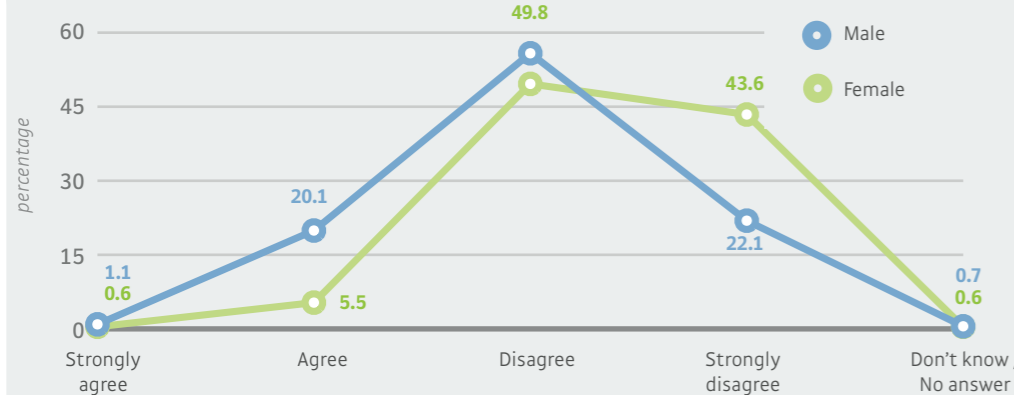
Overall, young Muslim women are more likely to observe Islamic practices. The survey showed that the proportion of women who pray five times a day, fast during the holy month of Ramadan and read the al-Qur'an is actually higher than that of their male counterparts.
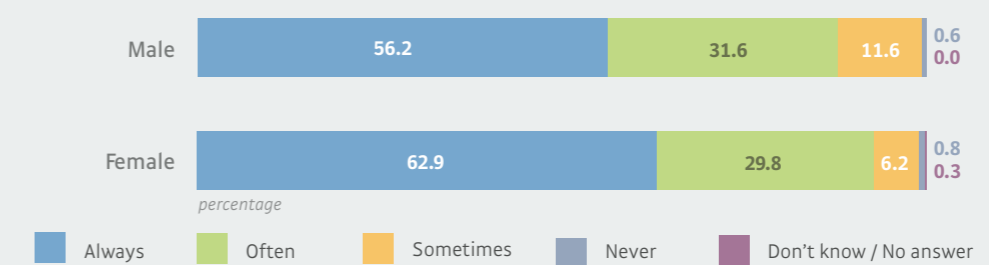
FIGURE 19

How often do you fulfill all of the five daily prayers?

Male 22.0 30.0 45.7 2.0 0.3
percentage
Female 35.4 30.4 33.8 0.5 0.0

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never
- Don't know / No answer

How often do you read the Quran?

Male 9.0 23.8 66.8 0.3 0.1
percentage
Female 12.6 31.1 55.6 0.3 0.5

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never
- Don't know / No answer

How often do you fast in the month of Ramadan?

Male 56.2 31.6 11.6 0.6 0.0
percentage
Female 62.9 29.8 6.2 0.8 0.3

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never
- Don't know / No answer

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, LIFESTYLE AND VALUES

It has already been stated that young Indonesian Muslims present themselves as a rather self-involved generation, concerned about their own lives and future. However, the data also showed an increasing awareness of social responsibility among the respondents. The strong emphasis on the self and this heightened sense of social responsibility are two sides of the same coin. Though they seem different on the surface, both orientations are actually attempts to build up certainty amid the public's lack of confidence in Indonesia's social system. Besides fulfilling the respondents' psycho-social needs, the heightened sense of social awareness is also a response to the relative economic deprivation that they face.

MUSLIM YOUTHS FEEL A STRONG SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS OTHER PEOPLE.

89.6% of the Indonesian Muslim youths who took the survey said that they feel a sense of responsibility towards other people. 54.5% said they are willing to help poor people, 51.6% stated that they are willing to aid disabled people, while 49.9% said that they would actively participate in efforts to protect animals and the environment. 40.6% of the respondents stated that they are willing to organize activities for young people, 30.1% stated that their generation is active in social organizations.

On the other hand, the findings confirm the self-confidence and the strong orientation towards the self that young Indonesian Muslims nowadays show: 58% of the respondents are very confident that they can work or study in their desired field. 63.9% of the respondents hold the opinion that hard work will pay off. In this context it also needs to be noted that the youths show signs of a heightened fear of factors that could disrupt their personal stability: 49.7% are concerned about pollution, while 42.3% of the respondents are concerned about the possibility that they might be threatened, robbed, or physically assaulted. 79% said they are "concerned" and "very concerned" about the threat of terrorism. 91.4% of all respondents fear losing their jobs, while 89.1% are afraid of the possibility that they will be diagnosed with serious diseases like cancer or AIDS (many of these respondents are city dwellers).

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FIGURE 20

Are you willing or interested in being involved in the following activities?

	Yes. definitely	Yes. maybe	Maybe not	Definitely not	Don't know / No answer
In organizing youth-related activities	40.6	47.7	9.2	1.6	0.8
In environmental and animal protection activities	35.4	49.9	11.6	2.0	1.0
In improving the lives of people who are physically or mentally impaired	34.7	51.6	11.2	1.3	1.2
In activities related to helping of poor	54.5	39.0	5.5	0.4	0.7
In activities related to improving political and social conditions	26.2	49.0	18.9	3.4	2.6
In activities related to care of the elderly	39.0	50.0	9.0	1.1	0.9
In preserving culture and tradition	49.8	41.1	6.1	1.4	1.5

percentage

FIGURE 21

Are you very concerned, adequately concerned, not very concerned, or not concerned at all with the following issues?

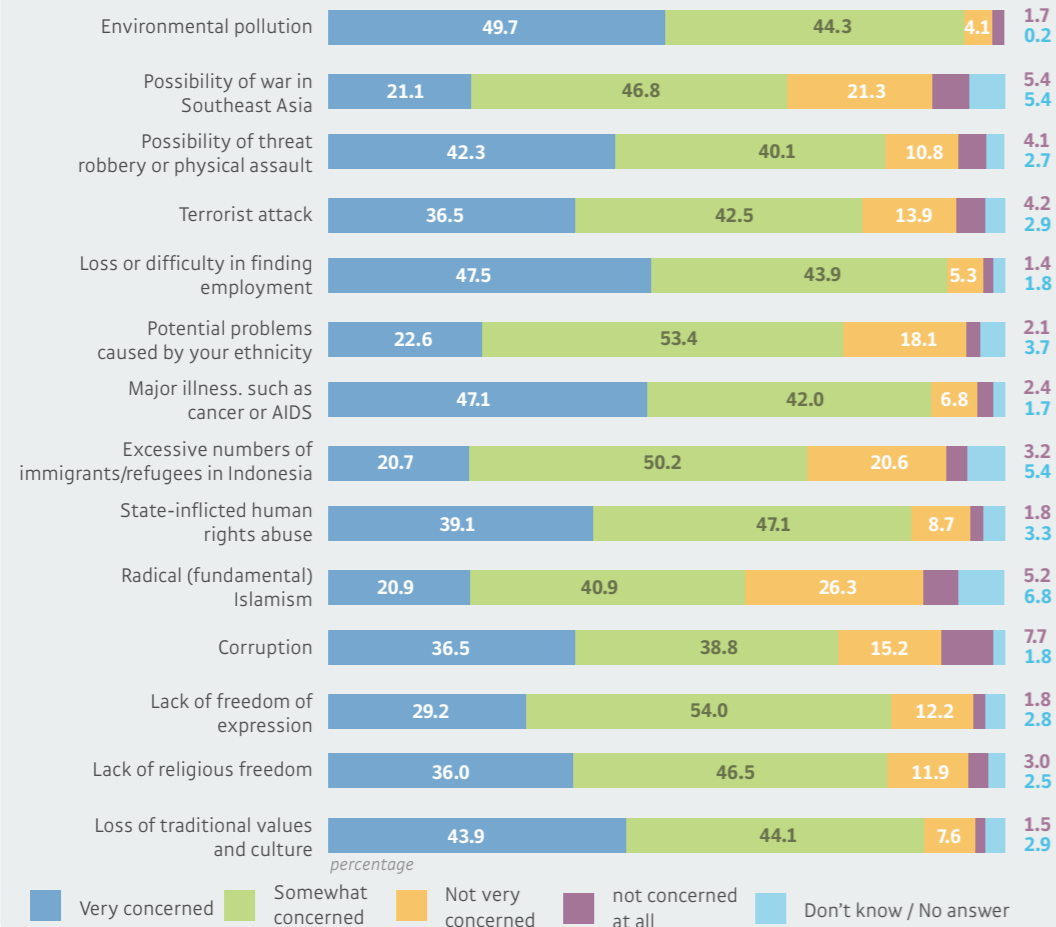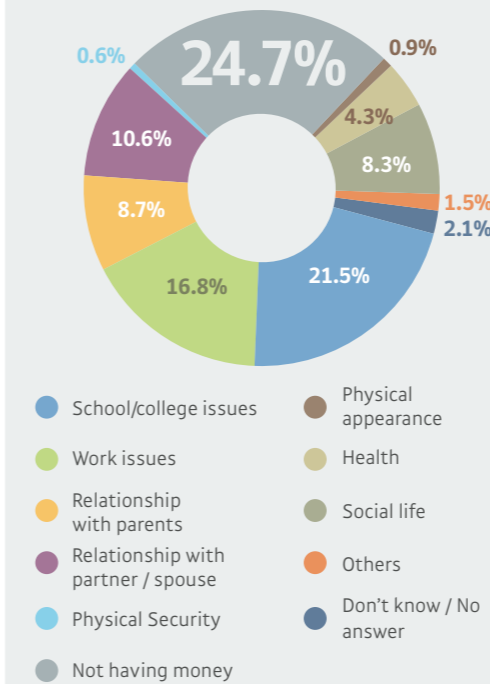|	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not very concerned	not concerned at all	Don't know / No answer
Environmental pollution	49.7	44.3	4.1	1.7	0.2
Possibility of war in Southeast Asia	21.1	46.8	21.3	5.4	5.4
Possibility of threat robbery or physical assault	42.3	40.1	10.8	4.1	2.7
Terrorist attack	36.5	42.5	13.9	4.2	2.9
Loss or difficulty in finding employment	47.5	43.9	5.3	1.4	1.8
Potential problems caused by your ethnicity	22.6	53.4	18.1	2.1	3.7
Major illness. such as cancer or AIDS	47.1	42.0	6.8	2.4	1.7
Excessive numbers of immigrants/refugees in Indonesia	20.7	50.2	20.6	3.2	5.4
State-inflicted human rights abuse	39.1	47.1	8.7	1.8	3.3
Radical (fundamental) Islamism	20.9	40.9	26.3	5.2	6.8
Corruption	36.5	38.8	15.2	7.7	1.8
Lack of freedom of expression	29.2	54.0	12.2	1.8	2.8
Lack of religious freedom	36.0	46.5	11.9	3.0	2.5
Loss of traditional values and culture	43.9	44.1	7.6	1.5	2.9

percentage

The survey respondents' statements about their sources of stress provide another indication of the strong orientation towards the self and the psychological upheaval faced by young Indonesian Muslims as a result of their increasing integration into the market economy: 24.7% of the respondents name lack of money as a source of stress. 21.5% identify problems in school as a source of stress and 16.8% cite problems at work. 10.6% are stressed because of problems in their relationship or marriage. The identification of financial constraints which hinder them from fulfilling their personal needs as the primary cause of stress reflects the strains the respondents face as a result of their increasing integration into the global market economy. Interestingly, when it comes to the solution of their problems, the youths' need for the support of others to ease their pain becomes evident: 38.4% of the respondents
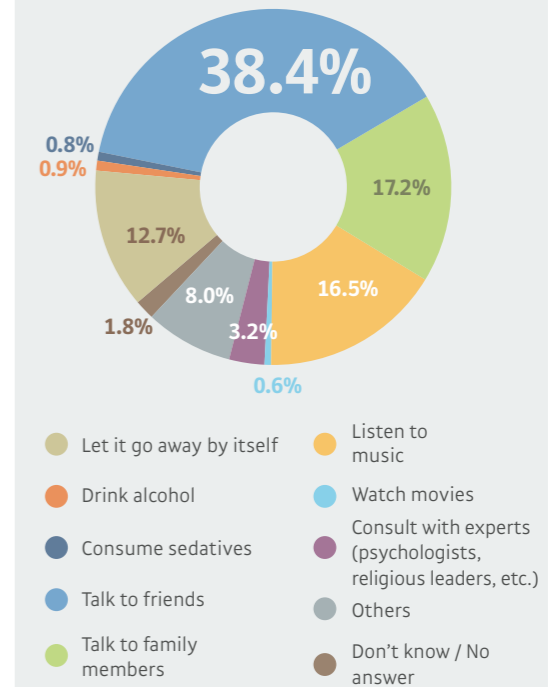
FIGURE 22

Some believe that life is not easy and stressful. Which one of these issues below is the most frequent cause for your stress?

24.7%

0.6% 0.9% 4.3% 8.3% 1.5% 2.1% 21.5% 16.8% 8.7% 10.6%

- School/college issues
- Work issues
- Relationship with parents
- Relationship with partner / spouse
- Physical Security
- Not having money
- Physical appearance
- Health
- Social life
- Others
- Don't know / No answer

FIGURE 23

If you are stressed. what do you usually do to overcome it?

38.4%

0.8% 0.9% 17.2% 12.7% 8.0% 16.5% 1.8% 3.2% 0.6%

- Let it go away by itself
- Drink alcohol
- Consume sedatives
- Talk to friends
- Talk to family members
- Listen to music
- Watch movies
- Consult with experts (psychologists, religious leaders, etc.)
- Others
- Don't know / No answer

would confide in their friends, while another 17.2% would confide in their family. Only 12.7% chose to deal with the problem on their own by keeping it to themselves. About 16.5% chose to deal with their stress by listening to music. Only a very small number of respondents turn to substance abuse to deal with their stress, with 0.9% turning to alcohol and another 0.8% using tranquilizers to deal with their problems.

THE DEPENDENCE ON TECHNOLOGY DRASTICALLY CHANGED THE LIFESTYLE OF INDONESIAN MUSLIM YOUTHS, ESPECIALLY THOSE LIVING IN THE CITY.
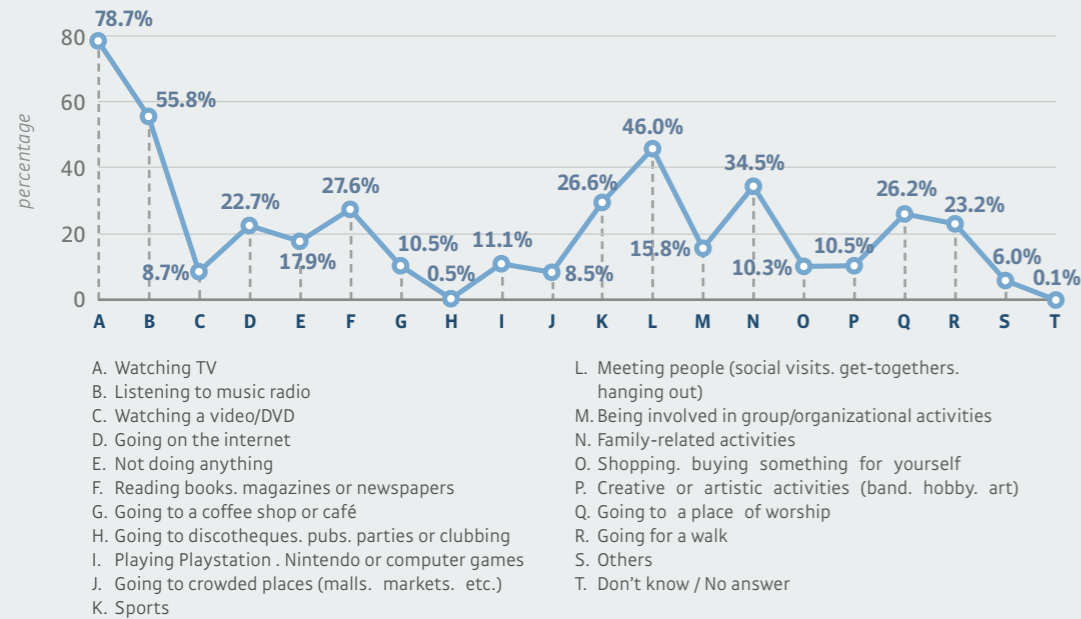
When it comes to leisure time, the arrival of mass communication and technology drastically changed the lifestyle of young Indonesian Muslims – technological devices are starting to encroach upon the time formerly spent with peers or family. Young Indonesian Muslims increasingly engage in solitary actions in their leisure time: 78.7% watch TV while 55.8% listen to music or the radio. 27.6% of the respondents read books, newspapers or magazines, while 22.7% surf the internet.

However, young Indonesian Muslims have not given up their social engagements completely: 46% meet up with their peers or older people, 26.2% go to a place of worship while 10.5% head to a coffeehouse. 34.5% of the respondents spend their spare time with family members. 29.6% exercise, while 23.2% travel.
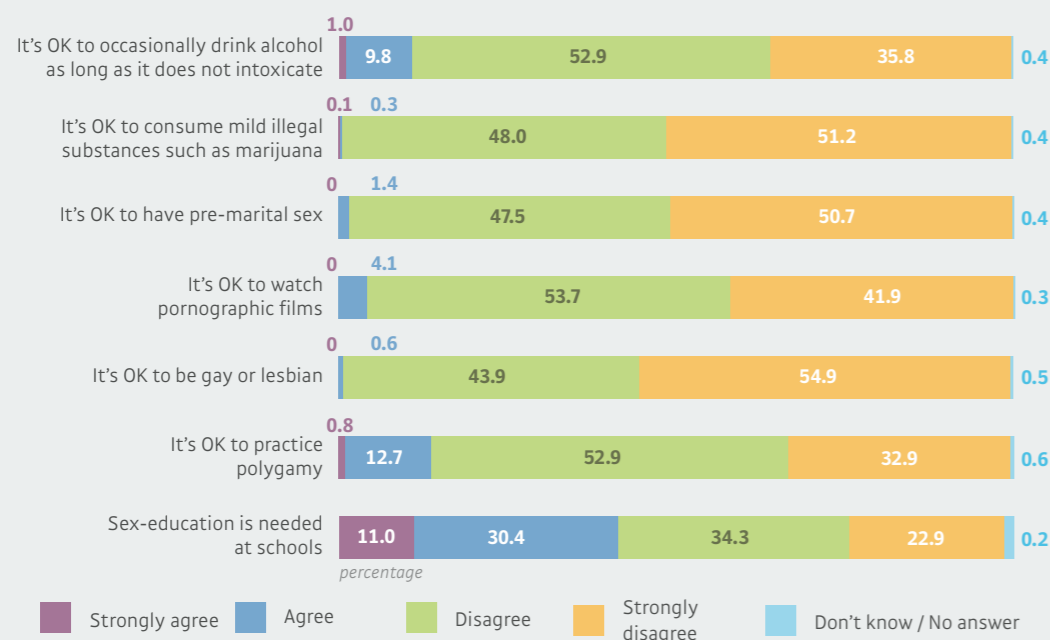
COUNTRY REPORT: INDONESIA

FIGURE 24

How do you usually spend your free time?

A. Watching TV
B. Listening to music radio
C. Watching a video/DVD
D. Going on the internet
E. Not doing anything
F. Reading books. magazines or newspapers
G. Going to a coffee shop or café
H. Going to discotheques. pubs. parties or clubbing
I. Playing Playstation . Nintendo or computer games
J. Going to crowded places (malls. markets. etc.)
K. Sports
L. Meeting people (social visits. get-togethers. hanging out)
M. Being involved in group/organizational activities
N. Family-related activities
O. Shopping. buying something for yourself
P. Creative or artistic activities (band. hobby. art)
Q. Going to a place of worship
R. Going for a walk
S. Others
T. Don't know / No answer

The respondents' dependence on telecommunications is quite high – 83% of the respondents use a cell phone. However, only 6.1% use smart phones like the i-Phone and Blackberry. The number of internet users is meager: while 13.3% of participants said they use the internet[1] daily, 37.1% of young Indonesian Muslims claimed that they never use the internet. But it must be noted, that these numbers will be changing very quickly if the development continues as it is – Indonesia is among the fastest growing countries when it comes to the numbers of internet users.

FIGURE 25

Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements:

It's OK to occasionally drink alcohol as long as it does not intoxicate — 1.0 | 9.8 | 52.9 | 35.8 | 0.4
It's OK to consume mild illegal substances such as marijuana — 0.1 | 0.3 | 48.0 | 51.2 | 0.4
It's OK to have pre-marital sex — 0 | 1.4 | 47.5 | 50.7 | 0.4
It's OK to watch pornographic films — 0 | 4.1 | 53.7 | 41.9 | 0.3
It's OK to be gay or lesbian — 0 | 0.6 | 43.9 | 54.9 | 0.5
It's OK to practice polygamy — 0.8 | 12.7 | 52.9 | 32.9 | 0.6
Sex-education is needed at schools — 11.0 | 30.4 | 34.3 | 22.9 | 0.2

■ Strongly agree   ■ Agree   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly disagree   ■ Don't know / No answer

[1] The survey has found a specific pattern among those respondents who do not use the internet. Many of them come from rural areas, are less educated and are between 20 and 25 years old.

When asked about their attitudes concerning issues like drug-use, sex and pornography, a deep sense of piety becomes evident: 52.9% of the respondents disapprove of alcoholic drinks, and a similar number disapprove of polygamy. 51.2% strongly disapprove of narcotics, while 50.7% of the respondents strongly disapprove of premarital sex. Another 53.7% frowned upon pornographic movies, while 54.95% strongly disapproved of gays and lesbians. Although the respondents disapproved of premarital sex, they cited the need for heightened awareness about sex and sex-education in schools.

The youths' lifestyles vary with age, place of residence, education, and income. Younger respondents between the ages of 15 to 19 years have tighter social bonds: not only are they still encapsulated in their nuclear family but they also show a stronger tendency to engage in social activities. They constitute a majority of the 40.6% of participants who are willing to participate in youth activities. As a group with tight social bonds, they are more likely to confide in their friends during times of stress. They are also more likely to use the internet than their older counterparts. Overall, they fill their spare time with the activities of teenagers all around the world. This includes listening to music, surfing the internet, reading, playing on the Play Station, and exercise.

Asked about values and morality, they condemn all practices deemed immoral: They tend to strongly disapprove of alcohol consumption, using marijuana, watching pornography or being either gay or lesbian. Also, they have a stricter view on polygamy than their older counterparts.

Meanwhile, respondents between the ages of 20 to 25 tend to be more independent and at the same time show a stronger sense of responsibility towards their parents and family. For example, they are more likely to confide in their relatives in times of stress. They prefer to spend their spare time with their family or at the mosque.

However, with increasing age they are more likely to experience stress because of a lack of money. They account for a large part of the 43.6% of respondents who emphasize on the need to earn a decent wage. In this sense, money can be seen as a manifestation of how this older age group expresses their social responsibilities and their identity.
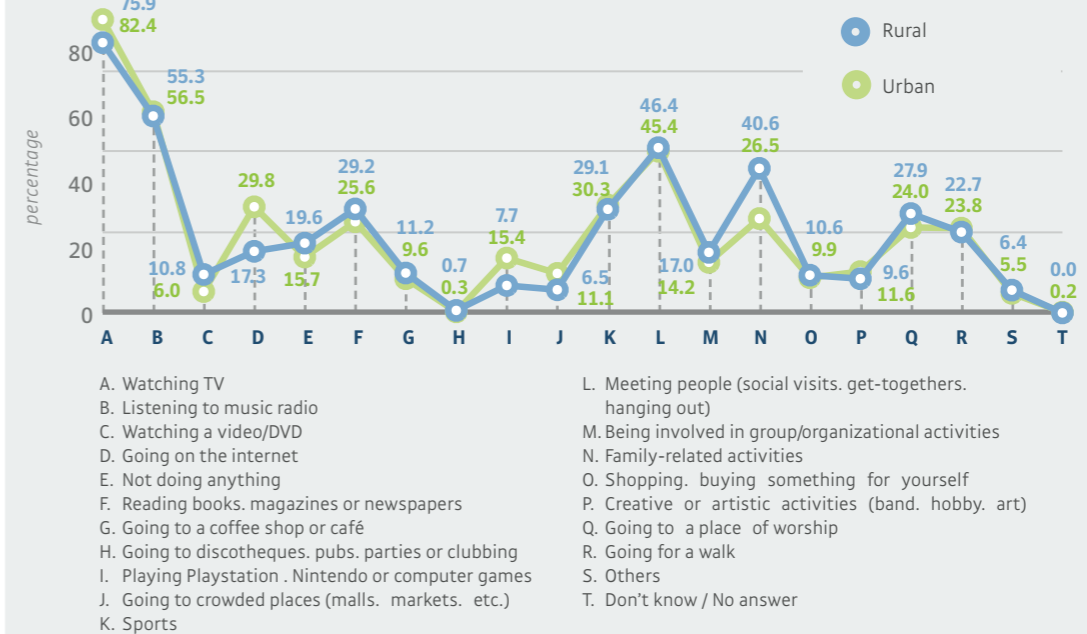
MUSLIM URBAN YOUTHS DISPLAY A MORE REALISTIC APPROACH TO LIFE THAN THEIR RURAL COUNTERPARTS.

When it comes to differentiating between urban and rural youths, it should be noted that urban respondents show more realistic expectations from life, the need for a healthy and secure life and a higher sense of responsibility towards society. The lifestyle of this group is developed in tandem with their increased reliance on telecommunication appliances and a strong affirmation of their Islamic identity. Urban dwellers make up the majority of the 83% of respondents who use cell phones, as well as the 13.3% of those who use the internet on a daily basis. In addition, urban respondents also make up the majority of those who spend their spare time watching TV.

On the other hand, young rural respondents and those with low incomes of less than 400 thousand rupiah show the most acute symptoms of relative deprivation[2]. Therefore, these two groups feel a strong need for social acknowledgement and group ties. For

FIGURE 26

How do you usually spend your free time?

● Rural   ● Urban

A. Watching TV
B. Listening to music radio
C. Watching a video/DVD
D. Going on the internet
E. Not doing anything
F. Reading books. magazines or newspapers
G. Going to a coffee shop or café
H. Going to discotheques. pubs. parties or clubbing
I. Playing Playstation . Nintendo or computer games
J. Going to crowded places (malls. markets. etc.)
K. Sports
L. Meeting people (social visits. get-togethers. hanging out)
M. Being involved in group/organizational activities
N. Family-related activities
O. Shopping. buying something for yourself
P. Creative or artistic activities (band. hobby. art)
Q. Going to a place of worship
R. Going for a walk
S. Others
T. Don't know / No answer

[2] Relative deprivation is the experience of being deprived of something to which one believes oneself to be entitled to have. It refers to the discontent people feel when they compare their positions to others and realize that they have less than them.
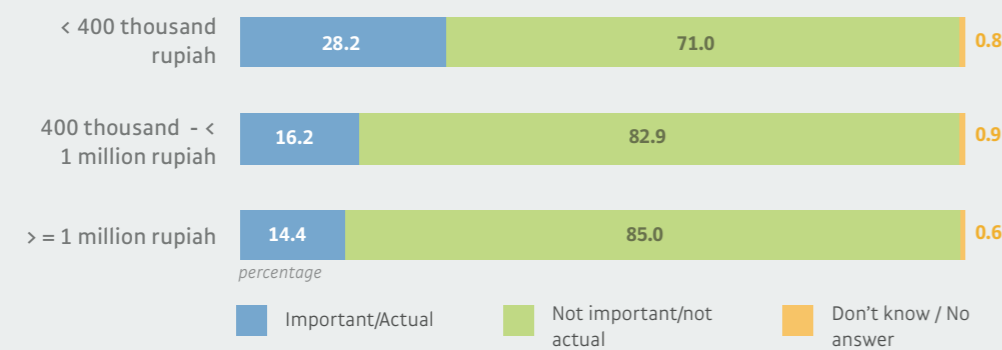
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example, most of the rural teenage respondents see a strong need for branded clothing. Rural teenagers are also more prone to turn to friends in times of distress. Again, in contrast to their urban counterparts, rural teenage respondents also account for many of the 34.5% of respondents who spend their spare time with their families.

A similar pattern can also be found among low-income respondents. These respondents are likely to emphasize on the importance of creating a safe environment. They rate the role played by friends in their lives very highly. Many are likely to follow traditional ways and values and a substantial number would spend their free time in mosques. However, this group also needs social acknowledgement. This is seen by the emphasis they lay on branded clothes and quality education. Last but not least, these respondents tend to rate the importance of becoming wealthy higher than their more affluent counterparts.

FIGURE 27

In your opinion which one out of the following issues are currently considered important / actual? And which ones are considered not important/actual for the young people?

WEARING DESIGNER CLOTHING

	Important/Actual	Not important/not actual	Don't know / No answer
< 400 thousand rupiah	28.2	71.0	0.8
400 thousand - < 1 million rupiah	16.2	82.9	0.9
> = 1 million rupiah	14.4	85.0	0.6

percentage

Besides the need for social acknowledgement, many low-income respondents often seek an older figure to look up to who can improve their life in the future. They tend to have a positive view of older people and make up a substantial number of the 49.6% respondents who view older people as hard workers who never give up. They also account for a large part of the 57.7% of participants who believe that the older generation places family first on their list of priorities. Many low-income respondents view their own generation as responsible people and regard the young Indonesian people of today as hard workers who do not give up. For these respondents, traditional values provide comfort and certainty in life and serve as a reserve of positive energy.

Another indication of the relative deprivation of lower income respondents is their firsthand witnessing of violence over the past 12 months. Many saw violence among youths first hand. Lower income respondents also make up the largest number of respondents who believe that fate will determine whether someone will be rich or poor, or a success or failure.

FIGURE 28

Have you personally witnessed or been involved in violence in the following situations within the past 12 months?

	Among youth	Between different ethnic/religious groups	At food stalls, clubs or parties	At public events (sports, music)	At school	With the police (e.g. in demonstrations)	No. I have not witnessed it	Don't know / No answer
< 400 thousand rupiah	39.0	9.4	9.0	17.6	19.2	4.8	42.9	1.5
400 thousand - < 1 million rupiah	38.2	5.1	10.0	20.3	18.9	6.9	40.2	3.3
> = 1 million rupiah	36.2	9.2	8.2	13.0	20.2	11.1	44.9	1.8

percentage
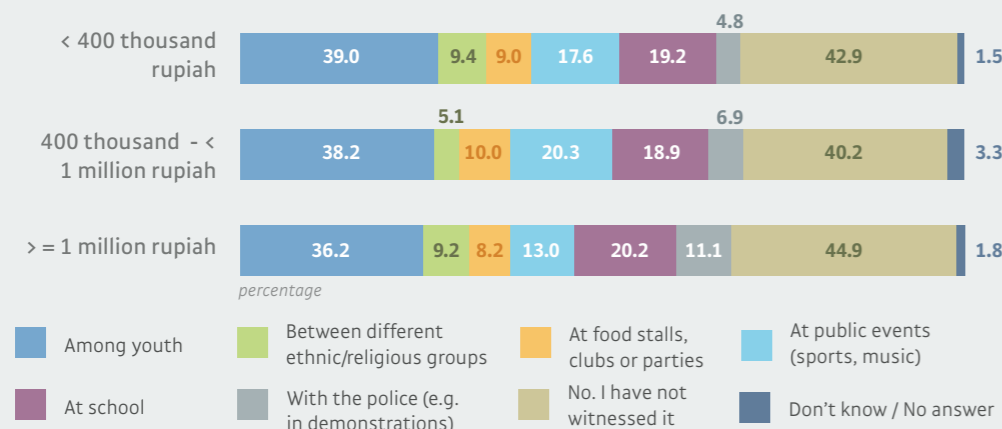
On the other hand, respondents who earn more than 1 million Rupiah a month adopt a lifestyle that reflects optimism about their future and establishing themselves. They are also relatively untouched by symptoms of relative deprivation, as compared to rural respondents or those with low incomes who are more vulnerable to this trend. They are more likely to rate the importance of getting a decent wage highly with 9.22 on a scale of 10 and are striving to establish a good name for themselves professionally. This group makes up most of the 42% of respondents who care about a safe and healthy life and are concerned about deadly diseases like cancer and about the possibility of getting robbed or physically assaulted. Their raised state of awareness is intended to improve their current and future economic situation.

Their leisurely activities tend to be individual in nature and show the increased access to various forms of information technology and sources of information, as well as their strong dependence on the information and communication industry. They account for most of the 55.8% of respondents who listen to music to pass the time, read books (27.6%), and surf the internet (22.7%). They also constitute the majority of the 13% of respondents who use the internet on a daily basis. Nearly all of them (93.3 %) use cell phones, while most of them are among the 6.1% of respondents who use smart phones.

The survey found that the more educated the Muslim youth, the likelier they are to be concerned about the loss of traditional values and culture (out of 44.1% respondents). These respondents are also the majority among the 6.3% of respondents who are likely to witness ethnic and sectarian violence.

YOUNG MUSLIM WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO ENGAGE WITH THE MODERN INFORMATION AND ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY.

Seen from the perspective of gender, women are more likely to depend on the information and entertainment industry. Listening to music, watching TV, reading and surfing the internet are the top choices for women to fill their free time. When it comes to spending time with others, female respondents prefer to visit shopping centers like traditional markets and malls, shopping (buying something for themselves), meeting with their family and getting involved with a specific activity group.

One could assume that many women feel that they are idle if they have leisure time. It is likely that their interpretation of filling in spare time is engaging in an outdoor activity that is different from their routine household chores. Because they regard the house as part of the domestic realm, they are more likely to acquire their awareness of Islam through groups in the vicinity of their house like neighbors and prayer groups, as well as at school.

In a certain sense, the female respondents' strong ties to the domestic realm often seem to make them feel comfortable and more protected from the effects of relative deprivation, which they will get in the public realm. That is why female respondents felt that they should be more focused on their domestic realm, as they are more attached to it. They also see the public realm as a secondary aspect that they will deal with once their domestic duties are done.

Many women do express their willingness to be active in various social activities – such as organizing youth-related activities, being active in environmental and animal protection activities or helping handicapped, old and poor people – but these statements can be considered as intentions only. Actually the number of female respondents who are active in social organizations are relatively lower than their male counterparts.

POLITICS

The survey's findings concerning the political views of the youths are quite ambiguous. The youth is highly ambivalent about the state's presence and its benefits. The young are beginning to widely question the state's role as the protector and guarantor of prosperity for its citizens. Nevertheless, they still hope that it will play its role as their protector and provide a solution for the relative deprivation that they face.

THE MAJORITY OF MUSLIM YOUTHS HAVE ACCEPTED THE COUNTRY'S CURRENT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION.

In general, the data showed that many Indonesian Muslim youth have accepted the country's current political and economic situation. 63.2% of the respondents think that Indonesia is on the right track. 38.7% of the participants said that the government is well run, while 37.5% said it is moderately well run. 31.8% of the respondents are optimistic about Indonesia's future. 40.6% of the Indonesian people rate the government well, while 30.2% said that the economic situation is much better than it was last year.

FIGURE 29

How do you view the direction in which the country is going so far. Is it going in the right or wrong direction?

63.2%

33.9%

2.8%

Our country is going in the right direction	Our country is going in the wrong direction	Don't know / No answer

COUNTRY REPORT: INDONESIA

However, certain doubts become evident if one takes a closer look: 32.2% of the respondents said that the country's economic situation is bad. 31.7% said that the government did poorly at law enforcement nationwide, while 14.2% of all respondents said the government did a poor job in national security. A similar number is critical of the government's track record, while 55.3% said that corruption and bribery are actually on the rise.

In general, interest in politics among the Muslim youths is quite low. Only 23.1% of the respondents said that they are interested in politics, while a meager 5.5% said that they are "very interested" in the field. 48.5% of the respondents did not think that everyone is obliged to be interested in politics. Another 48% of respondents even dismissed political activities as boring.

When it comes to voter participation, only 27.6% of the respondents are involved in local elections and local politics, even though this process influences their daily lives. Only 16.1% stated that they have participated in every election.

However, the respondents do pay closer attention to the political process – be it national or international – if it affects their efforts to have a well established life: 48.8% of the respondents said they are concerned that war will break out in Southeast Asia. They also have a positive view of globalization. 39% of the respondents said that globalization would be the tool to give them a chance of having a better life. Another 36.5% are concerned about corruption, while 39% of the participants are concerned about human rights violations by the state. While slightly more respondents (41.4%) said they have little interest in politics, most or 72% do not believe that all problems should be resolved through violence. Others are concerned about terrorism (42.5%), human rights abuses by the state (47%), radical Islam (40%) and corruption (38.8%).

MORE THAN 70 % OF YOUNG MUSLIMS IN INDONESIA THINK THAT PEOPLE HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE GOVERNMENTS THEY DO NOT LIKE.

Most of the respondents have a negative view of the actual practice of politics and the conduct of politicians, but at the same time they embrace democratic notions and the possibility of participating in social change. This makes them feel that they can reach a greater good. This positive outlook is based on the view that politics is an adventure as well as an outlet for positive energy and young people are pioneers of change. They also feel obliged, as young Indonesian Muslims, to change the political conditions for the better. 72.7% of the respondents hold the view that citizens can replace a government they disapprove of. About 66.4% believe that an opposition party is a vital pillar of democracy. 47% still think that everyone should be interested in politics. On the other hand,

FIGURE 30

Have you participated in an election before?

42.0%

16.1%

0.5%

41.4%

- In some
- Never
- In every election
- Don't know / No answer

FIGURE 31

How are your views regarding democracy and politics? Do you strongly agree. agree. disagree. or strongly disagree with the following statements?

People have the power to change governments which they do not favor: 11.6 | 61.1 | 20.4 | 1.5 | 5.4

A good democracy requires opposing parties: 5.4 | 60.9 | 19.2 | 1.1 | 13.4

percentage

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
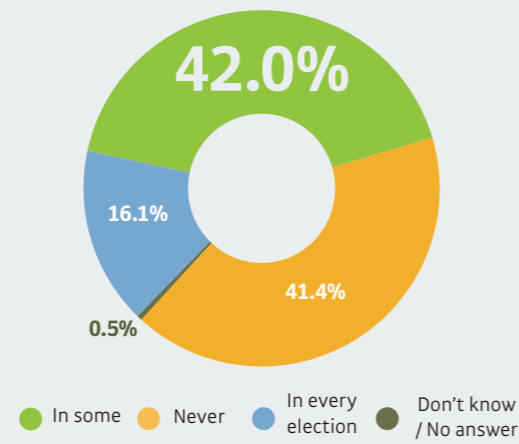- Strongly disagree
- Don't know / No answer

as already stated, the respondents' negative view of politics is shaped by "practical politics", or politics that was determined by the political process and the behavior of politicians. The respondents view "practical politics", which is a form of politics marked by non-stop negotiation of interests, as a practice that erodes the benefit of politics in their social life.

62.6% of the respondents dismiss politicians as figures who only take advantage of their electorate's votes. This might explain the respondents' orientation towards a "strongman" to expedite the political process (62 %).

49 PERCENT OF INDONESIAN MUSLIM YOUTHS DO NOT THINK THAT RELIGIOUS LEADERS SHOULD REPLACE POLITICIANS.

Most of the respondents view "practical politics" as a grey area that is always a bit murky. For example, 48.6% of them replied in the negative when asked if religious leaders should replace politicians in government institutions. Most of them were relatively older city dwellers as well as those who were better educated or better paid. This viewpoint is influenced by news or other information conveyed about politicians who practice "practical politics", as well as their ideas about the role of religious figures. The more the respondents had access to high quality information, the more critical and realistic was their opinion about politics. Respondents who have access to multiple, varied forms of information wish that the religious leaders whom they look up to as a moral example should not enter into "practical politics". They are of the opinion that the clerics' moral edge would be undermined if they were tainted by the negative aspects of politics.

It should be noted that 71% of all respondents obtained their information about politics through television. The data showed that television built up the respondents' image of "practical politics" and politicians: as architects of incidents that are marked by conflicts and self-interest that are always looking for ways to increase their popularity. The information conveyed by television affirmed their negative views about the dirt in "practical politics". This is the theatrical side of "practical politics" which induced 25% of all respondents to follow political scandals. Only 5.5% of respondents believe that politics can be an outlet of virtue in public life.

The negative side of "practical politics" is brought up yet again, as 64% of all respondents believe that money determines success in a political career. The Indonesian sociologist Koentjaraningrat observed in the 1970's that "practical politics" stemmed from the habit of taking a shortcut that later became the basis for political pragmatism. There is a belief that "practical politics" is a quick way to gain upward mobility and gain power, popularity and riches. Participation in politics meant an active role in political parties and a fast track towards power, popularity and riches. This can be seen in the case of some legislators and ministers today that are much younger than their counterparts in the New Order era. Some legislators and ministers are glamorous celebrities in their 30s who demonstrate that "practical politics" relies more on individual star power to gain votes instead of being based on the principle of a collective effort for the public good.

Perceptions about the major role played by money in politics also induced a sense of frustration among the survey's respondents. Some of them consider politics to be as uncouth as the Indonesian soap operas (sinetron). This is the despairing viewpoint that led a number of respondents to believe that a strongman would be an effective and useful solution for Indonesian political life.

As with other parts of the survey, political views vary with age, gender, place of residence, income and education.
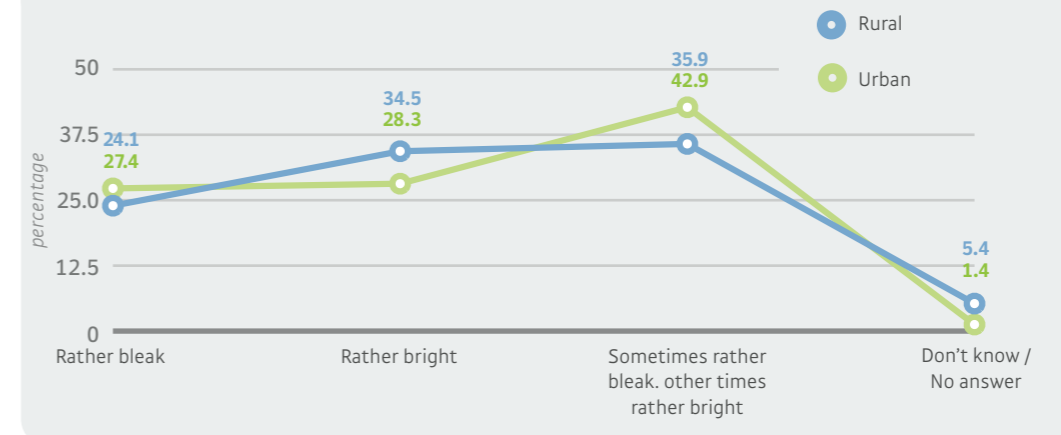
Young people especially from rural areas who have low incomes and a basic education entrust themselves to the state. The survey showed that these respondents proportionally follow political events at the local (gubernatorial) and national (presidential and legislative) levels more actively. The findings confirmed their call on the state to be a presence in their life which will better it in the near future (lihat Suryana, 2006).

RURAL MUSLIM YOUTHS HAVE A MORE IDEALISTIC VIEW OF POLITICS AND ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS.

The younger respondents (15-19 years old) tend to see politics as an adventure and as a form of public virtue. On their part, rural respondents have a more idealistic view of politics. This is why they are more likely to approve of religious leaders taking over the politicians' positions. They also have a more positive opinion about the government's performance. This group is more likely to be interested in local elections and to follow local political news. Rural respondents are also more optimistic about Indonesia's future.

FIGURE 32

What do you think of Indonesia's outlook?

- Rural
- Urban

percentage

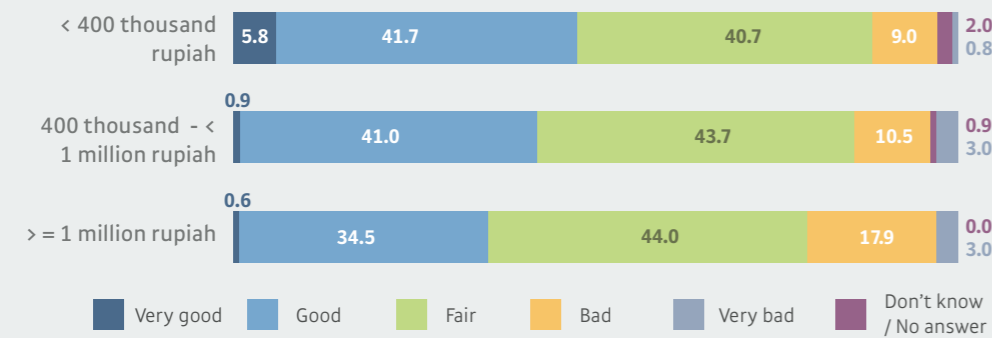|	Rather bleak	Rather bright	Sometimes rather bleak. other times rather bright	Don't know / No answer
Rural	24.1	34.5	35.9	5.4
Urban	27.4	28.3	42.9	1.4

COUNTRY REPORT: INDONESIA

On their part, urban respondents tend to be more critical about the government's track record. The increased and varied sources of information available to urban dwellers raised their awareness of politics and its patterns to a more realistic level. Access to information becomes the crucial factor behind this group's critical stance towards political scandals or news. Urban respondents tend to view national political news as a soap opera.

The urban youths are more concerned about news from Indonesia or the rest of Southeast Asia. They account for a large number of the 39% of respondents who are concerned about the government's human rights violations and corruption (out of a total of 36.5% from all groups of respondents). On the other hand, they also make up most of the 41.4% of respondents who expressed little interest in politics, as well as the 72% who disagree with the use of force to settle conflicts. Many urban respondents have a mixed view about Indonesia's future, oscillating between pessimism and optimism (in total, 39% of respondents have this view). They still have a positive view of globalization as the means to obtain a better life.

FIGURE 33

How do you view the current national governance?

	Very good	Good	Fair	Bad	Very bad	Don't know / No answer
< 400 thousand rupiah	5.8	41.7	40.7	9.0	2.0	0.8
400 thousand - < 1 million rupiah	0.9	41.0	43.7	10.5	0.9	3.0
>= 1 million rupiah	0.6	34.5	44.0	17.9	0.0	3.0

THE MORE AFFLUENT AMONG THE WORKING MUSLIM YOUTHS HAVE A LOWER TRUST IN GOVERNMENT THAN THE LESS WEALTHY.

The survey also showed that the higher the respondent's income, the lower is their trust in the government or their interest in politics. The more affluent are also more critical of the nation's economic state, law enforcement at the national level, national security, or the government's track record. Many believe that Indonesia should play a bigger role in Southeast Asia. They also expressed concerns about terrorism, human rights violations by the state, radical Islam, and corruption. On the other hand, the survey showed that respondents with a lower income have more confidence in the government and are more interested in politics.

FIGURE 34

Do you agree or disagree: Politics bore me

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / No answer
<= Elementary School	2.5	43.3	44.5	3.9	5.8
Junior High School	1.6	44.8	46.2	2.7	4.7
Senior High School	4.1	45.9	47.1	1.5	1.4
College/University	2.2	52.3	42.2	3.2	0.0
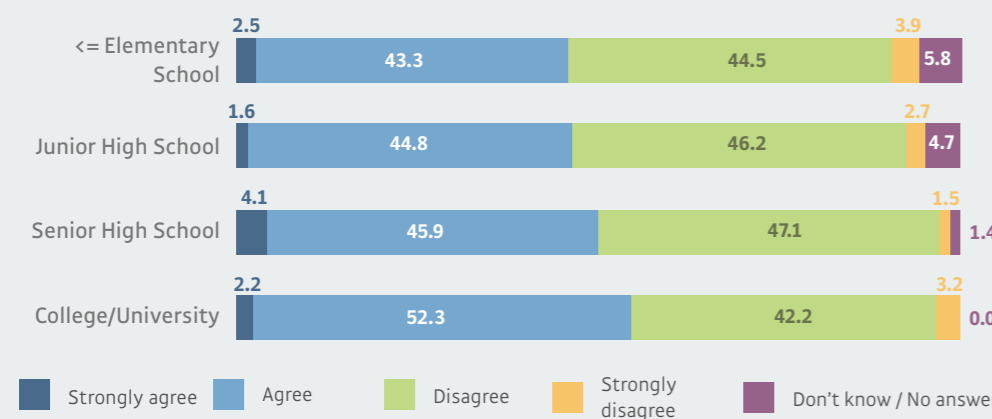
They also believe in the need to participate in politics and often call on politicians to pay particular attention to their social strata. They are aware that politics is intertwined with their daily life. This group still hopes that the government's performance, whether in the executive or legislative bodies, will improve their lot.

Lower income respondents believe more strongly that the country is moving in the right direction. They find the political situation and national security satisfactory. They are also satisfied with the government's performance and the state of the country's economy. However, they feel that there are too many immigrants in Indonesia, which indicates that they feel threatened in the economic sector.

The survey also shows that the higher educated Muslim youth respondents are clearly not interested in politics. The research shows that 3.3% of the Muslim university students do not see politics as important. Only 1.4% are interested in politics, while over 48.5% think that interest in the field should not be imposed on others. Of the 53.3% respondents who dismiss politics as boring, many are from this group.

Indonesian Muslim young women tend to support the political status quo. Female respondents are slightly less inclined than their male counterparts to be involved in movements to change the current social and political situation, even though more of them say that the country is moving in the wrong direction and that the economic situation is rather bad. Many of these women do not think that an opposition is vital to democracy in Indonesia.

Like their male counterparts, however, many female respondents disapprove of religious leaders taking over the role of politicians in the Indonesian government. They also strongly disagree with the view that women cannot make good leaders in Indonesia. Nowhere are these women's beliefs in the status quo as marked as it is in the issue of Indonesia's ideological foundation, as they rejected the idea of replacing Pancasila with the al-Quran.

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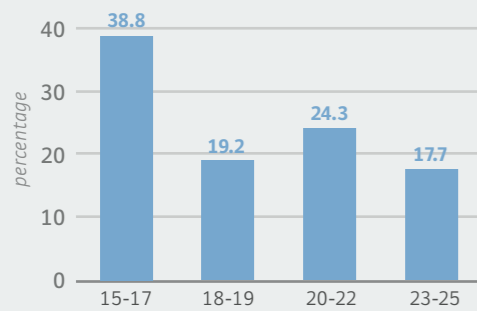Wardhani, Baiq. (2011). Negara Lemah, Gagal, dan Runtuh? Kompas, 1 Maret: 6

DEMOGRAPHICS & METHODOLOGY
INDONESIA

GENDER

- Male 49.9%
- Female 50.1%
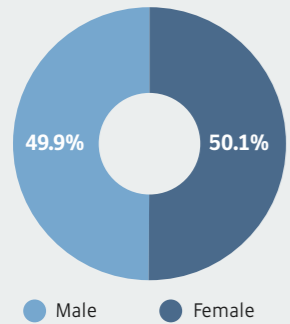
52.1 %
of the questioned youths attended a religious school.
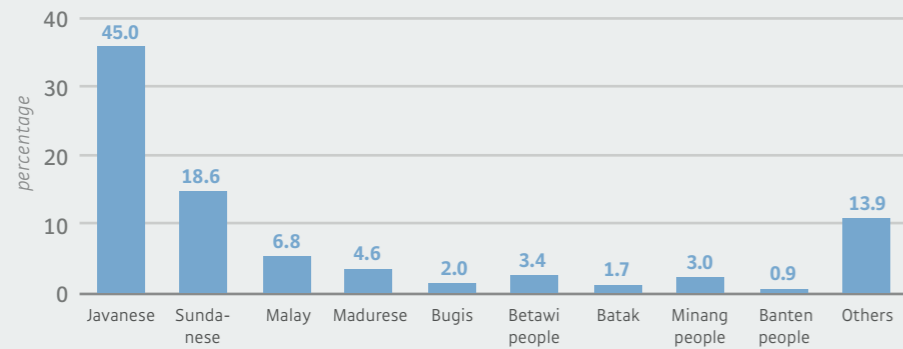
AGE

The data collection for this survey was carried out from November 18th until 26th, 2010 by Lembaga Survei Indonesia.
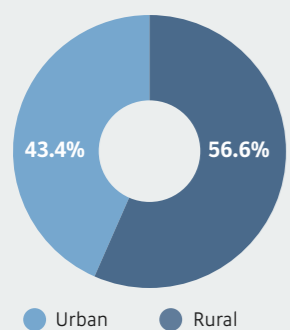
1.496 Indonesian citizens aged between 15 and 25 years were questioned.

The sample was selected randomly. The respondents are proportionally distributed over Indonesia's 33 provinces, in accordance with the official Indonesian 2010 population census.

ETHNICITY

SETTING

- Urban 43.4%
- Rural 56.6%

ATTENDANCE OF RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

- Yes 47.1%
- No 52.1%
- Don't know / No answer 0.8%
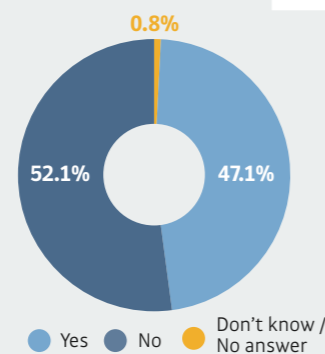
LEVEL OF EDUCATION
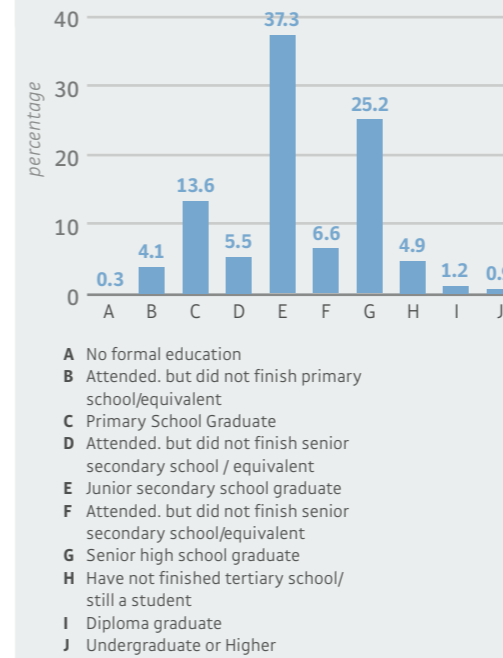
- **A** No formal education
- **B** Attended. but did not finish primary school/equivalent
- **C** Primary School Graduate
- **D** Attended. but did not finish senior secondary school / equivalent
- **E** Junior secondary school graduate
- **F** Attended. but did not finish senior secondary school/equivalent
- **G** Senior high school graduate
- **H** Have not finished tertiary school/ still a student
- **I** Diploma graduate
- **J** Undergraduate or Higher

There was a random selection of cities and neighbourhoods at national level and proportionally at the provincial level. In every city/neighbourhood five blocks were selected randomly. In every block two families with members between 15 and 25 years were then again selected randomly. In each of these families, one person between 15 and 25 years was selected.

The respondents were interviewed face to face by trained interviewers.

Quality control on randomly selected 20% of the results was carried out under supervision of the headquarters of Lembaga Survei Indonesia. The general margin of error is +/- 2.6% at a 95% significance level.

25.2%
of the questioned youths are senior high school graduates.

OCCUPATION
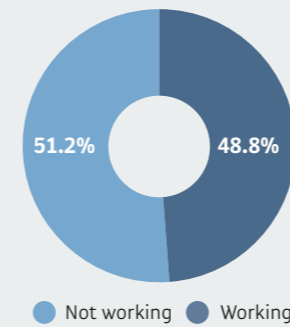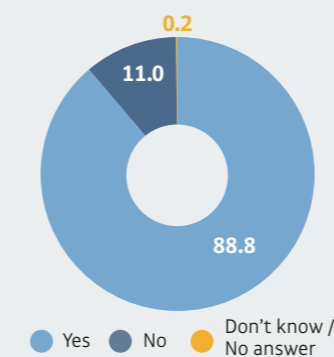
- Not working 51.2%
- Working 48.8%

FAMILY SITUATION

Are both of your parents still alive?

- Yes 88.8
- No 11.0
- Don't know / No answer 0.2

If "Yes". do your parents live together and not divorced. live together but divorced. live separately and divorced. or separated but not divorced?
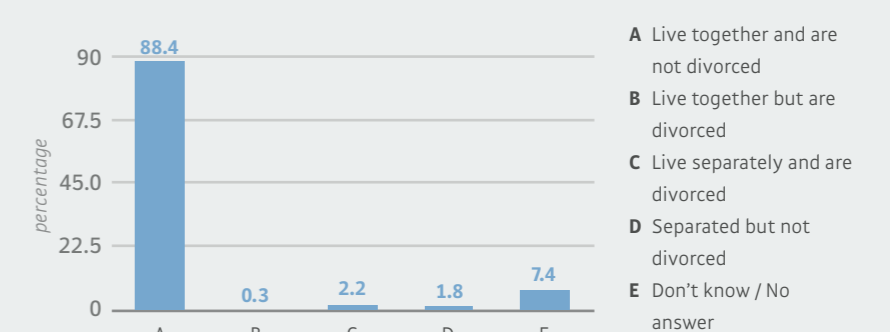
- **A** Live together and are not divorced
- **B** Live together but are divorced
- **C** Live separately and are divorced
- **D** Separated but not divorced
- **E** Don't know / No answer

COMPARATIVE REPORT
MALAYSIA - INDONESIA

INTRODUCTION

This survey was initiated by the Goethe-Institut and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom in 2010 to portray the condition of Muslim youth in Malaysia and Indonesia. The participants are males and females between the ages of 15 and 25, with educational levels ranging from elementary school to universities, both religious and public institutions. The respondents live in urban and rural areas, are married or single, are currently working or unemployed, and some have also used their right to vote. These youth have the full potential, energy and idealism to make their way in the job market and to become future leaders of their countries.

The survey's focus is to analyse five basic aspects of the lives of Muslim youth in both countries: personal development, family orientation, religion, social environment, lifestyle, values, and politics. This report will try to make a comparative analysis of the survey's findings in Indonesia and Malaysia by critically describing, explaining and interpreting their similarities and differences, as well as the various ways in which they are intertwined.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

MALAYSIAN AND INDONESIAN YOUTHS ARE GENERALLY HAPPY WITH THEIR LIFE AND LOOK OPTIMISTICALLY INTO THE FUTURE.

The survey has found that there are no significant differences between Muslim youth in Indonesia and Malaysia when it comes to their personal development. Generally, they view themselves as a happy group with a positive and optimistic outlook, and are happy with their life today. Their characteristics and self-image convey the image of energetic, creative, and self-confident young people who are keen to learn new things, embrace technology, and are hardworking, ambitious and driven to be rich and successful.

An important factor in the personal development of young people is the domestic environment in which they are raised. Educational institutions, traditional values, the interpretation of religious teachings, the media, government policies and social values also play their part. The Indonesian and Malaysian Muslim youth who took the survey both grew up after their countries gained independence. They are being raised amid rapid economic growth and modernisation, fast changing technology, globalisation, as well as changes in family structure and rising individualism. They are also exposed to a variety of information from print and electronic media to issues such as religious fundamentalism, the conflict between Israel and Palestine, and tensions between Islam and developed Western countries. The respondents have been exposed to advertising offering consumerist and hedonist lifestyles that raise their desire for brand name products.

FIGURE 1

Do you think that wearing designer clothing is important for young people nowadays?

MALAYSIA   INDONESIA
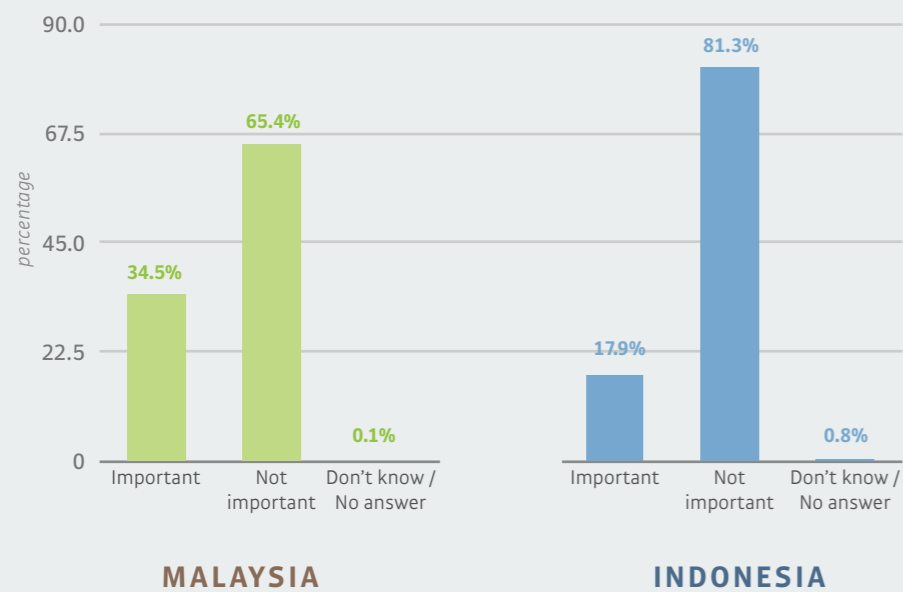
Muslim youth in both countries are optimistic about their own future and the future of their respective countries. Most of them are certain that their economic circumstances will improve. Only a relative few are pessimistic and gloomy about their country's future. The contentment with their lives, particularly that of Malaysia's youth, is understandable, because Malaysia has been politically and economically stable, particularly over the past decade. Although Malaysia was affected by the global economic crisis like its neighbouring countries, the economy did not collapse due to the preventive measures taken by the government. Malaysia was also not hit by any major natural disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes or flooding. The same response is somewhat surprising among Indonesian youth: the country's economy has not completely recovered since the destabilisation caused by the 1997 monetary crisis, natural disasters shake the country frequently, and it is very difficult for them to find jobs that offer a promising future.

FIGURE 2

All in all, are you happy with your life?

MALAYSIA   INDONESIA
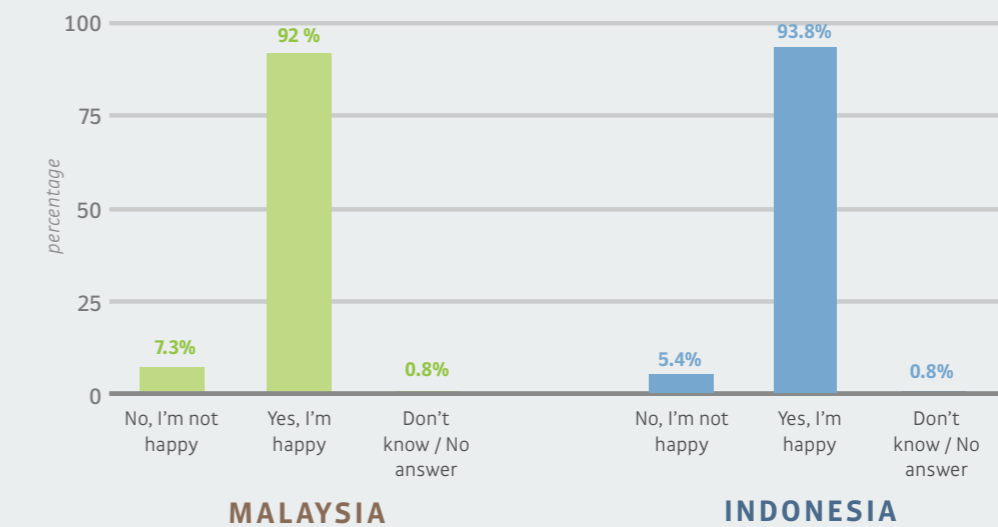
Education is a major factor in personal development and an important vehicle in social mobility. Since Malaysian Muslim youth are widely supported in their education by the government of Malaysia, they are by and large well educated, with only 2.6% dropping out of school. They have a secondary school education, a diploma or equivalent degree, and many have university degrees. Muslim youth in Malaysia are fortunate to have a standardised education system in their country and education up to university level is accessible to most young people. There is little discrepancy between education levels of young people in rural and urban areas. The Malaysian government and the private sector have started to develop vocational training for young people; vocational schools provide skills and expertise for the unemployed and university graduates who are looking for a job. Vocational training is not only meant to help young people obtain employment in the fast-growing industrial sector, it is also encouraging them to establish their own business. Given this availability of vocational training and education as well as steady economic growth, it is not surprising that most respondents state they are sure to get the education or job of their choice. Nevertheless, there is an anxiety among them that they may lose their jobs or fail in finding suitable jobs.

With Indonesian Muslim youth it is an entirely different story. Education, especially at university level, is still a luxury that is only accessible to the middle and upper classes, and one that is only available in urban areas. There are significant differences between young people in the cities and the villages. Unlike Malaysia, the management of education in Indonesia still contains many weaknesses. The clearest indication can be seen in the low number of funds allocated to develop the educational sector, the quality of school buildings, the recruitment process for teachers and the institutional system. Other weaknesses include low teachers' wages and subsidies, teachers' and students' welfare, the quality of teachers and the quality of graduates.
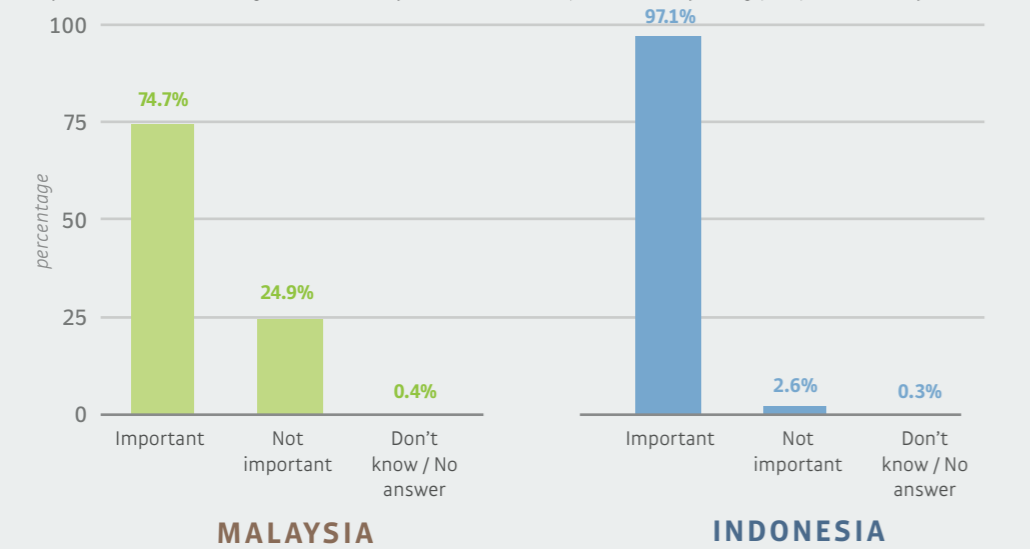
The dreams and hopes of youth in both countries comprise the same wishes, they all aspire to be successful and become rich business entrepreneurs, they all want to enjoy the good things in life.

COMPARATIVE REPORT: MALAYSIA - INDONESIA

FIGURE 3

Do you think that being succesful in your career is important for young people nowadays?

The respondents' second main goal in life is to become good parents. All young Muslims in both countries share this goal.

Lastly, when it comes to self-identification, Muslim youths in both countries tend to see themselves as Muslims first, and prefer to put their Islamic identity before their Indonesian or Malaysian national or ethnic identities. However, the percentage of Indonesian youths who take this viewpoint is lower than that of their Malaysian counterparts (47.5% to 79.9%), which clearly reveal the difficulty of nation building in multi-ethnic Malaysia more than it specifies religious belief: economic success comes relatively easy when compared to the long term achievement of realizing national integration and creating a national identity.

FIGURE 4

I view myself first and foremost as....

*) Malay, Chinese, Indian, Iban / Javanese/ Sundanese/Bugis...
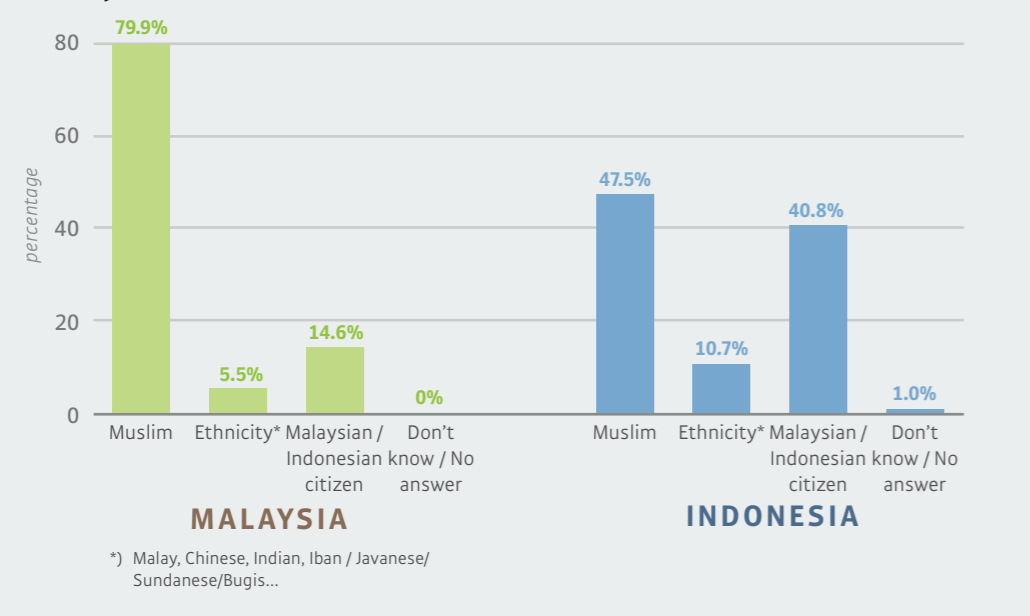
FAMILY ORIENTATION

OVER 90% OF MUSLIM YOUTHS IN INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA REGARD MARRIAGE AND FAMILY AS VERY IMPORTANT.

The majority has the opinion that raising a family makes one's life happier. Their certainty in gaining happiness in family life is influenced by their good relationship with their parents. They state that their parents have nurtured and raised them well. They also add that their parents mostly tell them what to do, which apparently does not bother them. Their acceptance of parental advice is deeply influenced by traditional values that require respect for older people, and is influenced by Islamic teachings that require obedience to one's parents.

Although Muslims youth in Malaysia regard the way their parents brought them up positively, only 24.2% wish to raise their children the same way that they were raised. On the other hand, more Indonesian Muslim youths (48.6%) state that they will raise their children the same way they were raised. More young people in Malaysia (35.5%) wish to bring up their children in a more religious manner, compared with a slightly lower percentage of their Indonesian counterparts.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that more males than females wish to raise their children in a more religious manner, particularly among the Malay ethnic group living on the Malaysian peninsula rather than the Bumiputra[1] indigenous population in Sabah and Sarawak. Moreover, the higher the respondents' education levels and accomplishments, the higher the percentage of those who wish to raise their children in a more religious manner than they were raised. Only a small number (2.5%) opted for a less religious upbringing for their children. About 20.1% wanted a stricter upbringing for their children, while 15.9% wished for a more loving upbringing for their children.

With respect to family types, most young Malaysian Muslims tend to want many children. Not one of the respondents merely wants one child. Such conditions could well be influenced by a conservative interpretation of Islam, where children are regarded as God's gift. Therefore, planning or limiting the number of children is viewed as a violation of Islamic law. They may, however, also be due to the financial and ideological encouragement by the Malaysian government, which generously supports large Muslim families.

In Indonesia the conservative view has changed. Only a few respondents wish to have more than two children. The change in this Islamic view has much to do with the New Order regime's request for Muslim scholars from the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah[2] organisations to give their blessings and support to the Family Planning birth control programme in Indonesia, even though transnational Islamic organisations and parties who stridently reject birth control as haram (taboo) caused the programme to come to a standstill.

FIGURE 5

How many children would you like to have?

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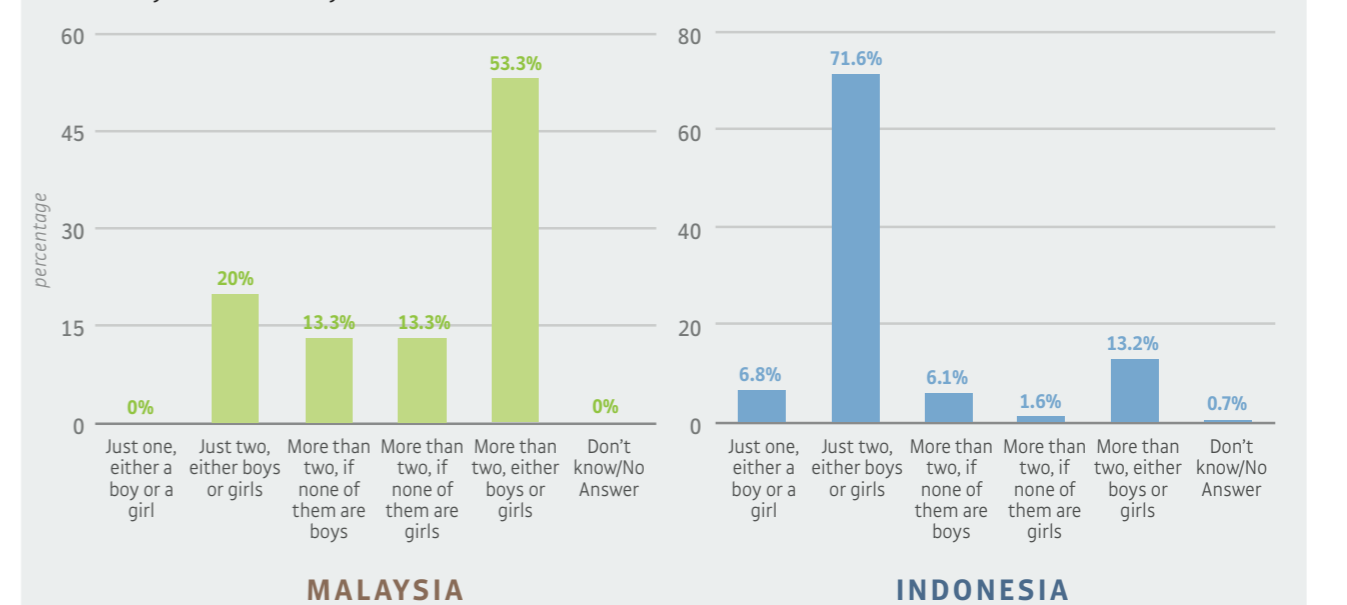
1   Bumiputra is a Malay term used to describe indigenous people of Malaysia
2   The NU and the Muhammadiyah are the two main Islamic organisations in Indonesia

COMPARATIVE REPORT: MALAYSIA - INDONESIA

RELIGION

MUSLIM YOUTHS IN INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA ARE GIVEN CONSTANT REMINDERS ABOUT THEIR OBLIGATIONS TO BE GOOD MUSLIMS.

In Indonesia and Malaysia, Muslim youths receive their religious awareness from various sources. They include parents and siblings at home, as well as religious teachers, be they informal mentors at the mosque or formal teachers in school. Religious awareness can also be obtained from various activities in school or other religious activities from radio, television and internet, as well as through government policies. However, young people's knowledge of Islam is generally acquired from religious teachers and parents. Muslim youths in Indonesia and Malaysia are given constant reminders about their obligations to be good Muslims and how to fulfill their obligations. They have been taught since they were young at home, at school and in their social environment that belief in God is an important, obligatory fundamental. Being a pious Muslim should therefore be an ideal for young people. The majority of the respondents say they were raised in religious or even very religious households, while only a few of them state that they were raised in non-religious households.

While many of the respondents come from religious households and about half of them pursued an education in religious schools not all of them always observe their religious obligations like praying five times a day, fasting during the holy month of Ramadan and reciting prayers from the al-Qur'an. Muslim youth in Indonesia and Malaysia are not very different in this regard. Less than a third admitted to routinely praying five times a day, as most said they pray routinely. Only around 60% said that they always fast in the holy month of Ramadan. More than three quarters of the respondents in both countries even admitted that they understood rather little of the verses in the al-Qur'an. Over 60% admitted that they only read the al-Qur'an periodically. This fact is rather surprising, as nearly 90% of the participants say that they come from religious homes. Women are more likely to carry out their religious obligations compared with men in Indonesia and Malaysia. This circumstance exists because women in Muslim societies are directed and obliged to be moral pillars in family life as well as in society. Women are constantly controlled to carry out religious precepts.

When it comes to polygamy, the majority of Muslim youths in Malaysia and Indonesia disagree with the act. In this regard, more women than men disagree with polygamy. More Indonesian youth disagree with polygamy (86.5%) compared with their Malaysian counterparts (72.7%). This data is heartening for moderates, as their views have shifted from the traditional viewpoint that sees polygamy as an Islamic precept.

It is important to note that the implementation of Shariah law in Islamic countries varies widely, including its interpretation of polygamy. Family laws in Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and the Sudan unreservedly allow polygamy. However, Islamic countries such as Egypt and Jordan tightly regulate polygamy. There, polygamy can only be carried out with a written permit from the court, after the man has obtained an oral and written agreement from his wife beforehand. Even then, permission would be granted only if the husband's livelihood is deemed sufficient to support two households. On the other hand, Muslim countries such as Turkey, Tunisia and Morocco implicitly prohibit polygamy and sentence polygamists with a prison term and a hefty fine. Polygamy is a legal practice in Malaysia and Indonesia, but in Indonesia the overall public opinion towards it is highly negative, a notion reflected in the findings of this study.
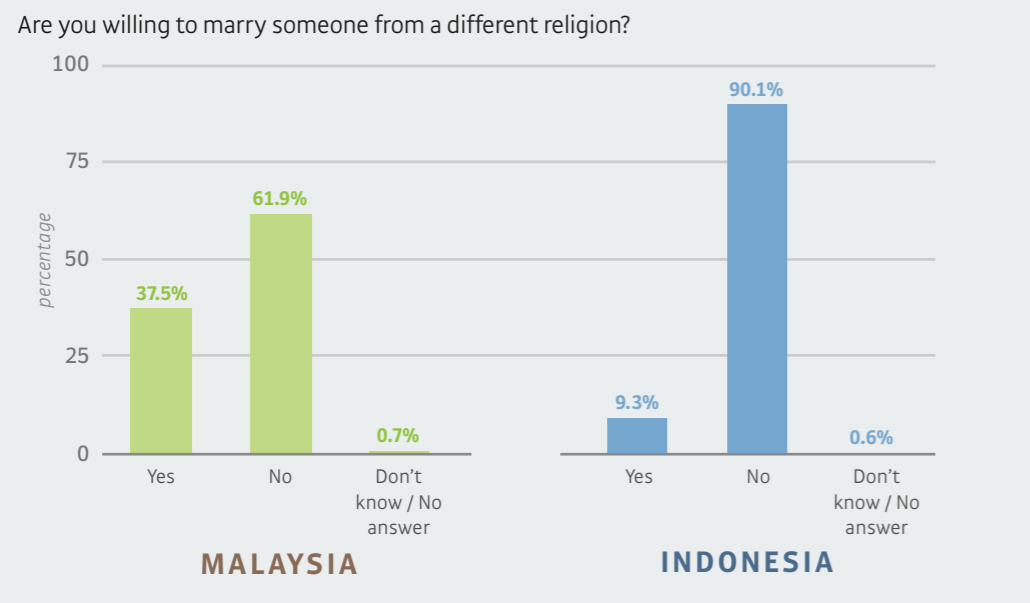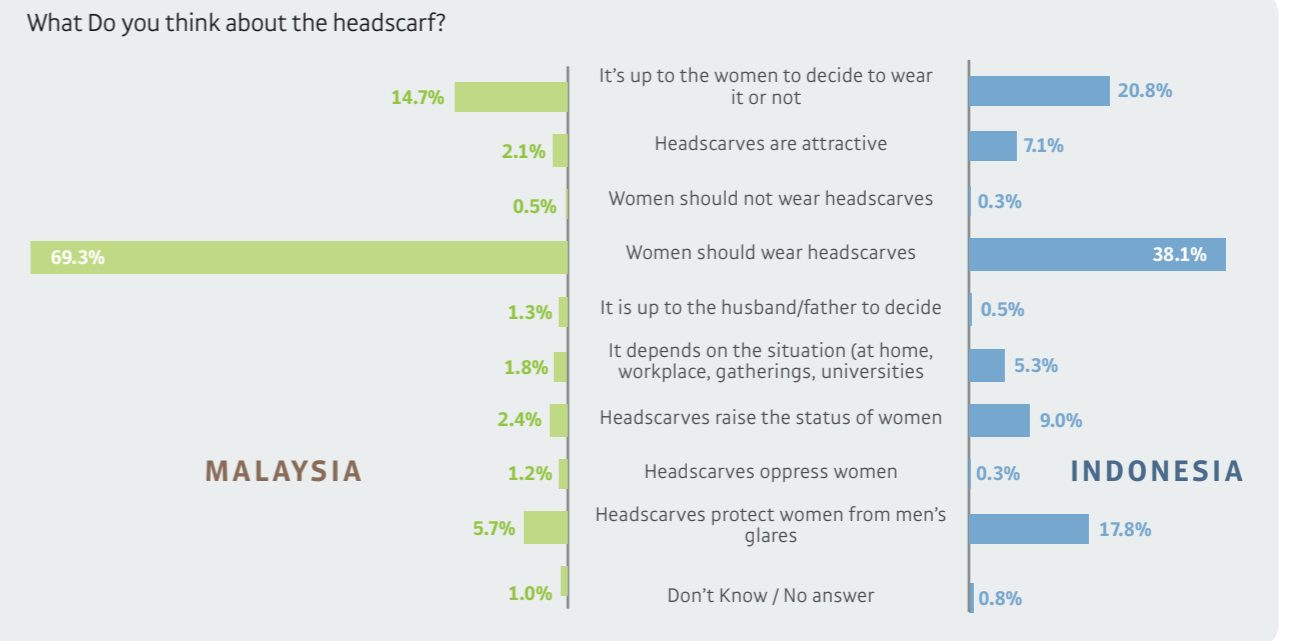
In contrast to their views on polygamy, nearly all Muslim youth in Indonesia and Malaysia hold traditional views on interfaith marriage. The majority of them disagree with interfaith marriage. Even if they are willing to marry a spouse of a different faith, they wish for them to convert to Islam. In this regard, it should be noted that the view of Islamic scholars on interfaith marriage is split into three different schools of thought with conflicting views. The first absolutely disagrees with interfaith marriage (as it is haram or taboo in Islamic law); the second agrees with a Muslim man marrying a non-Muslim woman, but not vice versa. This school of thought's reasoning is that women are weak and therefore liable to convert to their husband's religion. This system of thought is the view adopted by the majority of Muslims. Therefore, it is surprising that interfaith marriage is practised so widely throughout the Islamic world. The third school of thought agrees with interfaith marriage for both men and women. Their grounds are that if Muslim men can marry non-Muslim women it can be done vice versa, as men and women are equal humans created by God.

The use of the headscarf has become a lot more widespread in recent years, especially in Malaysia, where the dressing habits of Muslim women have changed profoundly. Most photos of Malaysian women between the 1950s and 1970s from all classes of society and geographic locales rarely show them wearing the headscarf, unlike today. In a number of instances, there is a picture of a headdress, but they do not exactly meet the criteria set by conservative religious thinkers today. Only recently did girls in elementary schools start wearing the headscarf.

FIGURE 7

What Do you think about the headscarf?

	MALAYSIA		INDONESIA
It's up to the women to decide to wear it or not	14.7%		20.8%
Headscarves are attractive	2.1%		7.1%
Women should not wear headscarves	0.5%		0.3%
Women should wear headscarves	69.3%		38.1%
It is up to the husband/father to decide	1.3%		0.5%
It depends on the situation (at home, workplace, gatherings, universities	1.8%		5.3%
Headscarves raise the status of women	2.4%		9.0%
Headscarves oppress women	1.2%		0.3%
Headscarves protect women from men's glares	5.7%		17.8%
Don't Know / No answer	1.0%		0.8%

The wearing of the headscarf in Indonesia and Malaysia first became popular in the 1980s, a development some experts believe was an impact from the Iranian Revolution in 1979. However, the wearing of the headscarf over the past two and a half decades has become increasingly widespread. In Indonesia, the wearing of the headscarf particularly increased following the Reformation era. The spread of Islamic parties and transnational organisations was also a significant influence. The headscarf has become the symbol of a woman's Islamic identity. Even so, there are still many Muslim women in Indonesia and Malaysia who hold prominent positions but do not wear the headscarf. The same thing is true for many wives of senior officials and powerful businessmen.

It is interesting to note that although many Malaysian Muslim youths do not constantly carry out other obligations of their religion such as praying five times a day or reading the al-Qur'an, nearly 70% of them urge for the headscarf to be made compulsory for women. More men than women urge for this. Surprisingly, Malaysian respondents with a secondary school education are more liberal over the headscarf issue than university graduates or those with a diploma. 66.9% of secondary school graduates call for the headscarf to be compulsory compared with 81.3% of those with a university degree or 73% with a diploma – an interesting fact that may point, however, more to stronger peer group pressure and increased institutional control than to a proportional relation between education and religious regulations.

Malaysian Muslim youths are very clear in their preference for Shariah and Hudud law, despite their laxity in carrying out their religious obligations. Over 70% would rather follow Shariah law than the Federal Constitution. However, only 50% of Eastern Malaysian Muslim youth would condone such a choice. More men than women wish for Shariah law to be implemented – perhaps because it favours men.

A surprising finding is that the majority of Muslim youths in Malaysia and Indonesia agree to the imposition of Hudud punishments, which call for the cutting off of hands for thieves, death sentences for murderers and whipping for anyone caught drinking alcohol. These are the data in more detail: 71% of Malaysians and 50% of Indonesians urge the punishment of cutting off the hand of anyone

FIGURE 6

Are you willing to marry someone from a different religion?

	MALAYSIA			INDONESIA		
	Yes	No	Don't know / No answer	Yes	No	Don't know / No answer
percentage	37.5%	61.9%	0.7%	9.3%	90.1%	0.6%

COMPARATIVE REPORT: MALAYSIA - INDONESIA

found guilty as a thief; 92% of Malaysians and 68% of Indonesians support the punishment of whipping of alcohol offenders, while 92.5% of Malaysians and 66% of Indonesians agree on the death penalty for murderers. It is interesting to note that more women than men support the call to cut off a thief's hand. The older respondents are more vocal in calling for Hudud law and they are also more likely to call for alcohol drinkers to be whipped.

FIGURE 8

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements

MALAYSIA

INDONESIA

Legend: Strongly agree · Agree · Disagree · Strongly disagree · Don't know / No answer
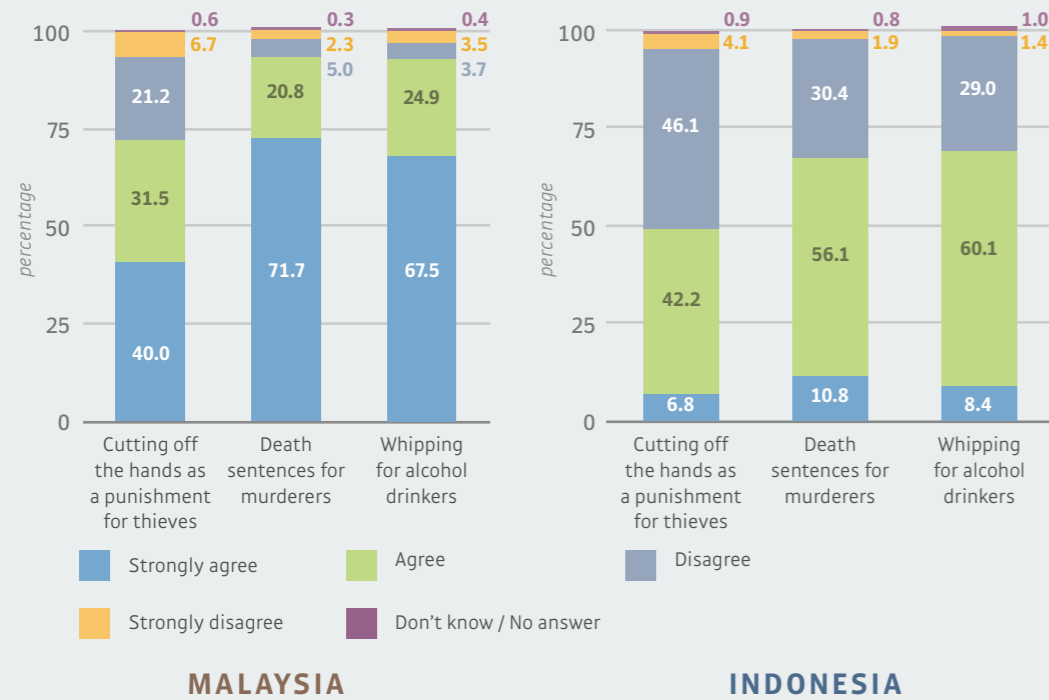
The rather conservative outlook of Muslim youth in Indonesia and Malaysia on religion and social life does not appear to be conducive to building modern democratic, pluralist and humanistic societies. Religious conservatism can be potentially incompatible with democratic principles, such as the freedom of opinion, freedom of speech, freedom of worship and freedom from discrimination.

Indonesia's history created a specific relationship between religious and state or public values that is different from the one in Malaysia. Although the majority of Indonesians are Muslim, the nation's founders acknowledged Pancasila as their ideological basis. Pancasila (Sanskrit for 'five principles') became the major force behind national, public and private life. This political philosophy has no precepts that are incompatible with Islamic teachings. The principles of Pancasila strongly reflect moral and religious messages, which are known in Islam under the term maqashid al-syari'ah or the common good. The nation's founders clearly refused to ground their nation on religion. Religion was only used as an ethical basis, not as an ideological one.

In Malaysia, however, it appears that during the last few decades the idea of an "Islamic state" has gained much ground. This was not always so. Whilst the first and third prime ministers (Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra and Tun Hussein Onn) openly declared that Malaysia was a secular state with Islam as the official religion – the fourth prime minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, declared that Malaysia was an Islamic state.

The difference between "official religion" and "state religion" is further complicated by the fact that Malaysia is a federation of states in which Islam may or may not be the state religion. For example, Sabah's condition for entering the "Malaysia Agreement" was that there would be no state religion. Therefore, perceptions of religious laws are bound to differ from state to state.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, LIFESTYLE AND VALUES

THE LIFESTYLE OF YOUNG MUSLIMS IN INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA IS NOT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF YOUNG PEOPLE ELSEWHERE.

In general, the sociological realities in the lifestyles of young Muslims in Indonesia and Malaysia are not very different from those of young people elsewhere, including those in the western world. The sight of young people filling cafés, shopping malls, salons and boutiques on the weekends, holidays and evenings is very common in both countries.

FIGURE 9

Do you think that technology is important for the young people nowadays?

MALAYSIA

INDONESIA
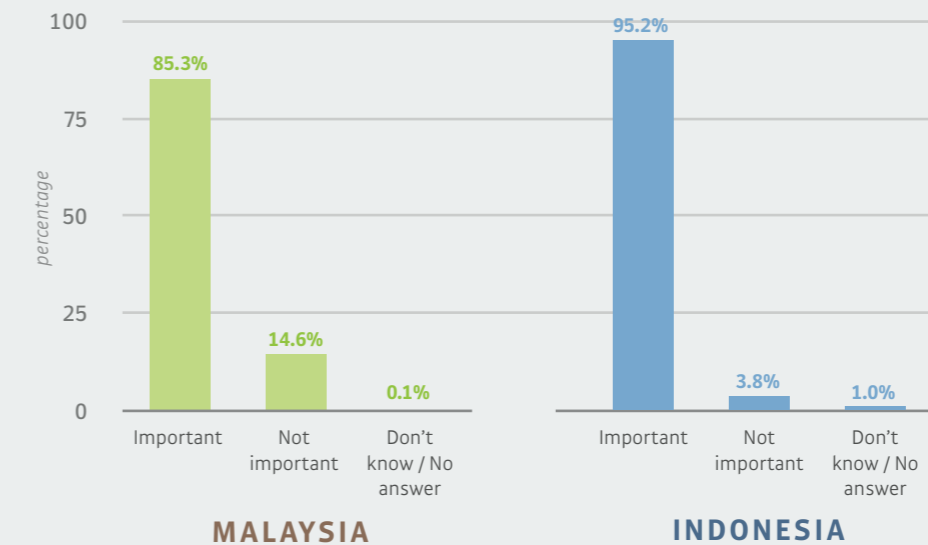
The five activities that are most liked by young Malaysian people in their leisure time are watching TV (75%), listening to music (61.7%), surfing the Internet (52.3%), reading magazines or newspapers (47%), taking a walk (39.9%), activities with family members (36.1%), and exercising (32.3%).   On the other hand, only 14.5% of young Malaysians and 26.2% of their Indonesian counterparts go to the mosque in their spare time. The respondents include those who graduated from religious schools.

It seems that technology is very important for young Indonesians and Malaysians of various ages and educational levels. Cellular phones, computers and other gadgets are their constant companions at work and in their leisure time because they enable them to keep in touch with their friends and entertain them with music and games. Watching television, listening to music and surfing the Internet are common ways to spend their leisure time.

For the respondents, reading books in their spare time is apparently not very popular they are more inclined to read magazines and newspapers. Most university graduates watch television in their spare time, though the percentage that do so is lower compared with respondents with a lower educational level. However, this still shows the popular appeal of television compared with other activities.

Technology widens young people's general knowledge and it comes with style and design that raises young people's wish to own luxury items. Outfits, shoes and accessories designed by famous designers are sought after, as they are status symbols: 60% of Malaysian Muslim youth say that owning designer clothes is important to them.

The majority of young people in both countries says that their financial situation is sound and that they did not experience or participate in violent incidents in their recent past. However, as with young people elsewhere, they still face problems, frustrations and stress. The three leading causes of stress for both Malaysian and Indonesian youth are lack of money, problems in school and at work.

Controlling emotions, especially stress, has taken a mental and physical toll. Confiding to friends is the respondent's favourite way to ease stress. Others choose to just let it go away by itself – interestingly, more Malaysian youths choose this manner of coping (20.9 % to 12.7 %). A smaller number of participants, most of whom are women, choose to confide in their family to deal with their stress.

COMPARATIVE REPORT: MALAYSIA - INDONESIA

FIGURE 10

It is okay to have pre-marital sex

MALAYSIA
INDONESIA

FIGURE 11

How interested would you say you are in politics?

MALAYSIA
INDONESIA
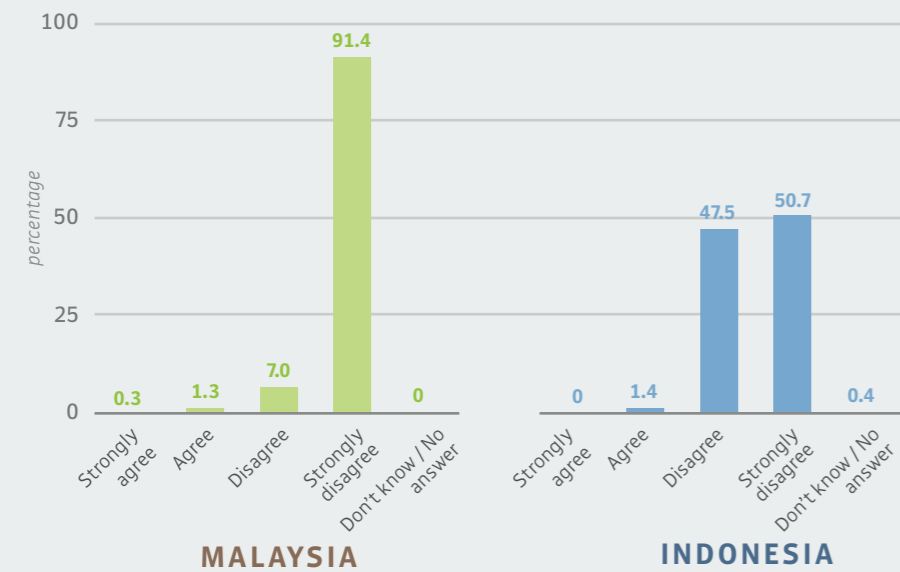
When it comes to values, the respondents generally admitted that belief in God is the most important thing in their lives. Older respondents view piety and carrying out religious obligations as main values, whereas younger respondents view hard work, creativity, and ambition as important values.

When the respondents were asked about sensitive issues such as premarital sex or homosexuality, most of them show a mainstream approach: no pre-marital sex, no gays and lesbians, no bikinis or tank tops.

Similarly, almost all participants reject interfaith marriage and wish for their partners to convert to Islam. The respondents showed interest, knowledge and practical care in a number of global humanitarian issues such as HIV/AIDS, the vanishing of traditional values and cultures, layoffs, and the prospect of losing their jobs without having another source of employment. There is no significant difference between Indonesian and Malaysian respondents in addressing these issues.

Most of the respondents from both Malaysia and Indonesia express their willingness to be involved in various social activities. Nearly all are interested and want to participate in various activities that are held to protect the environment and animals, improve the lives of the handicapped, help poor and neglected elderly people, as well as conserve culture and tradition. When it comes to social activities, most of them prefer to hold group activities, whether in the office, at school or at university.

POLITICS

YOUNG PEOPLE IN INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA ARE NOT PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN POLITICS.

Young people in Indonesia and Malaysia are not particularly interested in politics. While 23% of Indonesian youth admit to some interest in politics, and 27% of them state that they participate in regional elections, hardly any Malaysian Muslim youths (0.8%) would want to become politicians, this profession would in fact be the least of their ambitions and dreams in their lives. Especially Malaysian university students have all the reason for such strong feelings: A 1971 law for universities and institutes of tertiary education prohibits students from participating in politics. The students are instead encouraged to join the National Union of Malaysian Muslim Students (Persatuan Nasional Mahasiswa Muslim Malaysia), which holds motivational courses and tutoring for students, and the Peninsular Malaysia for Malay Students Federation (Federasi Malaysia Semenanjung bagi Mahasiswa Melayu), which helps Malay students succeed in their studies on an individual level. The government's dislike of student participation in politics has resulted in students losing interest in politics..

This general distance from politics in Malaysia is accompanied by some apathy towards elections. About 66.3% of those eligible to vote have never registered to vote, another 20% have never voted, while only 11.6% participated in every election. Women are more likely to exercise their right to vote when compared with men.
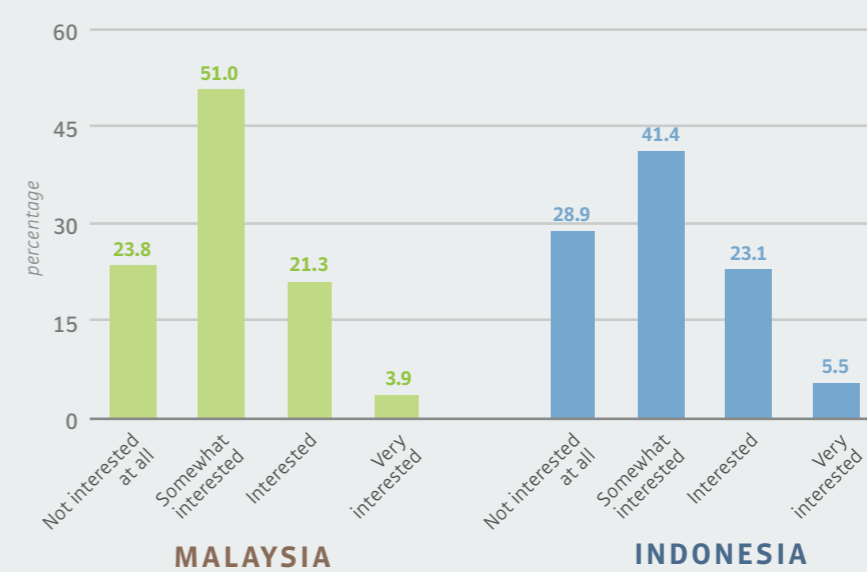
Although there is not so much general interest in politics, young people in Indonesia and Malaysia are aware of the importance of politics and democracy. Most of them state that the people should have the power to change a government that is not to their liking and that opposition parties are essential to a good democracy. They state that good leadership has nothing to do with gender issues, as good women leaders fully deserve support. More women are highly aware of the need to exercise their right to vote, though they have less knowledge about politics and democracy. Awareness of the importance of politics and democracy is highest among older and well-educated respondents.

CONCLUSION

Muslim youths in Indonesia and Malaysia are similar to their counterparts in other countries. They are content, satisfied and optimistic about their lives and their respective countries' futures. Though their social and religious views are still conservative and even fatalistic in some aspects, they have a positive self-image. All in all, they are energetic, creative, hardworking and ambitious, and see the importance of getting a quality education.

When it comes to their lifestyle, these young people rely on technology to communicate and to fill their spare time. They make extensive use of the new media (internet and sms), and they are also inclined to study technical subjects in universities. For entertainment they listen to music (modern and religious) and watch TV and Western movies. They do strive hard to improve their personal well-being and in their effort to seek jobs with good income. Technology has undoubtedly become most influential in the secularization of the young Muslim community and it is dominated by its rational-scientific principles with no intrinsic metaphysical values. Such a technological advancement has provided the Muslim youths with a huge amount of knowledge and information that the parents and grandparents do not possess.

In some aspects this gives the reciprocal impression that overwhelming secular experience and existence has made these Muslim youths technologically savvy. However, they are not becoming de-islamised. They may be superficial in their practice of and knowledge about Islam but they nevertheless perceive themselves as religious even though their overall religious outlook and practice may show more personal orientation.

Most youngsters do not choose to be involved in collective religious or political activities, but they overwhelmingly (92%) express their willingness to engage in some form of social work that relates to environment and animal protection, to helping the disabled, the poor and the aged. They state concern for humanitarian global issues such as HIV/AIDS, international conflicts, natural disasters, as well as the preservation of traditions and local cultures. They prefer to join collective social engagement at the place they study, and working together with peers is high on their list.

In terms of ethics and ethos, the young ones put hard work, ambition and creativity at the top of their list, as opposed to emphasizing religious activities and duties, which they believe were on top of their parent's list and yet they strongly believe in God. It is not surprising therefore that success and failure in life, in their view, is determined by fate. However, they are prepared to learn something new, to have fun in life and push their will through to achieve their ambition.

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As for family orientation, the respondents are strongly devoted to traditional values. They dream about the happiness of raising a family and having children - more than two if possible. Marriage is viewed as a yardstick of happiness. If their spouses-to-be are non-Muslim they want them to convert to Islam. They are divided whether to raise their children with a stronger religious component or to let the children grow up like they did. All in all, they want to be a good parent.

They describe the relationship with their own parents as good, though they may not set aside too much spare time to spend with their families. They also do not confide in their parents in times of stress. The respondents do not view the way they were raised and taught by their parents as ideal, so they want to find their own different way of raising and educating their children in the future.

With regards to the strong religious component of family life to which the majority of youths refer it comes as a surprise that not all of them always carry out their religious obligations as they are meant to: they do not always pray five times a day, fast during the holy month of Ramadan, or recite the al-Qur'an regularly. They admit to only having a little understanding of the verses of the al-Qur'an and they certainly do not head to the mosque in their spare time, but prefer to watch TV, listen to music, or surf the Internet. One could say that extremist attitudes and fundamentalist behaviour is distinctly alien to their religious practice.

Nearly half of them (42.4%) grew up socialized by very religious parents but they turned out to become moderate themselves. Remarkably, more than 60% have not seen or experienced violence in the last 12 months. They heard about the rules for wearing headscarves, Hudud laws, cutting off hands of thieves and caning for Muslims drinking alcohol but none of them mentioned any Quranic verses that would support these rules.

Lastly, in the matter of politics, the respondents are mostly disinterested and avoid any involvement as voters. But this does not mean that they are ignorant of politics and democracy, because they like to learn about political issues, for example, in civic education classes at school and they conduct a moderate participation and involvement in social organizations. They are aware that people have a right to overthrow incompetent rulers.

Unlike their Malaysian counterparts, most young Indonesian Muslims tend to distrust the government and disagree when asked whether religious leaders should play an active role in politics. Overall, the political position adopted by the respondents is a consistent one. They may not be very interested in politics but appreciate good leadership in their country. Of course, they are very aware of what is happening socio-politically and in economic terms. Indeed, they expressed appreciation and satisfaction with regards to the economic growth, political stability, good infrastructures, and satisfactory governance, a list that was topped by 82.4% of the Malaysian respondents in their high satisfaction with the peaceful situation in their own country.

All Muslim youths in Indonesia and Malaysia express a strong pro-Muslim worldview when it comes to international politics. According to them even President Obama of the USA cannot resolve the Muslim problems in the world, such as the Palestinian issue which is very high on their list of concerns. They see the positive side of globalisation as a phenomenon in support of peace and economic prosperity, but they also see the negative impact of globalisation in its destruction of the environment.

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VALUES
DREAMS
IDEALS

MUSLIM YOUTH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

MERDEKA CENTER

Friedrich Naumann
STIFTUNG FÜR DIE FREIHEIT

GOETHE
INSTITUT