Pious Approach to Development: Social Capital
And Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM)

Maszlee Malik and Hamidah Mat

Department of Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh, Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (IRKHS), International Islamic University Malaysia
Quranic Language Department (QLD), CELPAD, International Islamic University Malaysia

Abstract: Culture, religion, social networks and family institutions are proposed by some researchers to have their significant role in the re-constructed concept of development through the emerging framework of ‘social capital’. The social capital-inspired efforts to development transcends beyond growth and materialistic barometer. In the mean time, Islamic revivalism, from the other side of the coin, has managed to produce Islamic movements all around the world to be active actors of this new framework of development. Islamic movements are believed to be significantly contributory towards the development process through their specific ontological-based worldview that in many cases managed to provide welfare and charity to the people beyond the conventional state-based welfare system. Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia as an Islamic movement, during its 22 years of existence (1990-2012) has its considerable amount of contribution to this field. This paper aims to explore the organization’s vision, aim, activities, history and its co-relation to development within the framework of ‘Social Capital’.

Key words: Islamic movement %Pious %Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah %JIM %Da’wah %NGO

INTRODUCTION

Social capital as a post Washington consensus identifies the role that social networks could play in cultivating economic prosperity and sustainable development. Technically, the term social capital refers to social networking and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from connections among individuals as the same way as the physical capital to the properties of individuals. The term becomes popular lately through the works of Putnam, who explains how social cohesion; social behavior and cultural expressions would assist good governance and social equality [1, 2]. Accordingly, social capital also plays a significant role in stimulating solidarity and overcoming market flaws by means of collective actions and the use of community resources [3].

Similarly, the current global resurgent of religion into the life of modern people has its own impact on the discourse of social capital and development. Religious and faith-oriented organizations have been capitalizing the realm of social capital in pursuing their goals and aims, which indirectly result in the development of regions where they are operating within. Likewise, the global political Islamic movements have contributed towards enhancing the practice of democracy and good governance process [4]. Throughout the movements democratic involvement and their voluntary activities in both social and economic sectors, which derive from their religious orientation explain how religion could stimulate individuals to function in the public sphere [5, 6].

Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM) as another actor of social capital proves that non-violence faith-based Islamic movements could play substantial role in nation development. This paper explores Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM) as both an Islamic movement (faith-based organization) and a social capital frontier contribution towards the holistic concept of development. The research will have a descriptive and critical analysis into the organization’s
vision, aim, activities and its history in producing the ‘Social Capital’ towards the crystallization of development based on religious ideals.

**Pertubuhan Islah Malaysia (JIM): The Genesis:** Islam was identified as one of the leading factors of social changes in the Malaysian society beginning from the early 1970s. It was then, where the new religious discourse appeared and became more appealing to the society, especially among university students, hence replacing the previous discourse of nationalism that was once dominated the public sphere of the majority Malay Muslim society. Accordingly, the rise of da’wah movement during the period was believed to be part of the consequent of the emergence of the afore-mentioned new Islamic discourse. This phenomenon was said to be relatively dominated and spearheaded by Muslim students in universities and Islamic-oriented Muslim intellectuals in the society [7].

After the New Economic Plan (NEP) or *Dasar Ekonomi Baru* (DEB) was implemented, the Malaysian government decided to send the Malay students to study abroad as part of its attempt to fortify the socio-economical situation of Malays whom were mostly economically deprived compared to other races. The poor economic condition of the Malays was identified as an essential cause that resulted in the 13 May 1969 riot [8]. Most of the Malay Muslim students were sent to further their studies mainly in the United Kingdom. Consequently, due to their rural and traditional backgrounds, they were pushed to rediscover their religion as a reaction towards the modern life of the western society [9]. This resulted in a sizeable number of these students beginning to find their ways to understand more about Islam and was involved in spreading their belief.

This phenomenon was known as ‘da’wah’ and these students were identified as the pioneers to the existing Islamic and da’wah organizations within the Malaysian students there [10]. Furthermore, as a consequence of the admission of more Malaysian students in following years, these Islamic organizations became substantial in order to assist the new Muslim students to encounter their new life abroad [11]. Among the organizations were Muslim Student Society (MSS), Federal Organization of Student Societies in UK and Eire (FOSIS) and UK Islamic Mission (UKIM). Apart from that, the students also developed their own associations, for example *Kesatuan Melayu United Kingdom* (KMUK), Malaysians Islamic Study Group (MISG) and a magazine called *Suara Al-Islam* [12]. Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) was the most influential Islamic da’wah (propagation) movement in the early 70’s it managed to influence these students whose ideals were to maintain an ‘Islamic lifestyle’ while living abroad [13]. The ABIM thoughts and influence then managed to significantly inspire these students to become the pioneers of the Islamic da’wah (propagation) movements within the Malaysians students [14]. However, as a consequence of the exposure that they encountered, they began to subscribe to a different way of doing the Islamic propagation and activities, which were mainly influenced by the Egyptian and Iraqi Muslim Brotherhoods and the sub-continent Jamaat Islami’s whose leaders and cadres were living in exile in the UK [15, 16].

During the FOSIS Winter Gathering (where most of the leaders of Malaysian Muslim student activists convened every year) in December 1974, these students decided to establish an umbrella organization to unite all the Islamic da’wah organizations under Islamic Representative Council (IRC). However, the idea only became a reality after a year its proposal. In December 1975, IRC was born in *Al-Rahmah* mosque in Liverpool [17]. IRC, however, was not established as an umbrella organization; instead it was set up as another movement along the other existing Malaysian-based Islamic da’wah organizations. IRC adopted a more ‘al-’Ikhwan al-Muslimun’ (Muslim Brotherhood) style of approach in its identity, organizational structure, operations particularly in its regimentation activities [18].

Upon the return of IRC activists from 1975 onwards, they managed to create a kind of fraternity networking among themselves and other Malaysian graduates from other parts of the world that share similar Islamic aspirations [19]. They initially emerged as an unofficial Islamic da’wah movement which was strongly inspired by the extended vision of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB) ideals and the South Asian based Jamaat Islami that envisaged the establishment of Islamic State and Islamic Caliphate commonwealth to implementing Islamic *Shari’ah* law but, within the Malaysia context [20, 21]. ABIM was identified as a preferred platform for some IRC members to continue what they started in the UK [22]. This is because ABIM was believed to have the ability to uphold the Islamic da’wah and lifestyle. However, the honeymoon cooperation and support for ABIM met its end when Anwar Ibrahim, who was then the president of ABIM, joined the ruling party, UMNO [23].
As a result, some IRC activists joined the Islamic party in Malaysia (PAS) subsequent to leaving ABIM. Similar to what they experienced in ABIM, at the beginning, they were gracefully accepted by PAS members. Nevertheless, when one of the IRC members was elected to a high-ranking position in PAS, it created an unspoken resentment among PAS senior members. This finally led to an internal hostility within the party [24]. Due to their unfruitful attempts both in ABIM and PAS, IRC decided to have their own platform, a separate entity as a medium to spread their Islamic ideals to the society. On 27 July 1990, Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM) was established it was seen as a continuation of the IRC’s aspiration [25] (Sungib, 2012). The first elected president was the former IRC spokesperson, Saari Sungib, or widely known as his pen name Abu Urwah [26].

Despite the relative dominance of the former IRC members in establishing JIM, it should be noted that JIM as a new platform for da’wah was not solely an effort of IRC members alone. In essence, JIM was a product of the former IRC activists along with other graduates from Egyptian universities in the 80’s and other similar da’wah activists from the USA Malaysian Muslim students study group (MISG), Malaysian Muslim students da’wah movement in Australia (AUSIS) as well of those from the local universities [27]. All these student groups were united by their similar aspirations and bonded by their adherence to the ideals of Muslim Brotherhood’s reform methods and strategies [28].

**JIM as Social Capital:** The organization initially believed that reform could only happen in a gradual peaceful process through the bottom-up approach. In attaining these changes, JIM, since its earlier days was adherent to its ‘Islam’ (reform) program through the da’wah (propagation) and tarbiyyah (educational) process as the pivotal mechanism [29]. This vision exemplified the ideal of ihsani capital in its constant struggle to bring Muslim society closer to Islam and adopt an Islamic way of life. As the cardinal principle, this archetypal aspiration led the organization to pro-actively engage in an educational-based approach before it was duly operating under the new JIM. Bahari maintains that: “JIM intends to support the efforts of prominence of Islam in society and as the most credible alternative and strong in facing the negative symptoms that occurred among the society” [30].

JIM formulated its activism framework to implicitly and explicitly aim towards developing ‘functioning individuals’ who possessed the quality of salih (pious) and musleh (reformist), then turned to ‘virtuous families’, which later evolved to ‘communities of the pious’ [31]. According to Zaid Kamaruddin (year), the first secretary of the organization, the establishment of JIM was also based on the concept of Jama’ah (collective effort) and the interest of the society who wished to live in conformity with the guidance of al-Quran and al-Sunnah (Prophet Muhammad’s traditions). Kamaruddin states that: “JIM was established as it was confident that it will benefits and contribute to Islam and to the development of the society. The establishment of JIM also was an effort to broaden the range to call people to Islam” [32].

According to JIM leadership, in those years, the path that they chose would contribute significantly to the change of the state system in the higher level in a gradual pace, but with certain result [33, 34]. From the preliminary years of its establishment until 1998, JIM adopted this vision and presented the Homeostasis approach in uplifting Islam via maintaining and strengthening Islamic commitment among the Malay-Muslim leaders [35, 36]. During this period, JIM’s sole concentration was to enhance the internal development of the organization and spread its missionary and educational programs in outreaching the society, particularly the middle class Muslim Malays. JIM’s activities at this time, created what is recognized as the ‘bonding’ type of social capital. At this stage, not only the organization managed to bring its members together to mutually help each other in their missionary activities, but also they were mutually bonded to help each other in their daily earning. Based on the ideal of mutual co-operation, JIM, which most of its members consist of middle-class Malay Muslims worked to build their own welfare mechanism through the connection of their educational cells (usrah) that were in reality the smallest chromosome in the organization’s body [37]. Apart from the internal welfare and charity system available for the members and cadres, it also established some frontiers to include the community as part of its propagation activities to spread their ideals of da’wah [38].

After series of relentless meetings, Anwar Ibrahim who was then the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, managed to convince JIM leaders, whom some of them were his former comrades in ABIM, to bring the organization into the mainstream to work along with Anwar’s ‘government-initiated national Islamization project’, rather than isolating itself at the peripheral level? [39]. Saari Sungib, the then president of JIM asserts that the organization’s friendly engagement with the centre was due to the commitment of the major component of the
ruling party, UMNO towards Islamic agenda for the country [40]. It was known widely that during those years, the Islamic agenda within UMNO was driven by Anwar Ibrahim’s factor [41, 42].

Such a diplomatic approach had opened various doors/opportunities for JIM to enhance their reform works for its members and to the larger society [43]. Nevertheless, the comprehensive human capital production within JIM’s structure and activities despite their missionary works only operated in a semi-exclusive approach based on its motto “Community Building With Islam” (Literally translated from Bahasa Melayu: Bersama Islam Membina Masyarakat). Unfortunately, at this level, the production of reformist individuals in JIM only worked within the radius of its internal mechanism and its circle of influence. Nonetheless, JIM relatively represented an Islamic experiment in accumulating the social capital, which is one of the prime actors in good governance agenda for political and market efficiency at the micro level.

JIM also remained apolitical during its early years of establishment and maintained the da’wah and tarbiyyah (missionary and educational) method in crystallizing the ideal of ‘islah’ (witnesses for human being), which is pertinent to the Ihsani social capital framework. However, its political neutral stance came into its end due to the 1998 mass insurgent known as ‘Reformasi’ (reformation). It created a new horizon in the landscape of JIM’s reform agenda [44, 45]. The reformasi that was triggered primarily by the dismissal of the deputy Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim by the Prime Minister, Mahathir Muhammad. The gross dissatisfaction among the people for the alleged mistreatment of Anwar during his trial and his detention earlier (without trial) had pushed them to the street demanding the release of and a fair trial for Anwar. Sungib insists that JIM’s involvement with the Reformasi movement and its support for Anwar derived solely from the JIM’s principle-centricity instead of personal, individual, or political issue [46]. Apart from the demand for justice for Anwar, the reformasi supporters, whom included JIM members in general also demanded from Mahathir, to step down from his premiership [47]. It was during the reformasi that the pro-reformasi groups were aggressively demanding for the reform in the government by eradicating corruption in governance process, the abolishment of the detention without trial, the ‘internal security act’ (ISA) and the end of the cronism, nepotism and patronage culture in the state administration [48, 49].

Consequently, this ‘reformasi’ phenomenon had significantly pushed JIM to initiate an essential strategic paradigm shift in maximizing their Ihsani social capital activism towards the political discourse in the country. As a result, JIM metamorphosed overnight from an initially non-partisan organization dealing mostly with Islamic propagation activities to become a new pro-active ‘Islamic’ civil society actor that was involved directly with the politics [50, 51]. At this moment, JIM members began to be more inclusive by actively participating in politics. Anwar Ibrahim indirectly or directly had managed to drag JIM and many other Islamic and civil society NGOs to be part of the spearheading element in the people ‘reformasi’ mass movement. During this time, JIM believed that it must fully capitalize the democratic structure and space in the country to fully pursue its ‘islah’ agenda in prescriptive and preventive ways along with its agenda for nation development [52]. JIM also believed that a better Malaysia in the field of social and economy could only be achieved with a corruption-free Malaysia [53].

JIM’s participation in reformasi enshrined the modern notion of participation that had been promoted by many parties as one element of good governance. This ideal is derived completely from the concept of ‘equality of the citizens’. Within such a framework, people’s rights, people’s power, representative government, accountability of the representatives, eradication of dictatorship and tyranny and other principals are mainly the principals and foundations for the participation idea. By doing so, JIM was indirectly contributing towards the governance process to bring development and a better future for the country through its social capital strength. Upon such a discourse, JIM had turned to a wider engagement with other parties with similar aspirations both from the non-Islamists and non-Muslim organizations. The organization discourse changed from mere focus on primordial issues relating to Islam to the political discourse of freedom, human rights, rule of law, accountability, good governance and civil society [54]. This turning point, or what was famously uttered by its former president, Saari Sungib as the ‘leap’ (lonjakan) that led its members to be more inclusive by actively participating directly with politics [55].

Accordingly, since the 1999 election to the latest 2008 election, few JIM leaders and members began directly participating actively with the partisan politic by affiliating themselves with the main opposition parties, namely PAS (Islamic Party) and PKR (National Justice Party) Its then president, Saari Sungib contested in the 1999 election under the banner of the then Parti KeADILan Nasional (KEADILAN) (later turned to Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR)), along with the leader of its women wing, Fuziah Salleh, its first vice-president, Sahri Bahri and others [56].
In the meantime, JIM was actively involved as a watchdog for all the general and bi-elections in Malaysia [57]. In the same vein, JIM continued to promote political awareness among the public through their activities, participation in political lobby and campaign, press statements and the continuous educational process. As a political pressure group, JIM was relentlessly involved in the abolishment of the Internal Security Act (ISA) movement (GMI) [58, 59], a coalition of 88 NGOs against the detention without trial through the Internal security Act (ISA) form on the 30th April 2001 to fight for abolishment of Internal Security Act (ISA) and release of all ISA detainees from Kamunting detention camp. Its believed that JIM’s participation into the political field for good governance purpose was part of their islah agenda. At this stage too, JIM expanded its initial radius of reform agenda into the discourse of (good) governance, which was crucial for the country’s development [60]. JIM worked tremendously hard as a civil society movement in developing good governance culture to be practiced in state administration through their holistic political and social participations [61].

However, in 2004, under its new president, Zaid Kamaruddin, JIM shifted into another new dimension of transformational activism. Based on its ‘principle centeredness’ standard, JIM presented its new vision, “Developing a Malaysian which is fully implementing (inclusive) Shari’ah by 2020” [62]. Its ‘Islah’ approach was then expanded and tailored towards achieving a specific focal target for a designated timeline. In achieving the avowed aim, JIM proposed its ‘Big Picture’ framework aimed to enable the realization of the new vision through ‘public opinion leadership’ (POL). Consequently, JIM presented its ‘Four Year Strategic Plans’ to accomplish the targets by strengthening its internal organization through sharing, mobilization and empowerment and also by strategically projecting its reform method through the occupation of a distant final position in its set of priorities according to the ‘Big Picture’ [63]. JIM identified 15 strategic niches to be fully utilized to attain those goals (politics, youths, Ulama, media, international relations, education, dakwah (Islamic propagation), women, human capital, administration, local governance empowerment, finance, economic capital, welfare and community counselling services) [64].

Ironically, in preparing its new pace to achieve the aforesaid visions, ideologically (but not practically) JIM was moving further backwards by re-emphasizing its original mission towards the establishment of comprehensive Shari’ah doctrines (and without any substantial explanation on what the longed Shari’ah utopia would appear). Such inability to expound intellectually and scientifically the Shari’ah ‘realm’ that the organisation aiming and working to established is supposedly derive from its lack of socio-politico and political economic discourse due to the lack of expertise and scholars from those fields within the organisation cadres and leaders. Akin to other non-violence Ikhwani-oriented Islamic movements, JIM’s cadres and leaders comprise mainly of hard-sciences background professionals and engineers along with the traditional moderate religious scholars as its spiritual guiders. Unlike its main rivals, the Islamic Youth Movement (ABIM) and Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS), less people with social sciences and art background attracted to JIM.

Its president’s 2006 speech audaciously declared JIM’s rejection of the liberal democratic and capitalist ideologies [65]. Furthermore, the movement turning-back to over re-emphasizing internal tarbiyyah mechanisms thus, reflecting its epistemological break for this new chapter. Consequently, JIM’s vehemently rejuvenated its internal educational system to ensure the quality of its member was at the par with soleh wa musleh (pious and reformist) [66]. Nevertheless, conceptually, with such an ideal, from a social capital point of view, JIM was indirectly assisting the nation in developing human capital consisting of self-actualized functioning individuals.

The self-actualized functioning members, who were trained to be the agents of change in crystallizing the ‘big picture’, were being activated and collectively connected through JIM’s district-based local branches (JIM daerah) empowerment policy. The empowerment policy was initiated as part of its modus operandi in disseminating JIM’s aspiration to the larger audience in the community through continuous dakwah (propagation) and tarbiyyah (education) programs. In ensuring the efficiency of the empowered local branches, JIM decided to adopt the KPI (Key Performance Indicators) and KRA (Key result Area) evaluation system. All the empowered branches would be evaluated and audited annually to ensure adherence to the four year plans of JIM in achieving the organization ‘big picture’ [67].

**Jim as Non-State Welfare Provider:** JIM was known too for their continuous effort to provide a new spectrum of education at the formative stage of the younger generation, especially their own children. For instance,
JIM has established chains of schools, kindergartens and childcare centers. JIM’s chain of private schools all over the region, which started with ‘Al-Amin School’ in Gombak, Selangor, has been a landmark for ‘private’ Islamic schools with an integrated curriculum by emphasizing the excellence of their students in both academic and religious subjects. Thus far, there are about 30 private schools established by JIM and managed by Musleh venture Bhd. and have shown great performance despite their independency from the state fund [68, 69]. According to Mohd Nasir, Al-Amin School is an example of JIM education institution, which “successfully attracts the society and takes tawhid as its basic policy in educate generations based on what the Qur’an and Sunnah say, so that pious generation will be birth” [70]. Effectively, from the social capital and civil society point of view, JIM in this sense, has managed to cultivate the ideal of the third sector to enshrine the independency of society in education.

Apart from education, JIM was also directly involved through its women’s wing to campaign for issues concerning women, children and family since its establishment. The Women wing was formally established in 1993. The establishment was approved during Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional Khas on 28 August 1993 in Kuala Berang, Terengganu. According to Salleh, as the first JIM’s Women’s wing leader, “Women in JIM will build a positive image towards the organization”, hence, it was established to play a vital role in achieving JIM’s objectives along with their male counterparts [71]. Similarly, Salleh also insists that the wing has its responsibility to fill in the gaps left by the other non-Islamic and Islamic-oriented women organizations [72]. Siraj believes that the wing has and continues to play a key role in the administration of JIM and could efficiently achieve the aim of the organization, which is to be the voice of the public opinion [73].

Not only it was involved in political issues as a pressure group, but the Women division also educated, empowered and mobilized women and family as one of the most crucial compartments in the society [74]. Siraj believes that “Women in JIM focus on the matters to educate both individual and family, the education of the next generation, consultancy services, as well as advices on community issues” [75] Accordingly, they aspired to be a movement that would be respected by others and were viable to address any problems related to women or otherwise. Siraj stated, “the image of women in JIM can be showed as fundamental which holding Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah as legal sources, contemporary in terms of the approach in the society that is always changing dynamically and professional as well as prestigious in terms of the functioning of the organization according to the local and international standard” [76].

Additionally, JIM’s women heavy concern about the moral decline of teenagers and youth had pushed them forward to actively organize series of awareness programs to deal with issues relating to social problems. Among the programs that they organized were Children’s Club, a course of Islamic understanding, religious classes for factory workers, camping and health talks. Besides, the wing also constantly organized several campaigns internally and outside the organization for the mass to achieve their noble vision for a righteous Malaysian society being the vital instrument in strengthening the family bonds among its members, the wing engaged actively in educating JIM members and the general public by equipping them with Islamic characteristics and family values [77].

In addition, JIM played an effective role in providing social welfare for the society through the youth development programs (KRJ) and half way houses (Raudatus Sakinah and Hidayah Centre). Basically, Raudhatus Sakinah (RS) was established as an institution that provides protection and guidance to the youths who fall victims to the many cases of social problems [78]. RS has been in operation since August 1998 under the Women’s wing. Other than that, RS was registered under the ‘Care Centers Act 1993’ through the department of ‘Development of Society Social Welfare’. The primary objectives of RS are to help the socially problematic youths to re-build their self-confidence, pursue a healthy life according to Islam and be useful to the society. RS is chaired by Najibah Mohd Zin, a legal professor from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and operationally managed by its Managing Director, Rosmawati Zainal. These programs consist of religious teachings, communication-based classes and other technical skills such as computer training, sewing, cooking and crafting. On the other hand, Hidayah Centre (HC) halfway houses provide a temporary shelter for new Muslims who are isolated and abused or abandoned by their family due to their Islamic conversion [79].

Likewise, JIM’s youth development program through the Youth Club (Kelab Remaja JIM), or KRJ, has been a landmark and a compulsory niche for the empowered local branches to enhance JIM’s contribution in youth development work [80]. Through the youth activities
JIM’s branches manage to infiltrate the state funded schools to spread its ideal on building a better community through conscious individuals. Efficiently, such volunteer-oriented effort would lift some burden off the state’s budget that is normally spent for youth works and human capital building. Consequently, these activities allow independence from state funding resulting in a larger space for bigger and independent society for good governance [81].

Due JIM’s ideal vision on the importance of family institution as a key element in building a viable pious society, it emphasized the preservation of family value within its members. In the same way, JIM local district’s empowerment through the usrah (family) cells amongst the members, constantly worked as takÉful (mutual cooperation) clusters to provide proper mechanism for such means. Al-takÉful inspires the value of solidarity and empathy among believers and other members of society. In the realm of social capital, the concept acts as a useful element in providing a fertile ground for a community-based care and benevolence. Muslims with such criteria live with an innate feeling of an obligation to mutually cooperate with other members of society even though it is not legally compulsory. This is where JIM members attempted to crystallize in their internal welfare system through their earlier mentioned smallest cells connecting the members at micro level and through the takÉful system at the larger level among their members across the nation. As far as JIM’s internal mechanism for micro-economic, it had successfully mobilized its business networking and micro-financing system through its cooperation company (Koperasi Islah Malaysia Berhad or KIMB) [82]. However, this co-operation is not really effectively performs in preserving the needs for micro financing unlike other social capital cooperation in other organizations.

Similar to other Islamist movements, JIM was actively involved in global Muslim issues at the national, regional and international scenarios [83]. At the national level, JIM pro-actively responded to any natural disasters (they mean the same) within the country through its internal humanitarian unit called ‘Disaster and Emergency Rescue Unit’ (DERU). While region wise, JIM had been relentlessly contributing towards the development of Muslims in Southeast Asia in the education, religious, welfare and social sectors [84]. Likewise, JIM was also actively involved in the international issues since the eruption of the racial tense in Ambon, Indonesia in the years 1999-2000. Since then, JIM had established the International wing, which focused on the international issues concerning Muslims. JIM’s utmost mobilization could be seen during the post-tsunami periods where they were actively involved in the restructuring of Aceh and Sri Lanka through the humanitarian, educational and economic projects [85]. JIM was also known for its proactive efforts in the Palestinian issues through their national and international lobbies and humanitarian works at refugee camps in Beirut, West Bank and Gaza [86, 87].

With all its existing institutions and reform mechanisms, JIM managed to achieve its new vision, which would contribute towards the practice of good governance at the society level. However, after more than three decades of struggle to uphold the ‘Islahi’ ideals, on 29 December 2012, JIM was officially dissolved by a majority decision of its members in a special general meeting conducted in Kuala Lumpur. Most JIM leaders and members have found a new frontier to continue upholding their Islahi (reform) vision within the approach of social capital in a new organization called ‘Pertubuhan IKRAM Malaysia’ or IKRAM.

CONCLUSION

The shift of the tectonic plate of non-state welfare system in post-modern societies, however, demands a new paradigm for the independent welfare institutions to re-emerge in a new form. As mentioned in the discussion on social capital, new non-state welfare institutions should be developed with proportionate adjustment to make the ideal workable. The social capital actors sometimes act as intermediaries for the public to approach their leaders and sometimes as their voice against the injustice committed by the state and on many occasions as a means to community welfare. Equally, the engagement of Islamic movements as social capital through civil society activities will enhance the participation of Muslims as citizen for countries’ development, specifically in the realm of third sector and voluntary activities. Indirectly, the involvements will benefit the state, the market and the people to ensure the well-being of the society?

Moreover, the movements’ reform agenda will lead to a higher level of independency among the people, hence minimizing the size of the state, which is one of the prerequisites for development. Therefore, a civil society became an important institution to provide welfare for the people across the globe. The nature of such institutions can be described as “the realm of organized social life.
that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state and bound by a legal order or a set of shared rules” [88]. Likewise, the involvement of social capital actors in the political sphere as another actor of governance is also important for the check and balance processes in the countries they are operating, especially in the accountability mechanism.

To summarize, by looking into what JIM went through, it could be categorized under what Collier coins as the ‘civil’ social capital (non-official) that refers to micro cooperation and coordination which govern interactions between individuals as economic agents through trust, solidarity, fraternity, reciprocity and interpersonal networks [89]. Through this type of social capital, transaction and information costs among JIM members could be reduced, thus making physical and human capital for country development more productive. In this spirit, JIM exemplified that religion as both the foundation (source) and framework for civil social capital contributes to the building of networks in society.

Accordingly, after the critical and descriptive assessment on Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM), as both an Islamic movement (faith-based organization) and a social capital frontier, it would be appropriate to summarize that JIM had essentially contributed towards the attainment of good governance hence development of the society since its establishment. Besides its persuasion of attaining Islamic ideals its members adherent to and which the organization raison d’être, the means capitalized to achieve those goals contribute implicitly and explicitly towards the crystallization of good governance through social capital. This can be clearly seen from brief explanation of the movement’s discourse and activities in the previous paragraphs.

Similarly, JIM as social capital proved that Islamic movements could contribute towards good governance and development of the nation through the mechanism of functioning individuals, benevolent society and effective institutions. Throughout their activities, which reflected its independency from the state, JIM succeeded in developing ‘functioning’ individuals, at least among its members and targeted audience. In the same way, their internal welfare networking and the preservation of the family institution and values managed to produce good citizen needed for a developed country. Strong family institutions with Islamic values will ensure social networking among society members to establish the aforementioned concept of social capital. The effective role of families and social networking with the influence of culture, virtue and religious value has been acknowledged by many researchers of development and social capital as another factor for the holistic and comprehensive development [90, 91, 92, 93].

Through the aforementioned way, JIM as social capital contributed proportionately in enhancing and developing the means towards good governance through cultivating the culture of accountability, empowering the civil society, ensuring the rule of law and the calling for the protection and promotion of human rights. Consequently, JIM could be a successful example of how a civil society oriented Islamic movement could contribute towards the development of good governance and democratic culture in a multi-racial, multi-religions and multi-cultural society through the framework of social capital. Such an institutional solution is aimed at the development of individual lives by “focusing on micro dynamics of the society rather than aiming at affecting the financial equilibrium. This also fits into the new development paradigm; which has shifted the focus from macroeconomic development to micro dynamics. This will imply maximization of welfare of the society by extending the financial involvement of the larger society in the dynamic economic involvement” [94]. Correspondingly, within the framework of an enabling minimal state, participants in the civil society will be able to assume responsibility for some aspects of social and economic development, such as the provision of essential services in education and public health.

Despite all the achievements and activisms, JIM, similar to many other social capital organizations and movements are bound to the exclusivity approach. This ‘exclusivity’ has been highlighted by the critics of the social capital approach as an Achilles heel of the concept. The exclusivity of social capital entities could be clearly seen from their double treatments while dealing with their members as compared to their engagement with others in the realm of welfare. While many may perceive that such an approach as ‘social exclusion’ [95], which, in turn leads to what Bourdieu concludes as: “exclusive, often class-based and is interested in social capital primarily for how social resources and “distinctions” lead to exchanges that are both reflective of and affect the constant struggle for domination” [96].

Similarly, Daly & Silver maintain that social capital has always been perceived from its positive consequences rather than its “dark side.” Unlike the advantages of social capital, the concept also has many
dysfunctions, including sectarianism, cronyism, favoritism and inequality [97]. Equally, social capital may lead certain members of the social networking groups to segregate themselves in enclaves or gated communities. Similar to other recruitment-based social capital-inspired Islamic organizations, JIM too was vulnerable to the practice of ‘selective incentives and benefits’. ‘Selective incentives and benefits’ means that an organization exclusively shares its wealth, benefits and incentives only among its members [98] and social capital entities. It may be argued that these organizations do contribute in many ways to the society charity and welfare, however, what they offer to their own members prior to their affiliation is more as part of the recruitment incentives. This has been acknowledged by organizations as part of an act of ‘internal solidarity’ within themselves, which is also viewed as membership privileges similar to other business and fraternity entities.

Furthermore, based on her empirical research, Clark maintains that due to their ‘membership prioritizing scheme’ most Islamic organizations such as Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen, despite their charity works, are in many cases operate in the favor of the middle-class instead of the poor [99]. This is one of the dilemmas faced by JIM in their activities. Having been labeled as elitists since its inception, JIM had attempted to dedicate itself to the society, but it must firstly emphasize the charity, welfare and education of its own members due to the organization’s ikhwani-orientation [100]. However, after its metamorphosis from JIM into ‘IKRAM’, the leadership attempts to make the organization to be more inclusive and acceptable to the masses [101, 102].

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