

Social grouping is a universal phenomenon in human interaction. The fundamental principle refers to the concept that all mankind, men and women, must have boundaries that separate those who are in the group ('in-group') and those who are not ('out-group'). The term 'in-group' or 'out-group' refers to social groupings to which one belongs or does not belong. The differences in the terms range from small groups, face-to-face interactions of family members and peers, to large social groups based on gender, religion, and nationality (Brewer & Miller, 1996).

In tone, the terms also refer to the feeling of belongingness and not merely to the groups' attributes and characteristics in relation to the social psychological milieu (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). Thus, in this study, the most preferred terminology to describe group sense of belongingness can be related to the discussion of the group sense of nationalism and patriotism. Nationalism and patriotism can be referred to as the love of and pride in one's own country and especially the belief that one's country is better than any other country. One's belief on the subject of 'best of' or 'worst of' is a tricky and controversial issue. Thus, the study has no intention of making comparisons based upon these sensitive affairs.

Based upon the arguments above, the authors believe that the 'in-group' and 'out-group' phenomena affect every soul and specifically address the IIUM community, due to its multicultural population. Here, the phenomena will be discussed in terms of their effect on the campus community and not just their characteristics. First, members within the 'in-group' tend to see those in the 'out-group' as not equals. In this particular study, students who are not considered as equal individuals are not only represented by the differences in their ethnicity, culture and upbringing, but other alarming criteria such as stereotypes and labels are also in place. Unfortunately, in most cases, the stereotypes and labels are generally based upon the negative traits or perceived negative traits of the 'out-group' members. In reality, these negative traits or perceived negative traits may exist in only a few members of the 'out-group', or they may not occur at all within the 'out-group'.

Second, members of the 'out-group' are generally perceived as a threat, and the presence of such a threat tends to increase solidarity and cohesion within the 'in-group'. Further, conflicts caused by the perceived threat of the 'out-group' heightens loyalty of members of the 'in-group', which contributes to the maintenance of group boundaries. These phenomena gyrate equally for the 'out-group'. In this study, students who originate from the Balkan countries such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Union of Montenegro and Serbia compose the 'out-group', while all the other students at the campus compose the 'in-group'.

The Balkan students tend to see one another as individuals from the same continent but sharing different cultures, customs and ethnic backgrounds. For example, Albanians are the people of the Illyrian origin, who inherited different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to the other Balkans, such as Bosnians, Croatsians, Montenegrins and Serbians who inherited ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the Slavs and the Turks. These differences within the 'out-group' make it more complex to comprehend. On the other hand, the 'in-group' cannot easily identify

INTEGRATION AND INTERNALISATION IN THE INTER-GROUP RELATIONS IN INSTITUTIONS OF TERTIARY EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

*Nik Ahmad Hisham Ismail,
Nik Suryani Nik Abdul Rahman,
Mohd Sahari Nordin &
Ahmad Marzuki Hj Zainuddin*

Introduction

The uniqueness of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) in terms of its diversity in the students' population differentiates itself from any other public universities in Malaysia. Students on the IIUM campus come from different parts of the world, such as Asia, Europe, Africa and North America. On the surface, the student relations are normal. They interact and communicate with one another either in the class or out of the class. They are involved in activities such as group work, group discussions, co-curricular activities and other related academic and non-academic tasks. They are seen to be in harmony in the campus life and yet they are not. In fact, most of the students are divided into several social groups that are referred to as 'in-group' and 'out-group' in the social psychology paradigm.

Allah says in the Qur'ân:

Men, We have created you from a male and a female and divided you into nations and tribes that you might get to know one another.

The noblest of you in Allah's sight is the most righteous of you.

Allah is Wise and All-Knowing. (49:13)

In relation to the verse above, it is the commitment of IIUM to promote and develop educational programmes and learning environments that are conducive to inter-group relations. This study hopes to clarify the nature of social grouping among students and its effects on the inter-group relations at the IIUM campus. Keywords in the study are (1) social grouping (2) inter-group relation (3) stereotyping and (4) continentalism (inclusive of patriotism and nationalism).

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these differences, and as a result, in the eyes of the 'in-group' the Balkans students are 'Mat Salleh' who share similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Further, due to the stereotypes existing in the campus community, students from either group perceive each other in a threatening manner. The study explores the possible existence of the perceived 'superiority' and 'inferiority' threats, especially in terms of academic qualifications among the campus community. Even though both groups agreed that university qualifications would offer them better opportunities in the future, at the same time, both groups also felt that they were being deprived of certain courses at the campus. They perceived that the merit of the courses offered boils down to their applicability and practicality, in relation to the variety of future career opportunities. Thus, some courses that both groups undertake can be seen as useless, impractical and easy when compared to the other courses. For example, what will a person who is majoring in political science do with the degree after graduation or how fortunate will those students who are majoring in engineering be? Such questions are almost always asked by the 'in-group' members, about 'out-group' students even though many of the 'in-group' students opt for the same courses. Thus labels such lazy, unmotivated, unfocused, unfortunate and waste of resources are often applied to the 'out-group' students, labels that are demeaning.

Applying the second principle of the social grouping phenomenon, it is observed that in the presence of the 'in-group', the Balkan students tend to galvanize loyalty to continental spirits among themselves. First, the Balkan students, who may not otherwise be friends, tend to band together in foreign environments. For example, if two Balkan students were to be in a degree program or course together or in a 'threatening' environment, they are more likely to sit together, work together and become friends than if they were in a 'non-threatening' environment. This is due to the fact that in the 'threatening' environment they share something in common; at the very least the European identity that they do not share with anybody else in the class.

Next, while many Balkan students often complain about the difficulty, they become very defensive of the 'out-group' when challenged by the 'in-group'. For example, many students tend to stereotype the Balkan students as being 'easy' or 'slack-off' in their manners. In such cases, the Balkan students will defend and support their 'comrades' who are under attack. In this instance, the presence of the 'in-group' strengthens the loyalty and solidarity of the Balkan students.

These principles underlying the dynamics of all groups serve to strengthen the boundaries between the in-group and out-group. Again, as mentioned earlier, the 'in-group' and 'out-group' phenomena and the socio-psychological principles underpinning them are universal and the authors must make it clear that the phenomena in discussion are not targeted to any particular group. Their concern is that the problems may jeopardize the aspirations and vision of the university for the integration of the Muslim nations.

Another dimension of the study is to look at the nature of continentalism among the Balkan students, in particular 'patriotism' and 'nationalism'. Based on the *Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary* (1991), the term 'nationalism' comes from the root word 'nation' which means a community of people mainly common in descent, history, language, culture, tradition, etc. forming a state or inhabiting a territory.

Birch (1989) claims that the term nationalism is always misused by politicians, journalists and members of the general public. Most of the time, nationalism refers to loyalty to the state, for which the proper term should be patriotism. Again, to some extent nationalism is to reflect one's own culture and civilization as superior to all others, for which the proper usage should be chauvinism. Birch then defines nationalism as a political doctrine about an organization of political nature. Furthermore, Kohn (1982) agrees that the fundamental existence of nationalism lies within a good and just government. Both authors agree, to some extent, that principles and feelings of patriotism can override one's normal social and psychological composition.

From the Islamic point of view, nationalism can be understood in the definition of '*ashabiyyah*', connoting the concept of strong attachment which holds several individuals together, or closely united on the basis of similar interests or opinions. There are strong arguments against the practice of '*ashabiyyah*' especially as it violates Muslim unity and brotherhood (*ukhuwwah*). There are also arguments by Muslim scholars who promote '*ashabiyyah*' in times of war and when calamities burden the Muslim *ummah*. The authors wish to clarify that the purpose of the paper is not to seriously indulge in the discussion of the concept, but to highlight the understanding of the social groupings toward '*ashabiyyah*' especially with regard to the inter-group relations phenomena.

The concept of inter-group relations can well be understood within the social-psychological paradigm. Scott and Schwartz (2000) elaborate the relationship as the study of an individual in terms of his or her thoughts, behaviours, emotions, and perceptions in the context of a group, not as an individual. Wilson (1999) believes that one could gain tremendously from the inter-group relations and culture in terms of personal growth, cooperative activities, problem solving, counselling and countless other tasks. In relation to these principles, the researcher would predict that the continental spirits, such as the spirit of belongingness, nationalism, and patriotism, could be some of the major determinants or factors for inter-group relations between Balkan students and other students at the IUUM.

Hogg and Abrams (1990) define feelings of nationalism as part of the inter-group behaviour that will determine the way one looks or reacts to other members within a social grouping. Brewer and Miller (1996) further explain that in general there are two types of response namely pro-social and anti-social behaviour. Feelings, beliefs and interpersonal behaviour tend to be positive within the members of the same group. In addition, the pro-social behaviour, such as help and cooperation, are more likely to be extended within the 'in-group', compared to the 'out-group'. Stereotyping also occurs within the inter-group behaviours. The 'in-ness' and 'out-ness' of individuals can be based on factors as mentioned before. On another perspective, Napier and Gershenfeld (1989) categorize individuals based on their perceptions, Napier and Gershenfeld (1989) categorize individuals views can be translated into the relevant concepts of the paper especially in the discussion of inter-group relations and aspects of concern in the study.

Method

The method of data collection for this research was a case study. The purpose of the study was both exploratory and descriptive. As far as the exploratory aspects are concerned, the researcher tried to obtain some feelings and understandings of what is happening in the real inter-group circumstances. Little was known about the inter-group relations between the Balkan and other students at the IIUM campus. The study also intends to describe some of the socio-psychological phenomena that exist in the 'in-group' and 'out-group'. Here, the researchers had to maintain a degree of flexibility, so as to allow the discovery of new insights during the interpretation of the data.

The study employed two methods of data collection, namely interviews and document analysis. The interviews were carried out for a period of six months. In the early stage of the study, there were thirty-three students involved. The number dwindled to twenty-four students and finally only thirteen students completed the whole interview sessions. During the sessions, the researcher would ask the participants on the themes mentioned earlier. Probes were used to get the participants to elaborate on their responses. Such tactics were useful when seeking personal responses because the responses were interpretive in nature. These interviews enabled the researcher to explore the perceptions, understandings and worldviews of the participants in this study. Each participant was independently interviewed on separate sessions so that none of the participants would influence the others in their responses. The researcher had to ensure that all the participants would be comfortable and would enjoy the sessions, so they would not get wearied too quickly. For the purpose of validation, the draft of the study was given back to a few participants and upon their comments and suggestions, amendments were made to satisfy the criterions set by the researcher.

The documentary evidence was taken from the secondary and tertiary sources from the literature reviews. The evidence was then used to compare and verify the findings from the research. Hence, the purpose of the study is to gain precise knowledge and information concerning the problem of inter-group relations at the IIUM campus. It is hoped that this study will describe, explore and clarify the two important phenomena, namely continentalism and inter-group relations in a unique environment like the IIUM. This study also aims to explore possible avenues to strengthen the spirit of brotherhood (*ukhuwwah*) amongst the campus population.

Furthermore, it is hoped that the study will benefit several parties at the IIUM. First, this study can benefit the Student Affairs Division (STAD) especially *Mahallat* and Leadership Unit in organizing activities that will enhance inter-group relations. Second, the study can provide guidelines for social psychologists and cross-cultural psychologists to understand the existing phenomena, especially in the Muslim environment. Third, the study can also help teachers, students and administrators to understand the similarities and differences of individuals in the campus. Furthermore, it is also hoped that further study can be done to study the phenomena within the context of inter-group relations of other students at the IIUM.

Procedure

Each participant was interviewed six times. The duration of each interview ranged from 45 to 80 minutes. The participants were briefed on every session of the objectives of the interview. The sessions were audio recorded. The interview sessions were divided into few main themes such as family and personal background, country background, Europe, Muslim *ummah*, Islamic teachings and principles, nationalism, patriotism, *‘asabiyyah*, Malaysian society, and perceptions of one's wellbeing. The open unstructured interview was adopted so as to capture the participants' worldviews and understanding of experiences, with minimal interviewer bias. Items of the interview were designed and validated by colleagues at the Centre for Education and Human Development, IIUM and through in-depth search and study of materials in the form of books, journals and articles. Participants were given the liberty not to answer the questions if they found them to be inappropriate and disturbing.

Results

Demographic Variables

The study involved thirteen students from the Balkan states. There were six students from the Republic of Albania, five students from the Bosnia and Herzegovina, one student from the Republic of Croatia and one student from the Union of Serbia and Montenegro. Eight students were male and five were female. The students were undergraduates from the Kulliyah of Engineering, the Kulliyah of Revealed Knowledge and Human Science (IRKHS) and the Kulliyah of Economics except for one student who is in the Ph.D. programme at the Kulliyah of IRKHS. Nine students were at the age of eighteen to twenty-two years and four students were at the age of twenty-three to twenty-eight years.

Almost all of the students were born before the downfall of the Communist system in their respective countries and a few of them were teenagers during the wars in the Balkan regions. The majority of the students came from the agriculture-based professions and sub-professional families and only one student came from the white-collar professional family. The majority of the students had very limited exposure to the English language and the Qur'anic language when they were first accepted to the IIUM. Similarly, the majority of them have had very limited exposure to and knowledge about Islam before joining the programmes at the university.

Perceptions toward Islam

All of the students expressed their strong belief in Islam. Even though they had different opinions on certain aspects and issues in the teachings of Islam, they had all shown to be devoted to the Islamic principles. Islam was no longer seen as part of their culture and heritage, as they were made to believe during the Communist regime, but had become *al-din* to the majority of the students. The students also believed that Islam, due to its bipolar unity (between the material and the spiritual), has become the new understanding and belief of many in the region. Today, many

Balkans believe that Islam is the only way to unite Muslims in the region. Yet, in some parts of the region, Muslims still practise the teachings of Islam secretly due to the very strict rules and orders of the governments. This was also true for all religions in the region. Fortunately, as felt by the students, the opportunities to take up the challenges to learn about the religion are abundant in Malaysia.

The students assert that the effects of separation between religions and states, as the fundamental requirement of secularism, are still observable in the Balkan states. Thus, one finds certain quarters of the society in the Balkan states that are still practising the normal customs and upholding the values of the communist era. These groups seem to be unfriendly to those who are practising the religion openly, though they will not harm them. Those who practise Islam, or even try to practise it, will be considered as backward or will be ostracized by the society. The teachings of Islam have been available only in the *madrasahs* (traditional Islamic schools) and the mosques. The old folks and children have been the two majority groups to visit these places in order to learn the basic teachings of Islam. Unfortunately, it is still common even today to find people consuming alcohol and lacking in the understanding of the Islamic teachings in many places, especially in the urban areas.

According to the students, even though there have been many efforts to bring back people to the teachings of Islam, the *da'wah* methods taken up by some Muslims, mostly from the Middle-Eastern countries, have been disliked. Some of these people have taken very strict and punitive approaches to Islam. These *da'is* usually invited people to the mosques and preached in harsh ways, for example, imposing the rules of *halāl* and *harām*, practised by Muslims within a rigid Muslim circle. They imposed the wearing of beard on men and on women the *niqāb*. Unfortunately, in many cases these *da'is* had very shallow knowledge in these matters. They often adopted practices that were not from the teachings of Islam. For example, some of these *da'is* took the local women as their wives but for a temporary period and left the woman if they had to leave the region. The worst scenario would occur when they were not willing to learn and communicate in the language of the people.

The Balkan students feel that Islam was being imposed on them by these *da'is* in a way that was not fit and fair to their inquisitive and open mind. In contrast, the approaches undertaken by the Christian missionaries were totally different. These missionaries would visit houses and would invite the people to church in a more presentable manner. They would create rapport and socialize with the people and would learn the history and cultures of the locals. In fact, they were very fluent and eloquent in the local languages as well. The willingness to listen, understand, discuss and to offer some economic assistance to the locals were more acceptable to and welcomed by the Balkans.

The Balkan students believe that moral values such as honesty, trustworthiness, and sincerity are the good morals that one needs to keep throughout his or her life. For the Balkans, to practise religion is a process of change during which a person aims to achieve the highest morals and ethical values in life.

When the Balkan students came to IIUM for the first time, they were surprised to see that in Malaysia everybody seems to practise Islam. The only thing that they regretted was that a practising Muslim in Malaysia was not necessarily a

true Muslim, like those in the Balkan region. The difference in the conceptions of being a 'pious' man creates some misunderstanding between the two groups. In Malaysia, even the 'pious' person could be someone who tends to mix good deeds with some bad influences and these are quite obvious to the Balkan students.

In some cases, the Balkan students were initially amazed at the behaviour of the Malaysian students, who seem to be quick in judging individuals based upon their practices of Islam, especially the *ṣalāh*. Despite this, the Balkan students would be seen as not practising the Islamic teachings, if they were found to mingle freely in the open, to dress not according to the locals, to ask 'non-Islamic' questions in class and to behave differently to the locals.

The Balkan students believe that the local students perceive them in terms of their physical appearance and behaviour: Europeans rather than the Muslim Europeans. The locals' perceptions are more based on the 'already made picture' of the Europeans, rather than the subjects of their observations. On the other hand, the Balkan students put emphasis on the knowledge and understanding of the teachings of Islam that could lead to the better internalization of the teachings. These are the major differences between the two groups. As a consequence, the Balkan students are easily labelled and most of the time, the local students shun the Balkans.

The differences in the appearance, manners, and behaviour are the obvious features that the locals might use to conclude, perhaps wrongly, that most of the Balkan students are 'non-Islamic' or '*kurang Islamik*'. The Balkans strongly believe that what is built in spiritually in oneself is more important than what one knows or 'sort of knows' or 'pretends to know' about the Islamic teachings in the public. This was proven through some unfortunate events where some of the locals could not explain the basic teachings of Islam when inquired by the Balkan students.

The Balkans do not believe in judging a person from his or her external appearances; they prefer to judge character on the basis of what has been internalized. This can be explained through the historical events of the Islamisation process of the Balkan region. In the Balkan states, Islam came through the mode of knowledge. Since the early Islamic era, the people were practising Islam because of their inquisitive culture—the culture of wanting to know 'why' and 'how', not just 'what'. They wanted to know why they were asked to perform certain deeds and practices in Islam. This tradition of the internalization of the teachings of Islam was congruent with the Western culture that puts emphasis on the knowledge and knowing with certainty before embarking on actions.

Sometimes this culture of inquisitiveness and knowledge causes problems for the Balkan students. They find that in many cases the liberty of asking the question, 'why', of the Malaysians whether students, lecturers or administrators of the university, is almost non-existent. The dilemma of being immersed in a different culture and the adaptation and assimilation to a new environment prove to be major obstacles in the integration of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds in the campus. IIUM's own population is slowly violating the freedom of speech which could be one of its major assets.

The families of the Balkans are also divided into those who practise Islam and those who only believe in Islam. In some cases, the people who believe in Islam practise its values and teachings as customs and local heritage, only to be

different to those who practise the values and teachings of the non-Muslims. But many students assert that since the 'open policies' after the fall of the Communist regime in the Balkan states, things have changed for the better especially for the Muslims in the Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro. There are cases where students from the IIUM campus influence their parents when they visit their home countries during the university break. The parents find that the changes that their sons and daughters bring from Malaysia are the true teachings of Islam. Here, students seem to have acted as a catalyst for change, especially in the society where Islam is separated from people's daily lives. However, there are also cases where parents find it difficult to accept the changes in their children. Due to the global incidents of terrorism, some Albanian newspapers have gone as far as writing that the IIUM can be considered to be one of the centres for these activities.

The Balkans also believe that safeguarding the teachings of Islam is the highest spiritual action in Islam. They are willing to fight and die for Islam. These deeds could be seen in many incidents in the Balkan wars. The Muslims were *shuhada'* (martyrs) for the cause of Islam in the Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. The students believe that many Balkans learnt and became aware of the teachings of Islam during the war. The impacts of the war were tremendous, especially in uniting the people and the reawakening of Islamic spirits among the Muslims in the region. The war brought them closer to the teachings of Islam and strengthened the Islamic brotherhood among themselves. The unification of the Bosnian Muslims and Albanians in Kosovo under the flag of Islam was the positive consequence of the war.

The Balkan students also perceive Islam as a religion that encompasses flexibility and applicability to the modern Muslim society. The students think that the positive presentation of Islam is well preserved in the Muslim Malaysian society. The majority of the Muslims in Malaysia regard Islam in the manner that is more 'acceptable' and 'tolerable' to the world community. This is what they consider to be the 'true' teachings of Islam, but they are also aware of the aspects of 'acceptability' and 'tolerability' within the Islamic principles.

Perceptions toward Europe

Many Balkans prefer to be addressed as Muslims first, before their ethnicities. This is to differentiate themselves from the rest of the European people, the majority of whom are Christians. The students point out that the genesis of ethno-nationalism and ethnic-cleansing of the 1990's never existed in the Balkan region. On the other hand, the atrocities on the Balkan Muslims were actually due to the differences of the religions of the people in the region. This differentiation is a neo-racist phenomenon that excludes race and ethnicity in its origin.

The Balkan students believe that Europe is one of the world's superpowers. Today, Europe is moving very fast in terms of her unification. Under the European Union flag, many countries in the continent could have benefited from the restructuring of the economic, social and to some extent, political system. However, the students assert that the developed Europe is not in hand to hand with her civilization. To some extent, the civilization of Europe is still lagging, compared to her development. Some aspects of the civilized society in Europe are

still at the barbaric stage. For example, the value system of the individual, family and society have always been and are evolving around the barbaric traditions. In many modern societies, civilization is considered to be the values and cultures of the society. This is more crucial and important for the society than the material development.

According to the students, the clashes of interest between development and civilization within the civilized European society are the obvious evidence of hatred and revenge in the Western society. The clashes of the ethnic groups in the Balkan region are basically the result of the clashes of interests in civilization rather than the clashes in the development. Europe, as portrayed earlier, is united in terms of her development, for example, in politics, economics and social justice, but in terms of civilization, there is a big difference between the Balkan states and other parts of the European continent. The clashes could be well established in terms of the countries that inherited the Islamic civilization and those that inherited the Christian civilization. This is the primary factor dividing the Europeans. The animosity and enmity revolve around the two civilizations within the European continent.

Racism is less obvious in the European society due to the fact that the Balkans originate from the same race and ethnic groups. Europeans are nationalists, when it comes to the differences of national identity that exist in the society. Europeans are also divided in terms of their ideologies and values in the Western and the Eastern blocks. This is the secondary factor for the divided Europe. The eastern European society that was influenced by the communist ideology for several decades is facing some difficulties in accepting some of the new values of democracy and capitalism in the new Europe.

On another note, the students believe that the value system that is based upon the communal and state ownership is slowly being phased out and replaced with entrepreneurship and a *laissez-faire* system, yet the value system inherited from the communist era is still adhered to by many of the Balkans today. Life is still quite difficult and every day is still considered as a struggle for survival. The Balkan students are sensitive to the hardship that they have been through, and at the same time, treasure the benefits and privileges of the other Europeans. These are the basic values embedded internally in the Balkan students.

The clashes of values between the old regime and the new democratic frontier in the Balkan students' motherland have brought about some changes in their worldviews and personal development. Thus, values such as thankfulness and gratefulness are higher amongst the Balkans. The different scenario that they have been experiencing with other students, especially Malaysians, make them aware of the difficulties of their own countries, that will never be understood by the local students. This is a major obstacle in their socialization process with the locals who have different life styles.

According to the Balkan students, the Malaysians are spoiled and pampered by the bounties and opportunities. For the Balkans, due to their embedded values of hardship, thankfulness and gratefulness, the attitudes amongst the local students are unacceptable. There is the possibility that some Balkan students could be driven away by the new environment but the majority still uphold the values of their societies. Some of these Balkan students are caught under the snare of bad influences, but this could be said to be the norms for any individual who had the

first chance to be away from his or her family and society. Almost all of them think of going back to their motherland upon graduation. However, they believe that the values that they have learnt in Malaysia could not be implemented fully in their own environment.

The fact that Malaysian students experienced the same cultural shock when they were abroad, shows that what the Balkan students are experiencing today is quite similar and common in nature for all foreign students abroad. In fact, the experiences of the Balkan students in Malaysia are more discrete and contained, compared to the experiences of the Malaysian students abroad. This is due to the nature of the majority of Malaysian society who practise Islam and preserve the Asian values and cultures. The rules and regulations of the campus stand as a reminder to any wrong doings amongst the students.

The majority of the Balkans come from poor families. Thus, the situation that they experience in Malaysia does not allow them to disregard the values of their societies. The humanistic values which are instinctive of their wellbeing makes them aware of the students' problems and difficulties. In some cases, they are willing to share their 'little fortune' with other students who were facing the same difficulties. These values might be minute, but the sacrifice and the humanistic comprehension of the Balkans are a great achievement.

The students from the Balkan region believe that other important aspects that could be at stake for inter-group relations are the values of liberty, freedom and also democratic practices in Malaysia. Moreover, the idea and the practice of these values, especially at the microscopic level in the campus were initially an eye opener for the Balkan students.

The democracy and liberty that the Balkans are exposed to since the downfall of the communist system have been more dynamic and extensive. The so-called 'guided democracy' practised in the campus is one of the obstacles which they feel restrict their freedom of expression and speech, that they have begun to experience in their own countries. This misconception of the ideology could be small, but the gap between the groups leads to an immense impact on the inter-group relations.

Perceptions toward statehood

Nationalism exists whenever attachment and loyalty to the nation overrides other attachments and loyalties. For example, during the time of the former Yugoslavia, the ideas of brotherhood and unity were highest on the agenda of the communist regime. However, nationalism based upon ethnic-religious identity that existed on a microscopic scale—the state and community level—had been suppressed. Like many developing nations, priority was given to unity and integration in the development plan.

In the Malaysian case, the term 'unity' was perceived differently by different groups. Thus, superficiality of the unity was quite obvious in times of difficulties. Examples are the tragedy of May 13 1969, the exodus of Malaysians to other developed countries in the 1980's and the recent resistance of some quarters to the concept of '*sekolah wawasan*' (vision schools) in the 1990's. All these events raised questions in the minds of the Balkan students about the authenticity and genuine intentions of some quarters in Malaysia about unity and integration.

According to their humble understanding of Malaysian politics, they see the unity that exists among the Malaysians is due to the strong and firm government policies in bringing political stability to the country, and abolishing absolute poverty which results in the economic advancement of the country.

For many Bosnians, Croatians, and Albanians, national symbols, such as the national flag, is a symbol of sacrifice and devotion to their country. The primary cause for this lies in the fact the Bosnian people paid a high price for their independence and are aware that, in order to be respected by others one has to have a country. When they came to IIUM, they found that this is not the case in Malaysia. Malaysians are less enthusiastic about their national flag. They only display their loyalty to the country by flying the national flag during the national month of celebration and even so, only after they have been asked by the government. Furthermore, they argue that the national day has always been a day for family outing for many Malaysians.

In many incidents, Malaysians are considered to be less patriotic and nationalist and devoted to their own country. For the Balkans, Malaysians are difficult to approach and never open in discussing some of the important issues for unity. However, being confronted with many Malaysians outside the campus, who are more prone to discussion, they find that Malaysians, in general, are well informed about the political sentiments and news. They also believe that the barriers for unity could be in the forms of language, culture and other means of communication. The relationship among the races in Malaysia also depends upon the sentiments and the students found this to be dangerous and vulnerable for unity and integration.

Another important observation is the notion of viability of the nation-state in a dispersed territory. Minority groups and political immaturity were a big phenomenon in the 1980's. This highlights the fact that, no matter what the specific cultural content that defines the nationhood in a particular nation-state, the requirement of the undivided and viable territorial sovereignty will always produce national minorities within that state. This was proven in many cases involving the dominant and minority groups in the developing world. For example, the ethnic-religious sentiments arose in former Yugoslavia in the mid 1980's, whereby the Serbs wanted to control and dominate the whole of Yugoslavia. This caused political instability that resulted in the disintegration of the country in the beginning of the 1990's. Under such conditions, the destiny of the minorities was at stake. The Bosnians and Croatians opposed the idea. In order to mobilize the Serbs, their leaders started to inspire the sentiment of nationalism. Therefore the rise of nationalism among the Serbs was the primary cause of the war, while nationalism among the minorities came only as a result of the war.

On the other hand, very strong group sentiments are obvious among Malaysian students on the campus. The identification of group members can be categorised by state and political affiliation. There are two major groups identified by states, such as students from the state of Kedah and Kelantan. The other identification can be their affiliation to political parties, namely the pro-government and opposition party. Even though the groupings do not overrun the Malaysian students, the Balkan students notice that Malaysian students prefer to be identified by these groupings. The Balkan students believe that even the local students might not know the consequences and the implications of affiliation and

this could be seen as threats to the national interest. In such cases, political affiliation is not due to their political awareness and consciousness but due to their hatred and dislike towards each other. According to the Balkan students, when they inquired about the political parties, most of the locals lacked knowledge on the history, establishment, objectives and agendas of the parties. All in all, they supported the parties blindly.

The spirits of patriotism and nationalism are well illustrated among the minority groups in the campus. Due to their almost similar identity and culture, the Balkans prefer to be within their groups, rather than mixing with other groups. They would rather be together in the classes, canteens and other public places. This is common in the phenomena of the 'in-group' and 'out-group'. The Balkan students deny the reason that their wanting to be together is the result of their egoistic nature and their pride of their European identity and its 'superiority'. They honour nationalism and patriotism as the pride and the mechanism for future development of their countries.

Perceptions toward self-concept

The Balkan students believe that students need to change their views of the existing climate in the campus. Even though they inherit the Islamic culture and traditions, there are many variables which make them very unique individuals. For example, the Balkans prefer to be identified as 'practical' Muslims but they prefer to call the locals 'fundamentalist'. The practice of labelling exists in any multicultural environment in different forms. The most profound conviction between the groups can be identified in terms of their belief that they shall not offend others' cultures.

The problems arise in the inter-group relations when a group does not care about other cultures which cover different variables such as country, family, upbringing, education, personal and shared experiences. The Balkan students also believe that respect among the different cultures is almost non-existent on the campus. This might be due to the fact that almost all the students lack information about the different cultures, especially those of the local cultures. They worry about the stereotyping that co-exists with the perceptions of local students of the Europeans.

Due to the restrictions on certain aspects of culture and the philosophy of the university, international students have to find avenues in order to familiarize themselves with some of the local cultures. However, there are cases when university students, especially the international students, are found in places that are considered 'sinful' by the authorities. In some cases, students were asked to show their student identification cards, even though they were at these places to eat or to meet their friends. The Balkan students believe that these actions of policing and intrusions are quite similar to their own experiences and typical of the undemocratic institutions that exist in the third world countries. The Balkan students argue that by opening up and liberalizing the campus regulations and by integrating more of the local and international cultures, the gap and misunderstanding that exist could be removed.

Lack of communication creates prejudice among the groups. The Malaysian students would rather be among themselves than the international groups. This is

well evidenced in public places like the canteens, libraries and mosques. There seems to be inadequate interactions between the two groups. Thus the Balkan students feel that the vision of the campus for integration has not been realized and is far from attainable. In fact, in many instances, the campus society tends to push Islamic values and goals aside and does not give enough attention on how to strengthen Muslim brotherhood among the students and the university staff.

The Balkan students reject the notion that they have a superiority complex. The majority of them believe that a superiority complex arises when someone looks down at someone else's culture. They think this phenomenon is more related to the need of protecting their culture and it ought not to be used as a means of sabotaging the unity of the different cultures on the campus. It is more related to the need to protect one's identity and culture than the suppression of others. They also believe that local students lack self-confidence, especially when it comes to communication and interaction. In some instances, it was rather unfortunate to learn from the Balkan students that some lecturers made excuses to use Bahasa Melayu in the class. This action discouraged international students from participating and even attending classes. The Balkan students reported that there were many instances where most of the administrative staff would also prefer to use Bahasa Melayu over English when dealing with students in their daily chores. Moreover, the Balkan students also regard the Malaysian students as being less competent in English, especially when expressing their thoughts.

The attitudes of the lecturers are also quite disturbing, for example regarding the Balkan students who are not willing to learn and to participate or to make themselves more 'Islamic', compared to the other students in the campus. Such prejudices and discriminatory remarks are not supposed to be the culture and practice of the lecturers of an international university. In general, lecturers are aware of the fact that the majority of the students from the Balkans lack knowledge in the Islamic teachings. Therefore, it has been one of the missions of the university to train these students to be more knowledgeable in the Islamic teachings and values and become *dā'īs* when they go back to their countries.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated the inter-group relations amongst Balkan students at the International Islamic University Malaysia focusing on the phenomenon based upon the characteristics and effects of the social grouping, stereotyping, labelling, and continentalism (inclusive of patriotism and nationalism). The worldviews of the Balkan students towards selected themes can be summarized as follows:

First, the Balkan students view Islam as the only way to unite the Muslims in the region. They also express a strong devotion to and belief in the religion. The students propose an open, heart to heart approach for *dā'wah*, and urge others to take into account the language, the inquisitive and open mind of the people in the region. The misconceptions of the 'pious' personality, ethical and moral values of the *dā'īs* should be clear to both the 'in-group' and the 'out-group'.

Second, the Balkan students prefer to be addressed as Muslims in order to differentiate themselves from the majority of the non-Muslims in Europe. They agree that the hatred and animosity within the Balkan region in particular, and the European continent in general was due to the clashes of interest in the civilization

and not so much due to the development. The values that were triggered by these clashes brought about the changes in their personalities and socialization and thus this was a major challenge when confronted with a new environment, i.e. Malaysia. The values such as thankfulness, gratefulness, liberty, freedom and democracy could have immense impact on the inter-group relations in the campus.

Third, the Balkan students question the superficiality of unity and integration in Malaysia. They argue that the foundation for unity can be shaken due to the fact that many Malaysians are less patriotic and nationalist. They believe this could lead to sentiments and issues that could become threats to national interest. According to them, the existing group identification based upon regional and political affiliation within the campus community should not be encouraged.

Finally, the Balkan students believe that students need to change the existing climate and views on the inter-group relations in the campus. They suggest that the authority promote a more friendly and open environment based upon the concepts of Muslim brotherhood and Muslim culture. They also found themselves to be estranged by the locals, due to the differences in their behaviour, personalities, cultures and customs. They argued that the prejudices, stereotypes and labels emerged from misunderstanding and miscommunication between the groups in the campus.

At the core, the results throw light on the most fundamental question of the process of inter-group relations between the 'in-group' and the 'out-group' and the role of the university in achieving the visions for integration and internalization. The study has indicated that there is a need for a greater understanding of the students' perceptions on the formulation of ideas in the inter-group relations within the campus. The students' conceptions appear to reflect the reality and the climate in the campus. The results have indicated the importance and the need of the university authority to play a greater role and to increase efforts for the integration of the groups in the campus. Hence, the authors believe that this study is more than an academic exercise, as the results of this study may serve as a basis for further research on the inter-group relations, in particular the campus society of the International Islamic University Malaysia.

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Report

REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION: MUSLIM EDUCATION IN EUROPE

Mozammel Haque

In this review the situation of Muslim education across different areas of England and Europe has been reviewed. Factors affecting Muslim education, such as government policy, local authority and Muslim community initiatives have also been carefully examined and reported. The work of higher authorities has also been drawn upon, to have a comprehensive picture of certain burning educational issues.

Blunkett calls for Muslim teachers to learn English

Beginning with the government policy regarding Muslim education in Britain, the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, has called on Muslim teachers to learn English as a way of preventing a "clash of cultures" in Britain. This was reported by Richard Ford, the Home Correspondent of *The Times* on 31 October 2003. David Blunkett insisted that imams who could speak English had a key role in helping to shape the worldview of young Muslims. He said that the imams had a crucial role in helping young Muslims relate to the world in which they lived "rather than turning them away from it". Mr Blunkett also asserted, "This is absolutely central for the development of the Muslim community itself and for the life chances of young Muslims, but it also has a wider impact on social cohesion and race relations."

Mr Blunkett fears that the situation in England may turn into the one in France, where 60 per cent of preachers do not speak French. He is adamant that work has to be done in Britain to ensure that England does not follow the same route. "It is a worrying trend that young, second-generation British Muslims are more likely than their parents to feel that they have to choose between feeling part of the UK and feeling part of their faith, when in fact they should feel part of wider, overlapping communities," he said.

The Home Secretary, speaking in York, blamed religious extremism for forcing these youths to choose. Such a difficult choice, claimed Mr. Blunkett, seemed to be separating them from their British citizenship. For him, "The issue here is identity: whether people identify themselves with the actual world in which they live, or with another world they are taught about, which offers the absolute certainties which day-to-day interaction can never do. We need to join those within faith communities, who are trying to resist this tendency, working together to