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### Study Questions on Ong and Kahn

1. Ong says that other scholars view Islamic revivalism in Malaysia as an anti-government strategy of the politically marginalized. How does she view it?
2. Ong mentions Foucault's notion of "bio-power." What is this?
3. What was the purpose of state intervention in Malay peasant society under the 1972 New Economic Policy?
4. Describe the ethnic composition and sources of conflict in Malaysia.
5. Compare the state policies toward the intimate side of life (domestic, sexuality, etc.) developed in Malaysia discussed by Ong to one or two of the colonial policies described by Stoler.
6. Ong describes "state-making" in Malaysia in familiar terms—echoes from Eriksen and other writers. Describe the relationship between Malaysian "state-making" and Malaysian nation-building.
7. Describe the Malay village's conception of gender differentiation.
8. How did these customs and values change with the Islamic revival?
9. Describe reactions to the state's contraception programs.
10. What are "urban free trade zones?" Describe the Malaysian situation.
11. Summarize how the NEP programs unintentionally undermined the source of customary male power and greatly contributed to a crisis of national identity.
12. Describe the stand-off between NEP (and similar government policies and aims) and the ABIM (Islamic Youth Movement of Malaysia).
13. Describe the ways proper Malay identity was a gendered concept.
14. Remembering Nagel's example of the changes in clothing and behavior of the Kansas Kickapoo (revealing acculturation? or accommodation in order to strengthen retention of cultural traditions?), discuss the possible meanings of full purdah's becoming popular in Malaysia—a practice historically alien in the country.
15. What does Ong believe were the reasons behind the popularity of the *dakwa* movement?
16. Why did the Malaysian state support large-scale immigration of Indonesians?

17. Discuss the similarities and differences between the Malaysian state's interests as described by Ong and those of Singapore, as described by Heng and Devan.
18. Ong says that "Islamic revivalism reveals itself to be an ideology of the middle class brought into being by state policies" (p. 258). Discuss the social class aspect of her argument and the way Cohn's thesis applies to the Malaysian situation.
19. Describe the ethnoracial makeup of Malaysia and government policy goals with respect to the country's Malay population, with respect to desired economic and demographic changes.
20. The reading by Carol Smith attempted to analyze the way ethnicity/race, class and gender were imbricated. Compare Ong's attempt to do the same for Malaysia, adding religion to the mix.
21. Describe the ways in which male protection of female sexuality was seen to be implicated in Malaysia's nation-building project—from the point of view of the state, the Malay villagers, and the Islamic reformers.
22. Malaysian government policies flip-flopped in several ways over the last 50 years. Discuss.
21. Ong describes "a crisis of national identity" in Malaysia. Discuss the ways in which attempts to build a "modern" Malaysian state conflicted with other visions of what the proper future Malaysia ought to look like.
22. Describe the ways a woman's failure to observe proper gender roles led to her being derided as being "no longer Malay" (p. 268).
23. Why did many middle-class university women embrace the *dakwa* movement so strongly?
24. Describe how full purdah may be described as "subversive bricolage" (p. 269), and then discuss how this set of meanings differs from what full purdah means to you.
25. Ong says that women's participation in modern public life may be seen as a form of "erotic aggression" (p. 270). Discuss parallel perceptions in the U.S. and other Western countries.
26. Middle-class educated women, according to Ong, were afraid of being "priced out of the marriage market" (p. 271). Are Malaysian society marriage practices an example of women marrying *up*, as discussed in class?
27. Compare Malaysian pro-natalist government policies to those of Romania and Greece, discussed in class.

28. The chapter by Kahn contains a number of ironies that emerge when Jewish law intersects with assisted fertility. Choose two and discuss them.
29. Discuss why some rabbis preferred artificial insemination with gentile sperm over Jewish sperm.
30. Be prepared to discuss two examples in which Jewish laws about reproduction and Jewishness contradict conventional Western notions about kinship.
31. Compare the notions of “pure” blood and lineage described by Kahn to the “purity of blood” (blood symbolics) in colonial and post-colonial Guatemala.
32. “No one wants Arab sperm. It is not a question of racism, it is a question of what people want” (p. 108). What’s going on here?
33. Kahn’s essay describes how “surprisingly adaptable” rabbinic notions of kinship, grounded in an “ancient, albeit unique, religious-legal system,” have been to the “new world of reproductive options” (p. 111). Discuss one adaptation that particularly struck you.

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