

THE ISLAMIZATION OF THE MALAY SULTANATE: TRACING THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF ISLAMIC INFLUENCE IN MALAYSIA

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Keywords:

*Islamization;
Islamic
Development;
Indonesia;
Malaysia*

ABSTRACT

The development of Islam in Malaysia is an interesting phenomenon to study. As a country with a majority Muslim population, Malaysia has its own dynamics in the process of Islamization and the evolution of Islamic thought in this region. This study will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide a comprehensive analysis. Historical analysis will be used to trace the roots and evolution of Islam in Malaysia, with a focus on primary sources such as historical texts, legal documents, and archival records from the period of the Malay sultanates to contemporary times. In its development, Islam in Malaysia underwent various transformations. From traditionalism to modern revivalism, Islamic thought and movements in the country continue to evolve in line with political, social and cultural dynamics. The Islamic revival that occurred since the 1970s also colored the religious landscape in Malaysia. The issue of the relationship between Islam and politics has also become one of the main focuses in the development of Islam in Malaysia. The interaction between religion and the state, as well as its implications for people's religious life, is a hot topic that continues to be debated. The process of Islamization in Malaysia cannot be separated from the central role of the Malay sultanates, which helped spread and develop the teachings of Islam since the 13th century. Through political power and trade relations, Islam was deeply rooted in the culture and identity of the Malay people.

Received:

June 25, 2024

Accepted:

November 29, 2024

Published:

December 1, 2024

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How to cite:

S, S., S., S., Pababari, M., & Shafiq, K. (2024). THE ISLAMIZATION OF THE MALAY SULTANATE: TRACING THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF ISLAMIC INFLUENCE IN MALAYSIA. *Jurnal Al-Dustur*, 7(2), 136-151. doi:<https://doi.org/10.30863/aldustur.v7i2.6810>

INTRODUCTION

History records that the process of Islamization in some Muslim countries including Southeast Asia was spearheaded by traders, therefore trade activities are an effective means for the spread of Islam, so that the power of Islam is concentrated along the trade routes. The success

of the expansion of Islam indicates that the mission of the teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad Saw continues to run through the intermediary of preachers and muballigh, awareness of the task of da'wah that motivates Muslims to always strive to introduce Islam in various parts of the world, including to Malaysia.

For several centuries, the territory of Malaysia consisted of various small kingdoms and territories ruled by local leaders. In the 15th century AD, the Kingdom of Malacca became the dominant power in the region and played an important role in the spread of Islam. The famous king of Malacca, Parameswara, embraced Islam and changed his name to Sultan Iskandar Shah. This marked the beginning of the formation of Islamic Malay states in the region. Malaysia, as a federated state/commonwealth did not exist before the United Kingdom established colonies in the late 18th century. The Western region of modern-day Malaysia, at that time, consisted of various kingdoms that had their own independence. Malaysia is a constitutional-monarchy, or institutionalized monarchy. As implemented in the constitution, the supreme leader is the King Agong. The King not only governs the country with the advice of the prime minister, but is also the protector of religion. At this point, the relationship between state and religion seems straightforward, but in practice it is much more complicated. This is of course partly related to the state's system of laws, called the state body law, which presupposes autonomous powers in political and religious affairs.¹

The collection of British colonies was known as "British Malaya", which existed until its dissolution in 1946. After its dissolution, the colonies were reconstituted in the form of the "Union of Malaya". In 1948, there was opposition until the Union of Malaya was re-organized into the "Federation of Malaya". This latter entity finally achieved independence on August 31, 1957. Several other territories such as Sarawak, Singapore, North Borneo, along with the Federation of Malaya then joined to form "Malaysia" on September 16, 1963. The formation of this new alliance experienced dynamics, especially the military conflict with Indonesia and was "ended" with the exit of Singapore on August 9, 1965.²

Islam has been an integral part of Malaysia's history, culture and society. The religion has provided moral foundations, inspired government policies, and played an important role in the daily lives of Malaysians. With the majority of the population being Muslim, Islam continues to be a significant force in Malaysia's identity and development as a multicultural nation. Over the past few decades, Malaysia has witnessed rapid development in the Islamic field. Islamic organizations with roles in da'wah, education and social welfare have been active in promoting the religion and serving the needs of the Muslim community.³

The phenomenon of Islamic revival in Malaysia today with the vision of aspiring to the realization of a developed country based on Islamic values, provides a bridge of happiness for Malaysia whose majority population is Muslim, reaching more than 61.32% percent of the total population of around 28,334,135 million. Islam has colored all aspects of life since independence from Britain on August 31, 1957, the Government has implemented policies that are always based on Islamic values. This is outlined in the country's constitution. By definition of

¹ Ahmad Sahidah, "Islam dan Demokrasi di Malaysia: Hubungan Agama dan Negara yang Unik," *Millah*, 10.2 (2011), 213-26 <<https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol10.iss2.art2>>.

² Ahmad Nabil Amir et al., "Pergerakan Islam di Malaysia: Konteks dan Faktor Sejarah Pendahuluan Gerakan Islam di Malaysia adalah kesinambungan dari gelombang kebangkitan melantarkan.

³ A PRAYOGI, "Dinamika Islam Di Malaysia: Telaah Sosio Historis," *ETNOHISTORI: Jurnal Ilmiah Kebudayaan dan ...*, IX.1 (2022), 34-35 .

section 160 of the Act, all ethnic Malays are presumed to be Muslims, although the constitution also theoretically guarantees freedom of religion.⁴

Malaysia consists of two main regions separated by the South China Sea, Kuala Lumpur is the official capital and largest city in Malaysia. Putrajaya on the other hand, is seen as the administrative capital of the Malaysian government. Although many of the executive and judicial branches of the union government have moved there (to avoid the growing congestion in Kuala Lumpur. Putrajaya is named after Malaysia's first Prime Minister Tuanku Abdul Rahman Putra, One of the complexes that is the center of attention for tourists is the Putrajaya mosque.⁵ Malaysia is one of the most economically advanced countries in the Southeast Asian region, which has been transformed into a modern city with its iconic Petronas twin towers (Twin Tower), some people in the neighboring country consider that the twin architecture is one of the tallest buildings in the world, meaning a symbol of harmony. Malaysia's challenge in the 21st century is how to realize a democratic Muslim society in the midst of a multi-ethnic and religious life, explained senior observer from the BBC, Roger Hardy, in his article entitled Malaysia Islam and Multi-Culturalism.⁶ Nevertheless, the Islamic discourse in Malaysia is related to the development of Islam which is very advanced, seen in one of the grandest mosque buildings in Putra Jaya, symbolizing the glory of Islam is starting to rise. Based on the above thinking, the problematic study is how the process of Islamization in Malaysia and the development and progress of Islam in Malaysia.

Research on the Islamization of the Malay Sultanate has extensively covered cultural, political, and social aspects in the spread of Islam. However, studies focusing on the role and influence of Sharia law in this process remain relatively limited. Specifically, there is a lack of in-depth analysis on how Sharia law was implemented, adapted, and accepted within the existing legal structures during that period. Additionally, there is a need to explore the interaction between local customary laws and Sharia law, as well as its impact on the Malay society as a whole. Conducting a study that specifically highlights these legal aspects would provide a more comprehensive and profound understanding of the role of Islamic law in the Islamization process, and fill the existing research gaps in the current literature.

METHODS

This study will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide a comprehensive analysis. Historical analysis will be used to trace the roots and evolution of Islam in Malaysia, with a focus on primary sources such as historical texts, legal documents, and archival records from the period of the Malay sultanates to contemporary times. The writing of this article is a type of writing that is literature review, the data in this article is presented descriptively which shows a scientific study that can be further developed and applied about the Islamization of the Malay Sultanate: Tracing the Historical Roots of Islamic Influence in Malaysia with relevant references both in the form of written text and soft copy editions such as scientific journals, ebooks, online articles, which are accessed via the internet with a historical approach (historical research) with a focus on the process of

⁴www.republika.co.id/berita/ensiklopedia-islam/islam-digest/10/01/19/101546-islam di malaysia-sinergikan-islam-dan-kemajuan. accessed on June 10, 2024

⁵ Husain, W. A. F. W., Anwar, O. M., Zakaria, Z., Abd Rashid, I. M., Nasir, N. M., & Samah, I. H. (2021). The Malay sultanates as the impetus for the formation of Malaysia. *Psychology and Education Journal*, 58, 5820-5827.

⁶www.republika.co.id/berita/ensiklopedia-islam/islam-digest/10/01/19/101546-islam di malaysia-sinergikan-islam-dan-kemajuan. accessed on July 5, 2024

Islamization that occurred in the Malay Sultanate. to be able to explore and understand in depth the historical roots and dynamics of the spread and influence of Islam in the region. This formulation of data sources will ensure the robustness and reliability of the findings, providing a nuanced understanding of the development of Islam in Malaysia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historical Roots of the Islamization of the Malay Sultanate

1. Islamization in Malaysia

In history it is recorded that Islam was evenly embraced by the population in Malaysia in the 12th century, coinciding with the entry of Islam in India and Indochina. Islam entered Malaysia brought by traders from Arabia through Malacca which at that time was the center of trade, the traders stopped at the ports of the peninsula.⁷ The absence of complete documents regarding the arrival of Islam to Malaysia has led to the emergence of various theories about when and where Islam first spread in this country. Wan Hussein Azmi, in his book *Islam in Malaysia Arrival and Development (7th-20th Century AD)*, argues that Islam first came to Malaysia in the 7th century AD. This opinion is based on an argument that in the middle of that century Arab traders had reached the Malay islands, where Malaysia was geographically inseparable from it. According to Azmi, Arab traders who stopped at Indonesian trading ports in the third half of the century also stopped at trading ports in Malaysia. In line with Wan Hussein Azmi's opinion, Hashim Abdullah in his book *Islamic Perspectives in Malaysia*, asserts: Arab traders stopped at Sumatran ports to get necessities and temporarily wait for a change in the *mosun-wind*. Some of them stopped at Malay land ports such as Kedah, Trengganu and Malacca. By this it is said that Islam had entered the Malay land in the 7th century AD.⁸ However, this opinion/theory is still very doubtful because the hypothesis is too general and debatable.

Another opinion was expressed by S.Q Fatimi, in his book *Islam Comes to Malaysia*, explaining that Islam entered Malaysia around the 8th century H (14 AD). He relies on the discovery of a lettered stone in the Trengganu area which is dated 702 AH (1303 AD). The stone letter was written in Arabic script. On one side it contains a statement ordering the rulers and government to adhere to the Islamic faith and the teachings of the Prophet. As far as the spread of Islam in Malaysia is concerned, the role of Malacca cannot be ruled out at all. Because the conversion of Malay occurred mainly during the period of the Malacca sultanate in the 15th century AD, from around 1402 to 1511 AD. The formation and growth of Malacca in history is allegedly related to the civil war in the Majapahit kingdom after the death of Hayam Wuruk (1360-1389 AD). In 1401 AD a civil war erupted to seize the throne between Wira Bumi and king Wikrama Wardhana. Parmewara (the son of the Srivijaya king of the Seilendra dynasty) was involved in the war because he married one of the Majapahit princesses. Because the party he helped suffered defeat, Parmewara and his followers fled to the Tumasik area (Singapore) which was under the rule of the Siamese empire at that time. Temasek at that time was more of

⁷ Ira M. Lapidus, *“Resensi Buku Sejarah Sosial Umat Islam(1)”* (Indonesia: PT. RajaGrafindo Persada, 2021).

⁸ Helmiati, *Dinamika Islam Asia Tenggara*, Suska Press, Pekanbaru, 2008, p. 65.

a fishing village, ruled by a representative of the Siamese king named Tamagi. Because he wanted power, Parmewara killed Tamagi and succeeded in becoming the ruler of Temasek. The incident of Tamagi's murder was known by the king of Siam. Then decided to avenge Tamagi's death. Parmewara and his followers retreated to Muar and eventually reached Malacca. Malacca at that time was a small village inhabited by a small number of fishermen whose work was partly robbing merchant ships coming from the West to the East. Arriving in Malacca, Parmewara was appointed ruler by his followers and the natives there, and then established the Malacca kingdom in 1402 AD.⁹

Islam arrived in what is now Malaysia in the 12th century AD through Muslim traders, and has since played a significant role in the country's cultural, social and political development. Supporting this is the discovery of gold dinar currency in the Kelantan region in 1914. The currency has al-Julus Kelatan inscribed on its side along with the Arabic numerals 577 AH, which coincides with the year 1161 AD. On the other side of the coin is al-Mutawakkil, which means the title of government in the Kelantan region.¹⁰

Other supporting evidence is also shown by the existence of an old tombstone inscribed with Arabic script. This tombstone was found in the Kedah region in 1963 in the area of the grave of Sheikh Abdul Kadir bin Sheikh Husen Shah Alam (d. 291 AH). If we refer to the flow of history, the 12th century was the beginning of the development of Islam in the Malacca Strait and various other areas, especially areas facing the South China Sea. This is based on a report from the Sung Dynasty (960-1279 AD) that describes the growth of Islamic communities along the coast of the South China Sea. Furthermore, in Malacca, in 1276 AD, especially during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Syah, there were trade caravans from Jeddah who came to visit.

The leader of this caravan was named Sidi Abdul Aziz, who in addition to being the leader of the trade caravan, was also known as a scholar. With his role as a scholar, Sidi Abdul Aziz at that time recommended that the king of Malacca change his name to Sultan Muhammad Syah, considering that the Sultan had been Islamized before. Other supporting evidence can also be found in the historical records of Kedah which mention that in 1501 Islam had entered the Kedah region. Evidence for this statement can be seen from the discovery of a tombstone in Kedah on which the name Sheikh Abdul Qadir Ibnu Khusylen Syah was written. This name is the name of a Persian-descended preacher in the 9th century AD, this tomb was found in 1963. Another historical evidence, which is the most popular historical evidence, related to the entry of Islam in the Malay region is the discovery of an inscription in Kuala Berang known as the Trengganu Stone Monument (Trengganu Inscription).¹¹

The process of Islamization then proceeded in a complex manner, especially if it is related to the trade route as the route of Islamization, the participation and "collaboration" between Muslim traders, da'i/muballigh, and local rulers. In relation to trade routes, the Malacca peninsula, as early as the 7th century AD, had long been known as a major trade route, especially the route that connected East Asia (Far East) and West Asia with the Spice Islands in the Maluku region. Semenanjung Malacca became the main "entrance" to the archipelago, with its role as a stopover port, especially for traders. Its role as a port makes the historical process of the entry of Islam into Malaysia has the same history as the entry of Islam in the Indonesian region. This

⁹ Helmiati, *Dinamika Islam Asia Tenggara*, Suska Press, Pekanbaru, 2008, p. 81

¹⁰ Ira M. Lapidus.....

¹¹ Abdullah Renre, "Islam di Malaysia," *Journal of Humanities and Islamic Studies*, XI (2012), 80-93

process is due to the fact that Islam spread in the Malay Peninsula (Malaysia), had previously been processed in the northern Sumatra region (Peureulak, Aceh, Pasai) in the first centuries of hijriyah. The process of Islamization in Malaysia then also revealed the important role of Arab scholars and traders in developing the teachings of Islam. In its development much later, Islam in Malaysia was also dynamic, marked by the boisterous activities of da'wah and various formats of Islamic studies driven by intellectuals.¹²

2. The Development of Islam in Malaysia after Independence

After Malaysia's independence in 1957, the development of Islam in the country continued to be significant. Here are some key points regarding the development of Islam in Malaysia after independence namely:

- Constitutionalization of Islam as the official state religion. In Malaysian institutionalization, Islam is designated as the official religion of the partnership, making Islam the dominant religion and receiving institutional support from the government.
- Development of da'wah and religious activities. An increase in the number of mosques, surau and Islamic educational institutions across Malaysia. Intense proselytization activities by various Islamic organizations, such as ABIM, PAS, and IKRAM. The influence of contemporary Islamic thought from the Middle East and global Islamic revivalism movements.

Since the 1980s in Malaysia there has been a revival marked by the lively activities of da'wah and Islamic studies by intellectuals. Religious events as a process of da'wah in the spread of Islam in Malaysia, are increasingly widespread to introduce Islam more enhanced. Every year this country organizes international activities, namely Musabaqah Tilawatil Quran which is always followed by qari and qoriah in Indonesia.¹³ The Malaysian government is very committed to the importance of da'wah as an apriorative measure for the development of Islam in Malaysia is the government's awareness of the importance of Islamic morals in facing the world's global challenges. This development can be seen in several political policies developed based on Islamic policies since mid-1981. In this year there was a popular term, a board Islamic infrastructure, which aimed to encompass all the activities of Muslims in Malaysia. The most obvious commitment was the establishment of an Islamic bank in 1983. The International Islamic University also in 1983, and an Islamic insurance company in 1985.¹⁴

Islamic Da'wah that is so prominent in Malaysia is the attention to economic development by implementing the Islamic economic system in various banking and other economic sectors. The Islamic economy which is a pillar in the development of Islamic preaching in Malaysia has made the Islamic banking system dominate several Malaysian economic systems. The Hajj Savings Account is the first savings system to guarantee the public in planning for the Hajj

¹² Ajid Thohir, *Perkembangan Peradaban di Kawasan Dunia Islam - Ajid Thohir.pdf* (Indonesia: PT Raja Grafindo Persada., 2009).

¹³ Ira lapidus...

¹⁴ Indonesia Jurnal For Islamic Studies, *Studia Islamica*, Vol 5 No 2 Jakarta

pilgrimage. This capability greatly benefits the development of Islamic financial institutions in Malaysia.

After Malaysia's independence on August 31, 1957 from the clutches of the British colonialists, it was established as a nation and a state, like the nations of Southeast Asia in general. This independence was supported by the two aforementioned forces of Islamism and Nationalism in tangible forms (groups and parties). There were youth groups who joined the Islamic Union to establish Hizby a-l Muslimin (1948) and the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (1951), nationalists with the United Malays Nationalist Organization (UMNO) party, as the current ruling organization.

This situation is patterned and sustainable, and this develops along with the development of Malaysia as a nation and state. In fact, the struggle of the Malays or Muslim chiefdoms has long been by forming local groups and organizations, so Datok On Bin Jafar wants to unite the Malay people throughout Malaya. The effort was realized by holding a congress on 29-30 March 1946 which was attended by 41 organizations.¹⁵

The fact mentioned above shows that the growth and development of the spread through Islamic preaching in Malaysia received protection from the state, so that the preachers in conveying the teachings of Islam did not get significant obstacles. They convey the teachings of Islam in their own ways and methods that are stored in the Qur'an and Hadith. Comparing its current development with the position of Islam in the early days of its growth in the archipelago, namely the twelfth century ago and its position at the beginning of the country's independence. Islam has not only found a place in the basis of state administration but even all the basic goals of the state and its development process are gradually guided towards goals that are linked to universal Islamic values. What is more interesting, most of the foundations, strategies and implementation of development are not all labeled with the word 'Islam' but the intent and basis is based on Islamic teachings based on the Qur'an, Sunnah, Qias and Ijma' Ulama.

3. The role of merchants, preachers, and Sufis in the spread of Islam

The archipelago gradually received changes due to the influence brought by Islam in addition to the rapid development of trade with foreign countries. This fame attracted westerners, especially the Portuguese, to immigrate to this area. With this immigration, it was encouraged to accelerate and intensify the spread of Islam in this area. In 1498 AD Vasco da Gama succeeded in getting India, with which they attacked Islamic ships from Egypt.¹⁶

Trade activities between Arabs, Farsi and Indians with the Archipelago are said to have taken place since several centuries BC until the arrival of Islam in the 17th and 8th centuries AD. Since the early days of Islam, Arab-Islamic merchants, besides carrying out trading activities in the archipelago, have introduced the holy religion in every port they visited. From their noble character and high personality as well as the practices of Islam that they embraced. This situation caused them to always be highly praised and trusted by all levels of society. In each port, several shahbandars were appointed, especially in the work of collecting import and export taxes. Since the 13th century AD the trade of the archipelago has mostly been monopolized by Islamic traders from the Arab, Farsi and Indian nations. Thus, it can be emphasized that the syahbandar was not only the most important group to the merchants but also to the kings. In this situation

¹⁵ Nur Ahmad Fadhil Lubis, "Islamic Encyclopedia," 1993, hal. 81.

¹⁶ Ajid Thohir, *Perkembangan Peradaban Di Kawasan Dunia Islam*, PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, Jakarta, 2004, h. 208.

their position was so important and influential as well as acting as advisors to the Kings. They could influence the King to multiply the progress of trade by giving priority and convenience to Islamic traders.

Malacca state in the Malay land simenanjung, in the 15th century AD, especially during the reign of Sultan Mansyur Syah (1456-1477 AD) and bendahara tun perak is said to be so successful in the spread of Islam. The kingdom of Malacca not only succeeded in conquering several countries in Malay land and Sumatra such as Pahang, Terengganu, kedah, patani, johor, Kampar, indra giri rokan siak and bengkalis as well as others, it even tried to introduce and spread the religion of Islam to the conquered areas, a comprehensive dissemination activity that started from the palace and princes then to the common people which was a form of official dissemination.

Personality factors of da'wah groups and Sufi scholars. Preachers are a group of scholars who are authoritative in the spread of Islam, they not only have a variety of Islamic knowledge in depth but are even very pious to Allah in addition to having a perfect Muslim personality. precisely that they are respected and highly praised by the community, not only by Muslims even those who are not their personalities and actions are always emulated their words are words of wisdom that are always obeyed. Starting from a high personality such as sincerity, honesty, responsibility, not looking for anything important from the da'wah carried out the cause of the people of the archipelago is so affected by them.

Among those who were given important positions in Malaka were such as Sheikh Ismail, Syid Abdul Aziz, Maulana Abu Bakar, Maulana Isaac, Maulana Yusuf, and Sidi Arab. In Aceh such as hamzah fansuri, syamsudin alsumaterani, nuruddin al- raniri, abdul rauf singkil and others. there are also 22 famous scholars in Aceh, the state consultative assembly during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam (1607-1636 AD) in the Islamic kingdom of demak (1475-1550 AD), there were several Sufi scholars who involved themselves in playing a da'wah role in Java. Among them were the walisongo group consisting of sunan ampel, sunan bonang, sunan drajat, sunan giri, sunan guung jati, sunan kudus, and others. The Spread of Malacca as the Center for the Spread of Islam in the Malay Archipelago. Malacca is said to play a role as the center of the spread of Islam in the Malay Archipelago by looking at three main aspects, namely economic, political and social. From an economic point of view, in the 15th period Malacca had become the most important trade center in the archipelago because of its strategic geographical position, which was between the Indian Ocean and China, this position had made Malacca a center of focus by traders to stop and take refuge from the monsoons. Malacca then became the center for the collection of trade products from various regions.¹⁷

The rapidity of trading activities in Malacca has led to the development of Islam in Malacca. The praiseworthy traits displayed by the Islamic merchants attracted the government, officials and people of Malacca to accept the teachings of Islam. In developing the religion of Islam, the Malacca government itself encouraged Malacca merchants to carry out preaching activities in other places by using coastal ports from the north of Java, Maluku, Palembang, Tanjung Pura, Gerisek, Pontianak, Sulawesi and others. As a result, Islam was able to develop even more rapidly throughout the Malay Archipelago.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ebrahimi, M., & Yusoff, K. (2020). Socio-political Islam & revivalism in Malaysia. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 19(57), 239-254.

¹⁸ Helmiati, *Dinamika Islam Asia Tenggara*, Suska Press, Pekanbaru, 2008, p.108.

The arrival of Islam to the Malay Land at an early stage is said to have taken place in the 12th century AD. Malacca was the greatest Malay-Islamic kingdom in the region around the 15th century AD. Historically, Malacca was not only a kingdom with a vast government but it is well known as a kingdom that was very active in the field of Islamic recitation and education. Since the acceptance of Islam by Parameswara in 1414 AD, religious activities and Islamic education have been seriously pursued by scholars and preachers. The entire community from the class of kings, princes and commoners were presented with Islamic knowledge. To develop knowledge, houses, mosques, surau and palaces were used as educational institutions.

In 1511 AD, Malacca was lost to the Portuguese in that year recorded black history for the entire Peninsular Malay nation, both in the fields of politics, economy, culture and education. The arrival of the Portuguese paved the way for other European nations to colonize the Malay Land in turn for approximately 5 centuries. In such a long period of time, the Christian-educated colonizers managed to control almost all fields of politics, economy, culture and education.¹⁹

The study of the Qur'an is the basic or basic subject of the curriculum, the average Malay community calls it "Qur'an School". The realization to change the structure of the traditional Malay recitation, to a better and perfect stage by the British colonizers, was envisioned in the early 19th century AD, having the opportunity to review the institution in connection with which he made suggestions that the royal authorities provide a more suitable place of study in addition to making some necessary changes.

The Malay community is in a state of retreat especially in the economic, educational and social fields, but they still maintain the traditional Malay institutions that have been the nation's heritage since generations. The institution of the house, mosque and surau, known as the "Qur'an School", is still the focus of students. After they were not only able to maintain the survival of the industry, they were able to improve the agreement to a higher level. Children are sent abroad to places like Patani, Malacca and Egypt, etc., to continue their studies. When they finished their studies, they returned to their homeland to create institutions of higher Islamic Studies. These institutions are known as 'Pondok'. Establishment of Pondok Institutions and their learning.²⁰

Government policy after the ethnic riots of 1969

The socio-economic problem facing Malaysia in the first years after independence was the economic inequality between ethnic Malay and ethnic migrants, both Chinese and Indian. The contributing factors date back to the colonial period, when the British colonials compartmentalized the Malay population both in terms of geographical location and economic activities. Malays were left to live in villages as poor farmers and fishermen with limited opportunities for education. Indians were made laborers on the British government's allotment fields, also without educational opportunities. Meanwhile, the Chinese controlled the industrial and mining trades. As a result, the Chinese community, who mostly lived in the cities, achieved prosperity and prominence in the economic and educational fields. Meanwhile, the Malay Muslims, who mostly lived in the countryside and farmed, although they controlled politics and

¹⁹ Helmiati, *Dinamika Islam*

²⁰ Ajid Thohir, *Perkembangan Peradaban Di Kawasan Dunia Islam*, PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, Jakarta, 2004, h. 293.

government, but lagged behind in the economic and educational fields. It was this reality that sparked the ethnic riots in Malaysia in May 1969.²¹

These ethnic riots were an event described by Tuanku Abdul Rahman, former Prime Minister of Malaysia, as the darkest period in Malaysia's national history. The tragedy of May 13, 1969 is a historical event that will not be forgotten by the Malay nation, especially the government. The incident made the government and UMNO leaders aware of the importance of fighting for the fate and improvement of the Malay nation, restoring Malay trust in UMNO and realizing socio-economic justice for ethnic Malays for the sake of stability and security of the country. The government felt the need to carry out an economic reform program that made Malay people and other bumiputera as targets, by improving the socio-economic life of the Malay people. This was then followed up by the government by issuing a policy on the New Economic Policy (NEP). This policy was intended to elevate the socio-economic position of the weak economic circles who were generally Malays and improve their education and standard of living and business development. NEP intended to correct the imbalance and injustice between ethnicities.²²

Islamic Revival in Malaysia

The experience of Islam became more apparent especially after the Islamic revival in Malaysia which occurred in the 1970s and reached its peak in the 1980s.²³ The revival of Islam in Malaysia is evident in the efforts of Malaysian Muslims to take the teachings of Islam more seriously such as actively praying in congregation at the mosque, attending recitation sessions, doing a lot of good deeds, saying greetings when meeting, being careful in buying food so as not to be consumed by the haram, wearing Muslim clothing such as robes, headscarves and *baju kurung* and *telekung* (such veil and hijab) for women, wearing sarongs, turbans and caps or other clothing that characterizes obedience as a Muslim.

The Islamic revival movement is also seen among students on Malaysian campuses among students there are recitation groups known as *dakwah*. They actively hold recitations, fast together, pray at night together, and often also hold *dhikr* and nightly devotions together. While students at the University of Malaya and Kebangsaan University of Malaysia fortify their identity by joining *dawah* movements such as ABIM, Darul Arqam, and the Tabligh congregation, students studying abroad feel culturally shaken and alienated.²⁴

Islam gets Support from the State and Government

Another factor that has led to the strong image and nuances of Islam in Malaysian society and politics is the attitude and response of UMNO and the government to the strengthening of Islamic ethos and awareness in Malay society and showing more Islamic-oriented attitudes and policies. In this case the government has clearly shown an accommodative and pro-Islamic policy and is not only infrastructural, but also structural and cultural. This found its momentum during the Mahatir government and continued until the Abdullah Ahmad Badawi government.

²¹ Esposito, John L. 1992. *Islam dan Pembangunan*. Jakarta: PT Renika Cita. h. 78.

²² Ira M. Lapidus, *Sejarah Sosial Ummat Islam Bagian 3*, PT. Raja Grafindo Persada. Jakarta, 2000, h.386-387.

²³ Olivier, B. (2020). *Islamic Revivalism and Politics in Malaysia*. Springer Singapore.

²⁴ Ghallab, Muhammad 1966. *Inilah Hakekat Islam*. Jakarta: PT Bulan Bintang. h. 97

accommodative attitude of the government can clearly be shown by various policies that convince the Malaysian people and Muslims that the government and UMNO are serious in supporting the role of Islam. The government even carried out "Islamization" and "application of Islamic values" programs that cost relatively large sums of money

Structurally, the government's accommodating attitude can be seen in the policy of recruiting a number of Muslim activists to sit in the government system. The accommodating attitude can also be seen in the important event when Mahatir invited Anwar Ibrahim, a charismatic Islamic activist and figure, to join the government.²⁵ Regardless of the various assessments of this structural accommodation, it is clear that Anwar's involvement in the government has contributed a lot to the progress of Islam and Muslims in the country. It is alleged by some that the establishment of IIUM (International Islamic University Malaysia) was due to Anwar's efforts. As Nagata emphasized, Anwar is a helper in a way for the creation of various Islamic policies.²⁶

Another important structural accommodation made by the government to cite an example was the recruitment of 850 religious teachers into government agencies in the early 1980s. 100 of these were assigned to the prime minister's Islamic unit, while the other 750 were assigned to the office of the Minister of Education.²⁷

This illustrates that the government's role in supporting Islam in more detail and making development policies and programs in various fields more Islamic-laden. Although Pas and government-allied Muslim groups, such as da'wah organizations, may consider these to be merely ceremonial symbols, there is more substantive evidence of the government's increasing support for Islam. This can be shown by the following government policies in various aspects: In principle, Islamic religious affairs are the authority of the state government, as stipulated in the Malaysian constitution, the sultan is the leader in his respective country. Meanwhile, in states that do not have sultans such as Pulau Pinang, Malacca, Sabah, Sabal and the federal territory of Kuala Lumpur, religious leadership is entrusted to the *Pertuan Agong*. Nevertheless, the government feels the need to guide, if not to say regulate, so that Islamic religious activity in the country does not become a source of instability. This was done by the government, not only to show its role in supporting Islam, but also to allay the fears of non-Muslims against what Mahatir described as "Islamic Fundamentalists" who, among other things, want the establishment of Islamic law or the establishment of an Islamic religion in Malaysia.²⁸ So to neutralize these fundamentalist movements, as well as to attempt to guide and regulate Islamic activities in Malaysia, the government felt the need to design and regulate various Islamic activities themselves and based on Islamic policies. The government also established a number of Islamic institutions in the red plate or developed existing institutions to then coordinate and regulate various Islamic activities.²⁹

²⁵ Funston, J. (2000). Malaysia's Tenth Elections: Status Quo, "Reformasi" or Islamization?. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 23-59.

²⁶ Rahman, S. A., & Nurallah, A. S. (2012). Islamic awakening and its role in Islamic solidarity in Malaysia. *American Journal of Islam and Society*, 29(1), 98-125.

²⁷ Machendrawaty, Nanih dan Agus Ahmad Safe'i. 2001. *Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam*. Bandung:PT Remaja Rosda Karya. h. 90

²⁸ Abbott, J. P., & Gregorios-Pippas, S. (2010). Islamization in Malaysia: Processes and dynamics. *Contemporary Politics*, 16(2), 135-151.

²⁹ Suwannathat-Pian, K. (1993). Thrones, claimants, rulers and rules: the problem of succession in the Malay sultanates. *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 66(2 (265), 1-27.

In an effort to demonstrate its seriousness in responding to the reaffirmation of Islam, the government provided a number of infrastructures to assist Muslims in carrying out their religious obligations. The most common realization of this seriousness is the construction of a number of mosques to meet the needs of the Muslim community for places of worship. In addition, another important manifestation of the government's seriousness is seen in the provision of infrastructure for its pro-Islamic policies in various fields of life such as the economy, da'wah and sharia, education and other aspects of enhancing the diversity of the Muslim community. In the field of education, the government has built an Islamic Teacher College, which cost 22 million Ringgit. In 1982, the government organized a permanent site for an international Islamic training camp.

Education and teaching, Islamic policies and programs in the field of education seem to have received earlier attention than other fields. This could be because the position of Minister of Education is currently held by Mahatir Muhammad, a figure who is known to have played many roles and contributed to Islamization efforts in Malaysia. At the beginning of his career as Education Minister of Malaysia in 1974, Mahatir began his steps by reviewing the Islamic teaching system which he considered ineffective and not in accordance with the development and needs of the times.

In 1979, the government declared the establishment of the Tenggara Asian Islamic Research center worth 26 million ringgit, in the same year Islamic religious knowledge was established as an examination material at the Malaysian sijil pelajaran (SPM) level the following year the government established the first Islamic college maktab (Islamic teacher) worth 20 million Malaysian ringgit from which potential students were sent to Egypt Pakistan and Indonesia to continue their studies. In the years 1976 to 1981 and 1981-1986 it was seen how the government showed its seriousness in responding to the reaffirmation of the position of Islam.³⁰

Islamic legislation, the history of legislation clearly proves that Islamic legislation had been established and implemented in the government of the Malay Kingdom before the arrival of the British. There are clear evidences showing that laws had been promulgated in an organized manner for the use and guidance of the Malay kingdom at that time such as the 'Hukum Kanun Melaka', 'UU Pahang' and 'UU Kedah'. Some parts of the kanun are excerpts from the fiqh law of the Syafie Mazhab. After the arrival of the British, especially with the acceptance of the Resident System, gradually and little by little the principles of British law were incorporated into the system of administration, legislation and the judiciary. Eventually several laws such as *the Kanun Keseksaan, Keterangan and Kanun Acara Jenayah* were enacted where Islamic Law in the relevant fields no longer prevailed. Efforts to establish a harmonized and uniform Islamic law throughout Malaysia have started since a long time ago and several efforts have been taken for that purpose. JAKIM through *Jawatankuasa Teknikal Undang-Undang Syarak dan Sivil* has helped a lot in the development of Islamic law which is provided as a 'model' to be accepted by the many regencies.³¹

³⁰ Suhaimi, *Cahaya Islam di Ufuk Asia Tenggara*. Pekanbaru: Suska Press. p. 76.

³¹ Shah Mohammad Hazim Shah, M. H., & Buang, A. H. (2021). Ahmad Ibrahim dan Sumbangannya dalam Perkembangan Islam di Malaysia. *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, 16(1).

The latest effort is that JAKIM has put forward a proposal that the harmonization and uniformity of the Islamic laws of the states be made through the Mesyuarat Majlis Raja-Raja. The proposal on behalf of the Central Government was approved by the 176th Mesyuarat Majlis Raja-Raja on August 1, 1997. Ekoran that approval, JAKIM with the cooperation of *Jabatan Peguam Negara* has made a detailed study into six major laws of the states namely the Law of Islamic Religious Administration, the Law of Islamic Family, the Law of Sharia Errors, the Law of Sharia Court Information, the Law of *Tatacara Jenayah Syariah* and the Law of *Tatacara Mahkamah Syariah*.³²³³

Several series of meetings have been held between the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Peguam Negara, the JAKIM Steering Committee and the JAKIM Law Section Steering Committee with D.Y.M.M. Sultan Azlan Shah (as Advisor on Majlis Raja-Raja Laws) to discuss the proposed harmonization and uniformity of the laws.³⁴ Now the proposed bill will be brought to the *Mesyuarat Jemaah Menteri* for approval before being presented to the Mesyuarat Majlis Raja-Raja. Such is the persistence of the kingdom in harmonizing and homogenizing Islamic law in Malaysia through a wise and wise approach, namely the way of *syura* or deliberation than D.Y.M.M. Sultan-Sultan and Raja-Raja as the Chairman of the Islamic Religion of each State. Hopefully the efforts and pure ideals of the kingdom in strengthening the Institution of Justice and Islamic Legislation in this country run in a state of smoothness and harmony.

Forms of Islamic Culture in Socio-Cultural Life and its Dynamics in Malaysia

Islam has been integrated into the fabric of Malaysian society, thus homogenizing the national identity, historical identity and culture of the people (indigenous Malays).³⁵ However, due to the process of British colonialism, the structure of Malaysian society has become more pluralistic. The influx of ethnic migrants (mainly) Chinese and Indians, made the demographic structure of the Malay identity heterogeneous. This marks Malaysia's entry into a historical phase as a multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. This diversity can be seen statistically, where when Malaysia gained its independence in 1957, the total population of Malaysia was 6,278,763 people. Of that number, ethnic Malays amounted to approximately 50%, Chinese 37%, Indians around 12%, and other ethnic groups amounted to 0.2%. When the 1970 census was conducted, there was a change in composition. The composition ratio that emerged was: 53: 35: 11. By the end of 1998, out of a total population of 21 million Malaysians, 51% were Malay, 27% Chinese, 8% Indian and 12% other ethnic groups.³⁶

This composition continues to change judging from the latest statistics where Malays are approximately 60%, Chinese 25%, and Indians around 7 to 10% of the total Malaysian population. Islamic culture has colored the socio-cultural life of Malaysian society for a long time

³² Ahamat, H., & Alias, N. (2018). The evolution of the personality of the Malay Sultanate States. In *International Law and Islam* (pp. 249-276). Brill Nijhoff.

³³ Ikhwan, H., & Aidulsyah, F. (2020). Sultanates and the Making of Nationhood in Indonesia and Malaysia. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 48(3-4), 339-352.

³⁴ Kader, S. Z. S. A. (2016). Kerangka undang-undang pengurusan wakaf di Malaysia: Ke arah keseragaman undang-undang. *Kanun: Jurnal Undang-Undang Malaysia*, 28(1), 102-127.

³⁵ Ibrahim, Z. (2004). Globalization and national identity: Managing ethnicity and cultural pluralism in Malaysia. *Growth and governance in Asia*, 115-136.

³⁶ Hirschman, C. (1987). The meaning and measurement of ethnicity in Malaysia: An analysis of census classifications. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 46(3), 555-582.

and continues to experience the dynamics of its development to this day. Here are some examples of the manifestation of Islamic culture in Malaysia's socio-cultural life and its dynamics: **Islamic Architecture and Building Arts:** Mosques in Malaysia feature typical Islamic architectural styles, such as domes, minarets and calligraphic decorations. The development of mosque architectural styles is ongoing, with influences from various external Islamic architectural traditions. **Traditional Arts and Crafts:** The arts of calligraphy, weaving, carving and ceramics in Malaysia are influenced by Islamic aesthetics and values.

The development of traditional arts continues to adapt distinctive Islamic styles and motifs. **Clothing and Fashion:** Traditional Malay fashion, such as baju kurung, has absorbed Islamic elements in its style and fashion. In recent decades, there has been a revival of more modern and fashionable Muslim fashion. **Religious ceremonies and celebrations,** such as Hari Raya, have distinctive Islamic culinary traditions. **Family and Marriage System:** Islamic family law is adopted in the family law system in Malaysia. Islamic wedding ceremonies and rituals color the marriage traditions of the Muslim community. **Islamic Education and Teaching Institutions:** The proliferation of religious schools, Islamic boarding schools and universities in Malaysia. The Islamic curriculum and education system continues to be adapted and adjusted to the local context. The dynamic development of Islamic culture in Malaysia continues, with adaptation and acculturation to local Malay traditions. This makes the form of Islamic culture in Malaysia unique and distinctive.

CONCLUSION

Islam has played a significant role in Malaysia's history, culture and society. With the majority of the population being Muslim, the religion has a strong influence in the daily lives of Malaysians. Islam in Malaysia has continued to evolve and undergo significant changes in recent decades. Islam in Malaysia has continued to evolve and adapt to the challenges and changing times. With an approach centered on tolerance, and Islamic economic development, Malaysia continues to advance the religion and ensure that Islam remains an integral part of the country's identity and development as a multicultural nation.

The Islamization of the Malay Sultanate was a profound and multifaceted process that significantly shaped the cultural, social, and political landscape of Malaysia. Initiated around the 13th century, the process was primarily facilitated by the Malay sultanates through their political influence and extensive trade networks, which helped to deeply root Islamic teachings within Malay culture and identity. Over the centuries, this Islamization led to the integration of Islamic principles into the legal and social structures, influencing local customs and practices. The Malay Sultanate's embrace of Islam brought about various transformations, ranging from traditionalism to modern revivalism, reflecting the dynamic nature of Islamic thought and practice in the region. The Islamic revival since the 1970s further reinforced Islam's central role in shaping Malaysia's religious landscape, creating a complex interplay between religion and politics. Moreover, the Sultanate's efforts contributed to the development of Islamic education, which continues to play a significant role in the spiritual and intellectual life of Malaysian society. Overall, the Islamization of the Malay Sultanate represents a key historical development that has left a lasting impact on Malaysia's identity, demonstrating the enduring influence of Islam in the region.

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