

RELATION OF RELIGION, ECONOMY AND POLITICS:

Islamization of Malay Community through Trade and Kingdom

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Abstract: *Some scholars have suggested a paradigm that the process of conversion to Islam in the Malay community was spread by Sufis. Historical reconstruction in this region is always associated with the teachings, rituals and religious behavior of Sufis. This research was conducted to describe the process of conversion to Islam in three paradigms, namely, political economy, history, and religion. This study found that the conversion of religion in Malay society was mostly played by economic actors. To facilitate this conversion, economic agents married local women and negotiated with the ruling sultans. From the existing sources (manuscripts and archives), economic actors had a significant role in Islam conversion for Malay society. Economic actors, in the 17-18 century AD, consisting of traders, were connected with countries in the Indian Ocean. Some of them came to the West Coast of Sumatra to trade spices. The traders who came were Muslims. Their arrival brought two purposes at once, namely the teachings of religion in the right hand and trading commodities in the left hand. Both of these goals were the driving force of traders to spread Islam in every visited region. This study has proven correlative with the condition of the Islamic community in the current Malay community, which is more engaged in the trade than other sectors. At the same time, the community becomes devout Muslims.*

الملخص: اقترح بعض الباحثين أن التحويل المتكامل إلى الدين الإسلامي في المجتمع الملاوي نتيجة من جهود المتصوفين الكتابة التاريخية عن هذه المنطقة دائما متعلقة بالتعاليم، الطقوس، والأنشطة الدينية لهذه الفرقة يحاول هذا البحث تصوير وتفصيل عملية التحويل إلى الدين الإسلامي في المجتمع الملاوي من جهة ثلاث: السياسي والاقتصادي، التاريخي، والديني حصل البحث إلى النتيجة التالية أن العامل الاقتصادي له دور أهم في التحويل الديني في المجتمع الملاوي تسهيلات لهذا التحويل، التجار يتزوجون المواطنين ويتفاوضون الملوكة يمكن إدراك هذا الرأي من الأرشيف والمخطوطات لدينا كان التجار في القرن السابع والثامن عشر الميلادي مترابطين مع أنهم منتشرون عبر المحيط الهندي. عدد منهم ، معظمهم مسلمون، زار الساحل الغربي لسومطرة لتجارة التوابل والدعوة الإسلامية. هما، التجارة والدعوة، عاملان رئيسيان في نشاطهم الاقتصادي والديني كانت نتيجة هذا البحث توافق بأحوال المجتمع الملاوي في زماننا الحاضر الذي يشتغل بالتجارة أكثر من اشتغالهم في المهنة الأخرى، بالإضافة إلى كونهم مسلمين متدينين

Abstrak: *Sebagian kalangan, selama ini membangun paradigma, bahwa proses konversi ke agama Islam pada masyarakat Melayu disebarkan oleh para sufi. Rekonstruksi sejarah di wilayah ini selalu dikaitkan dengan ajaran, ritual dan perilaku keagamaan para sufi. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menggambarkan dan mendeskripsikan proses konversi ke agama Islam dalam tiga paradigma, ekonomi politik, sejarah, dan keagamaan. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa konversi agama pada masyarakat Melayu lebih banyak diperankan oleh aktor ekonomi. Untuk mempermudah konversi tersebut, para pelaku ekonomi menikahi wanita setempat, dan melakukan negosiasi dengan sultan yang berkuasa. Dari sumber yang ada (manuskrip dan arsip), para pelaku ekonomi memiliki peran signifikan dalam mengkonversi agama Islam pada masyarakat Melayu. Aktor ekonomi, pada abad ke 17-18 masehi, yang terdiri dari para pedagang terkoneksi dengan negeri-negeri yang ada di Samudra Hindia. Sebagian dari mereka datang ke Pantai Barat, Sumatera untuk berdagang rempah-rempah. Para pedagang yang datang tersebut adalah pemeluk agama Islam. Kedatangan mereka membawa dua tujuan sekaligus, ajaran agama di tangan kanan dan komoditas perdagangan di tangan kiri. Kedua tujuan tersebut yang menjadi daya penggerak para pedagang untuk menyebarkan Islam di*

setiap wilayah yang disinggahi. Penelitian ini berkorelasi dengan kondisi masyarakat Islam pada masyarakat Melayu saat ini, yang lebih banyak menekuni sektor perdagangan dibanding sektor lain. Pada saat yang sama juga menjadi pemeluk Islam yang taat.

Keywords: religion conversion; economic spirit; Malay community; king's power.

INTRODUCTION

The establishment of Muslim communities in Malay through a long process. There are several approaches that are the main factors forming Muslim communities in this region, namely; economics, politics, education, Sufism, marriage, and culture.¹ The six approaches together have contributed and are complementary each other in the Islamic sphere. However, it is also undeniable that the six approaches have limitations in the effort to convert the *Nusantara* community to Islam. Schrieke, for example, is not too sure that through the marriage approach, *Nusantara* people can be mass-Islamized. In addition, according to Schrieke, it is not possible that when a ruling area converts to Islam, the people would automatically flock to Islam², and it was impossible that members of the community would convert to Islam automatically following the converting rulers.³ Likewise, with the economic approach, A.H. Johns is skeptical of the economic approach, especially trade that is made the basis of the Islamic community of the archipelago. According to Johns, a person cannot have two functions at one time, being a trader on one side and being an Islamic announcer on the other. The emphasis of Johns' argument that needs to be considered is if they were very active in spreading Islam in the archipelago, why the development of Islam was so slow if not stagnant, even if Islam has been spread to the archipelago with a trading approach in the 7-8 century AD. Even now there is neither

¹ Marwati Djoned Puspongoro and Nugroho Notosusanto, *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1990), 188-195.

² Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies* (Den Haag: Van Hoeve, 1955), 233.

³ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII: Akar Pembaruan Islam Indonesia, Edisi Perennial* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2013), 13.

archaeological evidence nor other sources that explain the presence of large numbers of local Muslim populations or about the occurrence of substantial Islamization in the archipelago.⁴

The Sufi approach insists that the Muslim community was formed due to the efforts of the Sufis who did acculturation of the local community's culture so that gradually a society changed from a Hindu-Buddhist society to a devout Muslim society.⁵ In addition, Sufis also had magnetic powers that were able to attract nobles and rulers to be involved in the transformation of divinity by bringing their descendants closer to the Sufi tradition. This strategy seemed to be very effective in accelerating the occurrence of communal Islamization which had not been able to be carried out by traders who came to the archipelago.⁶

According to Van Leur, a historian who loudly mentions the magnitude of the influence of trade on the conversion of Islam in the archipelago, economic and political factors were decisive for the process of Islamization of the archipelago's population. The ruler had a strong interest in the smooth process of trade in the territory of his power. This was where the law of mutual benefit applied. The authorities would facilitate Muslim traders to more freely carry out trading activities, with the hope that local authorities could build not only regional but also international trade networks⁷

This historical research applies historical method. There are three research steps carried out following the historical method. First, heuristic method, it is the stage where the researcher collected archive⁸ in the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia

⁴ A.H. Johns, "Muslim Mystic and Historical Writing," in *Historians of South East Asia*, by DG. E Hall (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 40-41.

⁵ Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII: Akar Pembaruan Islam Indonesia, Edisi Perennial*, 13.

⁶ A.H. Johns, *Sufism as a Category in Indonesian Literature and History*, 1961, 10.

⁷ J.C. Van Leur, *Indonesia Trade and Society: Assays in Asian Social and Economic History* (Dordrecht: Foris Publication, 1983), 110.

⁸ In historical methodology, the position of archives as historical sources occupies the highest position compared to other historical sources, or can be said to be primary sources. Archive as a source to track maritime history according to Mona Lohanda can be clarified into several periods. *First*, the VOC colonisation period, which lasted 1605-1800, was the richest source of maritime history. The main collection of this period is; *Daghregister van't Casteel Batavia (1640-1806)*, an official diary of the activities of the central government of Batavia. Another archive

(ANRI), archives in the Rusli Amran Foundation Library stored at Gusti Asnan's home, archives and maps obtained at the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia, and archives found in the Yogyakarta Ignatius library. The archives consisted of letters and news compiled in the *Bronnenpublikatie* series *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, totaling of 16 volumes.

Additionally, there were VOC documents stored in the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (ANRI), which is now recorded in the inventory book, *The Archives of the Dutch East India Company and Local Institutions in Batavia*. Letters were sent routinely from the local authorities and more intensely in 1700 AD. In that year, the local authorities in West Sumatra, especially the Kingdom of Inderapura almost every year sent a report to Batavia about the development of commerce in the Kingdom of Inderapura.⁹ Other archives that also strengthen the Inderapura are; *Contract Gesloten door R. Palm met de Regent van Indrapoera*, *Verbond Indrapoera*, *Contract Indrapoera*. These archives explain sufficiently about the existence of the Inderapura Kingdom and its relationship with trade on the west coast of Sumatra.

The collection of local sources in the form of *Tambo* and manuscripts about Inderapura was obtained from the collections of Yulizal Yunus and Pramono. Moreover, the archive of the Kerinci *Tambo* was obtained from Dikki Saputra. Two texts discuss comprehensively the Inderapura Kingdom. First, the script of *Muballighul Islam* (abbreviated MI) describes that in 580 H the Arab adventurer arrived in Inderapura and helped spread Islam in this Kingdom. This manuscript illustrates that in the 12th and 13th centuries AD the Inderapura region was crowded by foreign sailors, mainly Arabs. Other archives that also strengthen Inderapura

is *Resolution van't Casteel Batavia* divided into some kinds of archive such as *secrete resolution* which is very confidential, *generale resolution* which is public, *bijilagen resolution*, the attachment. *Second*, the Dutch governance period (1816-1942). There are two primary sources in searching the traces of maritime history in the Indonesian archipelago. The *Algemeen Secretarie* is an archive covering various activities of colonial government. *Third*, the period of Japanese Occupation (1942-1945). *Fourth*, the period of Indonesian Governance. Mona Lohanda, *Membaca Sumber Menulis Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2011), 68-78.

⁹ Widya Fitrianiingsih and Sri Margana, "Sejarah Indonesia: Perspektif," n.d., 507.

assertions were; “*Contract Gesloten door R. Palm met de Regent van Indrapoera, Verbond Indrapoera, Contract Indrapoera*. This archive explains a lot about the existence of the Inderapura Kingdom and its relationship with trade on the west coast of Sumatra. The collection of local sources in the form of Tambo and manuscripts about Inderapura was obtained from the collections of Yulizal Yunus and Pramono, while the Kerinci Tambo was obtained from Dikki Saputra. Two texts discussed further the Inderapura Kingdom. *First*, the Muballighul Islam text; This manuscript tells us that in the year of 580 Hijriyah, Arab adventurers arrived and participated in developing Islam in this area. This text illustrates that in the 12th and 13th centuries AD the Inderapura region was crowded with foreign sailors, mainly Arabs¹⁰ *Second*, Inderapura Manuscript; This manuscript describes the geographical layout of Inderapura and plants that are excellent for traders. Also, this text contains the bureaucratic structure used by Inderapura Kingdom.¹¹

Second, source criticism. At this stage, the researchers verified the sources obtained in the form of archives written by the VOC and sources written by the local community. Both sources were verified to test the truth or accuracy of the sources. The procedure of source criticism procedure was carried out utilizing internal criticism (credibility) and external criticism (determining source authenticity).¹²

Third, interpretation. At this stage, interpretation was implemented to interpret historical sources that have been verified. These sources were interpreted to obtain an explanation of historical facts that implicitly discussed an event and synthesized between facts through historical explanation.¹³ The interpretation method used to analyze sources that have been verified was by situational analysis.¹⁴ The situational analysis consisted of two levels, the first level was to analyze the process of the people’s awareness concerning

¹⁰ Gusti Asnan and et. al., *Dinamika Sistem Birokrasi pada Masa Kesultanan Inderapura Abad XVI-Awal*, n.d, 9.

¹¹ Asnan and et. al., 6 dan 11.

¹² Kritik eksternal berfungsi untuk menguji kredibilitas sumber.

¹³ Abdurrahman Dudung, *Metodologi Penelitian Sejarah Islam* (Yogyakarta, Ombak, 2011), 168.

¹⁴ Nor Huda, “Wacana ‘Islamisme Dan Komunisme’: Melacak Genealogi Intelektual Hadji Mohammad Misbach (1876-1926)” (Yogyakarta, Disertasi PPS UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2012), 44-45.

the interpretation of situations that were projected to cause action. The next level included an explanation of the nature of the people's situational interpretation concerning their biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors that resulted in the interpretation and the actions following it.¹⁵ To achieve data accuracy, in the context of trade, protelization theory was used in which the data were interpreted by grouping them into three groups; sources identified as having information about the arrival of Islam brought by traders, data containing information regarding the acceptance of local traders to Islam brought by traders, and then data included in groups containing information about the role of the sultanate and traders in Islamizing the local population. The data that had been interpreted were referred to as historical facts.

Fourth, historiography. It was the last stage in the writing of history that aimed to re-create the totality of past events that happened. Historiography was carried out as an effort to compile a series of facts that have been synthesized in the form of historical writing in a critical analytical writing style. Through this stage, the researchers hoped to be able to present a series of comprehensive and scientific history, so that it exhibited the expected historical value.¹⁶

ECONOMY AND POLITICS IN THE FORMATION OF MALAYS

UNESCO defines Malay as a tribe that inhabits Peninsular Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Madagascar (Must Aminurrasyid) 1966). Initially the term Malay was used for Malay kings from Sumatra and / or Malacca, in the 17th century the term Malay experienced changes that were used for the nation and language. The use of Malay term first appeared around 100-150 AD in the work of Geographical Syntax using the term 'maleu-colon. G.E. Gerini interpreted that this language comes from the word sankrit, which is 'malayakom, or malaikurram' which refers to

¹⁵ Ibrahim Alfian, "Dari Babad Dan Hikayat Sampai Sejarah Kritis," in *Tentang Metodologi Sejarah*, ed. Ibrahim Alfian and et. al. (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1992), 45.

¹⁶ Huda, "Wacana 'Islamisme Dan Komunisme': Melacak Genealogi Intelektual Hadji Mohammad Misbach (1876-1926), 11-12.

Tanjung Kuantan on the peninsula of Malaysia.¹⁷ Each traveler gives a different name to the Malay archipelago, Arab people call this region with Hind al-Syarqiyyah (East Indies), while Indian travelers give names to Swarnabhumi (golden earth) or Swarnadhipa. The Chinese call it kunkun. Likewise, when British travelers reach the Malay Island they use the term Malay Archipelago, while French sailors call it Oceania et Malasia. The last term that is not yet popular is Malayonesia, a term taken in Arabic *al-malayuwiyyah*

To identify Malay, two approaches are used. First, the Law approach. In Malaysia, Malay people are Muslim, speak Malay, practice Malay customs, born in the Malay Land Alliance. Second, the social-anthropological approach, Malays in physical terms are brown-skinned, have a large, simple body, and are always gentle and virtuous. In terms of ethnology, Malay means a group of people who practice the social system of acquisition and generation, including the Mongoloid people.¹⁸

Salih Affandi Jaudat in his book *Ummat Melayu* divides Malay territory into two; First, *Jazirah al-Malayu* is specifically for the Malay Land Peninsula (Negeri Segenting Kra Malay to Singapore and Riau). Secondly, *Arkhabil al-Malayu* is a wider Malay world including, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Sulawesi, the Philippines and Overseas.¹⁹

The formation of the Malay community into a Muslim community both in *Jazazirah al-Malayu* and in *Arkhabil al-Malayu* is not such a coincidence that there is a structured process carried out by the Muslim community coming from outside the Malay country itself. Of course, there are a number of main factors driving the community to occur. This article only wants to portray the process of forming a Muslim community in *Arkhabil al-Malayu*, namely in an Inderapura kingdom located on the west coast of Sumatra.²⁰

Muslim traders from Arab, India and China have a mission so that the rulers can accept Islam as a royal religion which will impact

¹⁷ Abdullah Idi, *Dinamika Sosiologis Indonesia: Agama Dan Pendidikan Dalam Perubahan Sosial* (Jakarta: LkiS, 2015), 16-17

¹⁸ Idi.

¹⁹ Salih Jaudat, *Ummat Al-Malayu* (Mesir: Matba'ah Sya'bah, 1908), 23

²⁰ Sudarman and et. al., "Spice Route and Islamization on the West Coast of Sumatra in 17th-18th Century," vol. 302 (ICCLAS, 2018), 48-50, <https://doi.org/10.2991/icclas-18.2019.13>.

on the Islamization of all people under the rule of the ruler . This condition is explained by Neher:

“... Converting to Islam brought traders to the international Muslim community, namely the *ummah*, an important factor in Indonesia’s economy. The greater sense of community and trust among Muslim merchants broadens their networks and opportunities to expand their business.”²¹

For the authorities, integrating with the international or global community through religious conversion does not only provide hope and promises but also a strategic step to obtain various benefits. *Firstly*, the authorities or kings personally enter the international economic-political community. As the Islamic power is pursuing political and economic benefits, conversion to Islam strengthens the political position of authorities because Islamic power will influence the progress or collapse of a Kingdom.²² *Secondly*, the conversion of religion has raised trading economics and the welfare of the royal state. Accepting a new religion means strengthening the trading economy. The authority must continue to establish persuasive contacts with Arab traders, Indian Muslims and Chinese.²³ *Thirdly*, the conversion also means strengthening the country. The Inderapura Kingdom already had strong ties with the kingdoms on the west coast of Sumatra, for example, political alliances with the Sultanate of Banten on the eastern tip of Sumatra and political alliances with Aceh Darussalam on the western tip of Sumatra. Therefore, it means that Islam has strengthened and enlarged the power of the Inderapura Kingdom.

The role of the authorities towards Islamization in the archipelago is an inevitable fact. Milner emphasized that leaders (sultans/kings) in Southeast Asia had a very important role in the process of Islamization for religious doctrines and structures relied

²¹ Clark D. Neher, *Politics in Southeast Asia* (Inc. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1981), 15.

²² Moeftich Hasbullah, “Perdagangan, Internasionalisme Dan Konversi Agama; Perspektif Psiko-Sosial Dalam Islamisasi Di Nusantara Abad Ke 15-17,” *Mimbar: Jurnal Kajian Dan Budaya, Lembaga Penelitian (LEMLIT) UIN Syarif Hidayatullah* 29, no. 1 (n.d.), 17-18.

²³ Hasbullah.

on the authorities.²⁴ There are at least three reasons why kings and palaces should be given more attention in reviewing the process of Islamization: First, they have a special role and strategic position before their people. Second, there is a relationship between the kingdom authority and the world trade network. The history of the archipelago has determined that Islamization took place in the age of commerce reached its peak in the 17-18th century AD. It can be said that at that time there was not any kingdom located in city ports that were not connected with international trade. For the trade to remain active and secured, all the kingdoms in the archipelago bind themselves by building international trade relations. Third, the great impact of the conversion of the King to Islam. In pre-Islamic traditional views and beliefs, authorities or kings are perceived as “God-Kings”, “God-Emanations”, or “God-Reincarnations” where the people serve them wholeheartedly with body and soul because the king is trusted by his people as the incarnation of God so that the legitimacy of the king’s power is very strong.²⁵

Based on the *Tambo Tinggi* script of the Inderapura Kingdom revealed by Yulizal Yunus,²⁶ Islam in Inderapura was closely related to the Islamization that occurred in the Srivijaya kingdom. Srivijaya kingdom had established trade relations with Arab traders. To strengthen the relationship, Arab traders brought the king’s son (the crown prince) named Indrayana to travel and visit the Arabian Peninsula. The trip was planned for only one round (approximately three months). Unexpectedly, after witnessing the movement of Islam in Arab lands, Indrayana was interested in converting to Islam and postponing his return simply to study Islam in Arab lands. When he returned to Srivijaya, his Islam was known by the king and the entire royal family. The king was furious because Indrayana had dared to leave Hinduism-Buddhism. The king’s wrath increasingly peaked when Indrayana began to spread Islam in the territory of the Srivijaya kingdom, this was why Indrayana was expelled from Sriwijaya.²⁷

²⁴ A.C. Milner, “Islam and the Muslim State,” in *Islam in South-East Asia*, ed. M.B. Hooker (Leiden, 1983), 31.

²⁵ Milner, 14.

²⁶ Yulizal Yunus, *Kesultanan Indrapura Dan Mandeh Rubiyah Di Lunang: Spirit Sejarah Dan Kerajaan Bahari Hingga Semangat Melayu Dunia* (Padang: IAIN-IB Press, 2002), 79-81.

²⁷ Yunus.

Indrayana then left the palace and sailed with a large ship equipped with all provisions. The voyage moved towards the west coast. After crossing the Sunda Strait, the voyage entered the great ocean that was the Indian Ocean. By sailing along the coast of the island of Perca, through the ferocity of the great ocean, with the terrible waves and storms, Indrayana finally docked to a port in two-pronged river estuaries flanked by two small islands. Indrayana settled in *Pasir Ganting* and built a village. Indrayana then formed a small kingdom named Indrajati and he became its king at the same time. The Islamic kingdom led by him grew rapidly and built successful relationships with the kingdoms around the Indrajati kingdom. After the king Indrayana died, Indransyah Sultan Galomatsyah succeeded him.²⁸

Another source that explains about Islam in Inderapura is *Tambo Alam of Inderapura Kingdom*. The *Tambo* explained that the Kingdom of Inderapura had interacted for a long time with Persia and the Arabian Peninsula. The emergence of Islam in Mecca also became an interesting conversation in the Kingdom. Sultan Gelomahsyah was ordered to go to Mecca to meet Sayyidina Ali in 656-665 AD. After studying Islam with Sayyidina Ali, Sultan Gelomahsyah returned to Inderapura to fly with *sepelangkahan kaki* in *sehelai lapik pandak*.²⁹ After arriving at Inderapura, Sultan Gelomahsyah taught the basics of Islam to the people and royal authorities. The arrival of Islam in Inderapura was impeded by Hinduism so that the development of Islam in the Inderapura Kingdom was very slow.³⁰

These two traditional sources at least give a general description of Islam in Inderapura Kingdom. Both *Tambo* revealed that, first, Islam in the Kingdom of Inderapura originated directly from Arabic. Indrayana and Sultan Gelomansyah learned Islam from the first source then went home to preach it to the royal circle. *Second*, the process of Islamization in the Inderapura Kingdom was driven by Muslim traders who came to Inderapura. Indrayana embraced Islam because he was persuaded by Arab traders who invited him to join the pilgrimage to the Arab lands. Likewise, the Sultan Gelomansyah

²⁸ Yunus.

²⁹ According to customary law and religious believers, *sepelangkahan kaki* and *sehelai lapik pandak* are models which contain meaning and wisdom to accelerate the development of Islam in the Kingdom of Inderapura, and the meaning of *lapik pandak* is one of the pillars of Islamic harmony by establishing prayers.

³⁰ "Naskah Tambo Alam Kerajaan Inderapura" (n.d.), 23.

came directly to learn Islam in Arab lands because he heard about the development of Islam in Arab from Arab-Muslim traders. Based on *Tambo Tinggi* of Inderapura Kingdom, Sultan Gelomansyah was the second king after Indrayana. This indicated that the Kingdom of Inderapura under the leadership of Gelomansyah was Muslim in religion. Indrayana King was a carrier of Islam and founder of the Kingdom of Inderapura, and the arrival of Sultan Gelomansyah to the Arab country aimed to further explore Islam and build networks with Islam in Arabia. Third, Islam came to Inderapura at the beginning of the development of Islam in Arab lands. Sultan Gelomansyah learned Islam directly from the caliph Ali bin Abi Talib who ruled in 656 to 661 AD or the 7th century AD.

Information from the two *Tambos* about the Inderapura Kingdom certainly was not necessarily taken for granted because this traditional historiography often mixed facts and myths. The arrival of Islam to the archipelago expressed in traditional historiography often claimed that; *First*, Islam was brought directly from Arabia; *Secondly*, Islam was introduced by professional teachers and broadcasters, those who specifically intended to spread Islam; *Third*, the origin of Islam started from the rulers; and *Fourth*, most of these professional propagators of Islam came to the archipelago in the 12th century AD.³¹

The validity of *Tambo* which was used as a historical source to reconstruct the arrival of Islam in the Inderapura Kingdom is still debatable among historians, but the historical facts about the year and spread of Islam in the Inderapura Kingdom are very relevant to the theories developed by other historians. Arnold, for example, one historian, argues that in the 7th century AD Arab traders had spread Islam in the archipelago even though the record of these activities could not be proven academically. Chinese sources state that in the 7th century AD, an Arab trader had become a leader in the Muslim community on the west coast of Sumatra. Some of these Arabs married local women so a community of Arabs and locals was formed.³² The existence of Islam in the Kingdom of Inderapura in the 7th century AD needs to be noted because the pattern used is not to

³¹ Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII: Akar Pembaruan Islam Indonesia, Edisi Perennial*, 12.

³² T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam : History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (London: Constable, 1913), 364.

bring propagators of professional Islam but the Sultan directly picked the religion to the estuary where Islam was born. This pattern in local sources is considered a new revelation found in the spread of Islam in the archipelago.

In 1838, Salomon Muller paid a visit to Inderapura. According to Regen, Islam had developed in Inderapura in 1279. Previously, Brahmin Hinduism was strongly rooted in this region.^{33 34} If it was true what Regen said to Muller, surely there needs to be proof that confirms Muller's report as a source of history. Regarding the strong Brahmin Hinduism stated in Inderapura Kingdom's *Tambo Alam*, it was also mentioned that Hinduism was the main challenger to the presence of Islam in the Inderapura Kingdom. Naturally, the role of Islam was only seen in the 13th century AD.

Muller's statement should be taken into consideration as Islam in the 13th century AD had developed on the east coast of Sumatra, then on the Kampar River into the center of its spread. It went inland through *Kuantan*, *Rokan*, *Kampar* or *Batanghari* rivers. From there, Islam came to Inderapura.³⁵ Islam that came from *Darek* in the 13th century did not mean that it did not yet exist in Inderapura, but perhaps its influence was very minimal. Although Islam had been embraced by royal authorities, the community and religious figures were still held by the Hindu Brahmin religion. Arnold emphasized that in the 12th-13th century AD, the Islamic Archipelago began to show its development and experienced rapid Islamization.³⁶

Islam in Inderapura increasingly experienced rapid development when the kingdom was under the rule of Aceh Darussalam kingdom, which at that time was led by Sultan Ali Rijajat Sjah al-Qahhar from 1337-1368. He was able to conquer the west coast of Sumatra to Inderapura. The Sultan did not only conquer but also spread the scholars to give teachings about Islam to the people on the west coast of Sumatra, especially in the Kingdom of Inderapura.³⁷ The tradition of sending scholars to the territories of the Kingdom of Aceh

³³ Salomon Muller, *Reizen En Onderzoekingen in Sumatra*, 1838, 24.

³⁴ Salomon Muller, *Reizen en Onderzoekingen in Sumatra*, 1838, 24.

³⁵ Rusli Amran, *Sumatra Barat hingga Plakat Panjang* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1981), 45.

³⁶ Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam : History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith*, 365.

³⁷ Zainuddin, *Tarich Atjeh* (Medan: Pustaka Iskandar Muda, 1961), 121.

Darussalam continued massively. Sultan Ali Riajat Sjah al-Qahhar's successor was Sultan Alaadin Mansjursjah, a king who had a high passion to spread Islam throughout the archipelago. To achieve his obsession, the sultan invited many scholars from Arabia and India to be able to teach Islam in the territory of Aceh Darussalam. In the year 990 hijriyah/1382 AD two Muslim scholars were brought from Arab; they were Sheikh Abdul Chair Ibnu Hadjar and Sheikh Muhammad Jamani. Both had expertise in Sufism, Mantiq, and Tawheed. These scholars were then sent by the Sultan to give teachings in the Kingdom of Inderapura.³⁸

The pattern of power development used by the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam by using *ulama* or preacher as a strategy to conquer the kingdoms on the west coast of Sumatra was seen as a new pattern. Aceh certainly knew very well that Islam on the west coast of Sumatra was not so strong that it took a Muslim preacher to explain to the king and the general public about the basics of Islam. This was the hypothesis of Christine Dobbin who believes that Islam has had the first and longest success in the west coast entry ports of Minangkabau. This place heavily resembled an Islamic city in the Middle East.³⁹ In the 16th century AD, at the port of Inderapura, it would be easy to find port officials with an Islamic degree, as well as teachers who were fluent in reading verses of the Koran. Even in the 18th century AD, many beach brokers and their families had extensive knowledge about Islam.⁴⁰

Islam in Inderapura was more likely to be controlled by the kingdom. Simply put, Islam was a royal religion. A very fundamental change when Islam became a royal religion was to change the name of the kingdom to the Sultanate, as did the Islamic kingdom in the archipelago that politically attributed his kingdom to names that were considered more Islamic. Azra tended to associate these changes due to the influence of the Ottoman Empire.⁴¹ In the 17th century AD, Aceh Darussalam had a very intense political relationship with the Ottoman Turks, so it was natural that this political-diplomatic

³⁸ Zainuddin, 252.

³⁹ Christine Dobbin, *Gejolah Ekonomi, Kebangkitan Islam*, n.d, 189.

⁴⁰ Dobbin.

⁴¹ Azyumardi Azra, *Islam Nusantara: Jaringan Global dan Lokal* (Bandung: Mizan, 2002), 51.

relationship would have an impact on the kingdoms under the rule of Aceh Darussalam Kingdom. Hamka has his analysis that the title of the Sultan did not originate from the Ottoman Empire. According to Hamka, the title change began in the 13th century AD when Islamic political institutions had begun to stand. With the conversion of the ruler of the archipelago to Islam, the political entity that had been known as a kingdom was then officially called the sultanate.⁴² When referring to sources about Islam in Inderapura as already discussed, the actual change of the kingdom to the sultanate in Inderapura was stronger felt in the 13th century AD. Before Aceh took control of Inderapura, this sultanate already existed and had a government system that was converted to an existing Islamic government system.⁴³

The historical facts above provide an understanding that the Islamization in the Inderapura Kingdom was achieved through three periods. The first period is the arrival of Islam. Islam came to Inderapura brought by traders who came from Arab, docked at the port of Coromandel, reached Barus and spread towards Inderapura. The second period is the entry of Islam into Inderapura. At this time, Islam was brought by Sufis and professional missionaries. The third period is the development of Islam in the Inderapura Kingdom. During this time, Islam was developed by traders in cooperation with political force.

The reconstruction of the Islamization process above is different from the results of de Graaf's research, which states that:

“...that Islam was propagated in South-East Asia by three methods: that is by Muslim traders in the course of peaceful trade, by preachers and holy men who set out from India and Arabia specifically to convert nonbelievers and increase the knowledge of the faithful and lastly by force and waging of war heathen states”.⁴⁴

De Graaf's states that the process of Islamization in Southeast Asia was carried out in three ways: by merchants, Sufis and through expansive political power. De Graaf's theory was also conveyed by

⁴² Hamka, *Sejarah Ummat Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1981), 24

⁴³ Kamaruzzaman Bustamam Ahmad, “Relasi Islam Dan Politik Dalam Sejarah Politik Aceh Abad 16-17,” *Al-Tahrir* 16, no. 2 (November 2016), 267–92.

⁴⁴ P.M. Holf and et. al., “South Asian Islam to the Eighteenth Century,” in *Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. H.J. de Graaf, Jilid 2 (London: the Cambridge University Press, 1970), 123.

Tome Pires when explaining about Islam in Java. According to him, many *Moorers* killed Javanese rulers, then appointed themselves as new rulers. Thus they became leaders and took over trade.⁴⁵ De Graaf's statement which introduced the Islamization process in Southeast Asia is not quite right, because history tends to be more idiotic in nature, where each region has its peculiarities (idiographic in nature). In one area, de Graaf's theory might find its reality, but in another area, it will be difficult and will find a different case. This is also the case with Islam spread in the Malay community in Inderapura. Historical sources did not find any indication of Islam being spread through violent conquests. What was discovered was that Islam was developed by traders who were supported by royal political influence, without war and violence, but from political lobbying and economic negotiations that were mutually beneficial to both parties.

CONCLUSION

The history of the formation of Muslim communities in Malay society was driven more by economic processes and political negotiations, religion only became a passenger in the process. This reality can be portrayed in the Islamic process of the Inderapura community which considers economic and political advantages over religious factors. The hegemony between the Islamic kingdoms (the Kingdom of Banten, Inderapura and Aceh) and even conquering each other by religious matters but due to political and economic factors. This article recommends that there be in-depth research on the collapse of Muslim societies in the economic and political fields.

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⁴⁵ Tome Pires, *Suma Oriental ; Perjalanan Dari Laut Merah*, n.d, 255.

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