

The History Of Islamization In Indonesia: Its Dynamics And Development

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Abstrak

Article History

Received :13-02-2025

Revised :28-02-2025

Accepted :14-03-2025

Keywords:

History;

Islamization In Indonesia;

Dynamics; Development

The introduction of Islam to Indonesia is a complex historical event that occurred over an extended period. There are five theories regarding the entry of Islam into the archipelago, primarily based on the origin of its bearers: the Arab theory, the Chinese theory, the Persian theory, the Indian theory, and the Turkish theory. This research employs a literature study with a qualitative approach. The strategies for spreading Islam in the archipelago were carried out through trade routes, preaching (dawah), marriage, education, and cultural Islamization. The key figures who disseminated Islam in the archipelago were scholars and kings/sultans. Islamization in the archipelago is characterized by its unique features, namely a relatively peaceful and gradual spread, which differs from the pattern of Islamic dissemination in some other regions of the world. Islam was introduced through various channels, especially trade, marriage, and preaching by Muslim traders, scholars, and Sufis. Ports and coastal cities became the initial points of Islamic spread, eventually reaching inland areas. The Islamization process in Indonesia is also marked by intensive adaptation and acculturation with local cultures, resulting in a distinctive form of Islam unique to the archipelago. This accommodative approach allowed Islam to be widely accepted and to become an integral part of the Indonesian identity. The arrival of Islam not only transformed the religious landscape but also shaped new social, political, and cultural dynamics, which have had a profound and lasting influence on the formation of Indonesia's national identity.

Introduction

In Islamic education, various objects and other matters are taught to serve as a means to understand the existence of Allah SWT (Imamuddin, Andryadi, and Zulmuqim, 2020:70). To prepare future generations, Islamic teachings are expected to cultivate a spiritual personality (Abdullah and Sharif, 2019:937).

Education has thus far been oriented towards three pillars: increasing knowledge, providing life skills, and emphasizing how to become a "person" by the students' mindset (Kjellgren and Richter, 2021:1). The presence and emergence of Islamic education in Indonesia are closely related to the arrival of Islam in the archipelago (Asni, 2019:1197). Discussing the arrival and development of Islam in Indonesia, which occurred long ago, is certainly not an easy task. Presenting tangible evidence or expert findings that specify the date and location of significant events is crucial. However, it is undeniable that many experts are eager to explore the arrival and development of Islam in Indonesia. This curiosity has led to discoveries that sometimes align and sometimes differ, resulting in various theories that can serve as references for understanding the emergence and evolution of Islam in Indonesia for the current generation.

Traders and preachers facilitated the arrival of Islam in the archipelago in a peaceful manner (Lailatun and Mawardi 2023:10). Islam spread from its birthplace in the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, to all corners of the world, including Southeast Asia's archipelago. This represents an impressive transformation of religion and civilization. However, as a historical study, this spread has theoretically created complexities, especially in remote areas outside its birthplace. Due to the complexity of Islam, the process of its arrival in the archipelago becomes a valuable theoretical study that enhances knowledge. For instance, many historians offer different perspectives and evidence. The differences arise from the focus of the evidence provided, such as the origin, time of arrival, carriers, and the impact shown. These striking differences inevitably affect conclusions.

The author also acknowledges that various authors have extensively discussed this topic in different articles. Some of the articles the author has encountered include Fauziah Nasution's work, which states that when Islam arrived in Indonesia around 1963, the process of its arrival became a continuously popular subject of study (Demir and Barton 2023:59). As a result, ongoing research aims to improve or strengthen existing studies. Scholars played a central role in Islam's early arrival and advancement in Indonesia. Arab intellectuals, as entrepreneurs, were the central intermediaries for Islam in the archipelago, followed by Sufi missionaries. The image of the Sufi imam is closely linked to two roles: a businessman spreading Islam through commerce and economic centers and a sultan's power while informing about Islam. Similarly, The article outlines three theories about the arrival of Islam in Indonesia: 1) Snouck's Gujarat Theory, which claims Islam originated from Gujarat, based on a) the lack of evidence explaining the role of Arabs in spreading Islam to the archipelago, b) India's long trade history, and c) the oldest Islamic inscription in Sumatra depicting a connection between Sumatra and Gujarat. 2) The Mecca Theory, proposed by Hamka, suggests Islam arrived in Indonesia in the 1st-century H/7th century CE. 3) The theory that studies Persian culture in Indonesian Islamic society, which resembles Persian culture. The Islamization process in Indonesia as very complex and lengthy, based on various theories. The gradual acceptance of Islam by indigenous people has integrated Islam into local traditions, norms, and daily life. This indicates Indonesians are very receptive to external values, demonstrating their openness. This attitude is also accompanied by forming Muslim communities in coastal areas, initially where locals interacted with foreigners (Fuadi and Mahbub, 2023:33).

Research Methods

This study employs the library research method, where the sources consist of books, articles, journals, and other readings related to the research. This method allows researchers to access a broad and deep range of information without conducting fieldwork (Purnomo, 2024). Library research provides an opportunity to explore various perspectives and existing theories, thereby enriching the theoretical framework used in the study. In this context, researchers can evaluate the available literature to understand how previous research has been conducted and how its results can be applied to current studies. This method also allows researchers to identify gaps in the existing literature, which can serve as a basis for further research. Thus, library research functions not only as a theoretical foundation but also as a source of inspiration for innovation in research. Library research limits its activities to library collections only, without requiring field research. This means that researchers do not need to collect data directly from research subjects or objects but instead rely on available written sources. This limitation can be advantageous, especially when field research is not feasible or practical, for instance, when access to research locations is restricted or requires significant time and resources. However, library research also has its drawbacks, such as limited access to data and potential bias from the authors of the sources. Therefore, researchers must carefully select their sources, ensuring they are credible and relevant to the research topic.

Thus, the qualitative approach allows researchers to tailor their analysis methods to the research needs. The data collection technique is the library technique, which collects books and articles relevant to the research. This technique involves searching, gathering, and organizing the required information sources. Researchers must be able to devise effective search strategies to find the most relevant literature. Additionally, researchers must be able to filter and manage the information obtained to be used effectively in analysis. This library technique forms the basis for qualitative research based on library studies.

Discussion

The Entry of Islam in Indonesia and Its Islamization

Before the arrival of Islam, Indonesia had a well-developed and complex civilization. The Nusantara region was inhabited by various tribes and ethnic groups with distinct cultures and beliefs. Great kingdoms, such as Sriwijaya and Majapahit, emerged as significant centers of trade and culture in Southeast Asia. These kingdoms had extensive influence, covering most areas now known as Indonesia and some regions beyond the archipelago (Thahir 2021:23). Before Islam's arrival, Indonesia's dominant belief systems were Hinduism and Buddhism. The influence of these religions is evident in various archaeological relics, such as the Borobudur and Prambanan temples in Central Java. Additionally, animistic and dynamistic traditions were still deeply rooted in many areas. These belief systems significantly influenced the social, political, and cultural structures of Nusantara society at that time .

The pre-Islamic Indonesian economy experienced significant development, particularly in maritime trade. The strategic location of the Indonesian archipelago along the trade route between India and China established it as a crucial trade hub.

Commodities such as spices and fragrant woods from Indonesia were highly sought after in international markets. Prominent ports like Sriwijaya served as significant stopovers for traders worldwide (Azis, Amalina, and Azharotunnafi 2021:117). The social and political structure in pre-Islamic Indonesia was generally feudal, with kings or local rulers holding supreme power. Society was divided into several castes or groups, although this system was not as rigid as in India. Culture and the arts also flourished, as evidenced by various art forms such as wayang (shadow puppetry), dance, and literature that have survived today. Local languages and scripts, such as Old Javanese and the Pallava script, were widely used in communication and kingdom administration.

The arrival of Islam in Indonesia occurred gradually, beginning around the 7th century, primarily through Arab and Indian traders. This process of Islamization was largely peaceful, with little to no military conquest involved. Islam spread along trade routes, through intermarriage, and by the efforts of scholars who preached the faith. As a result, Islamic kingdoms emerged, such as Samudra Pasai in Aceh and Demak in Java, which played a crucial role in disseminating Islam throughout the archipelago (Asroni 2022:104). Although Islam became the dominant religion, the influence of Hindu-Buddhist and local beliefs did not disappear immediately. There was a process of cultural acculturation that resulted in unique forms of Indonesian Islam. For example, wayang art persisted but was adapted to align with Islamic values, and mosque architecture incorporated local elements such as tiered roofs

The development of Islam also brought changes to the social and political systems. The concept of sultanates began to replace the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom system. Islamic law (sharia) started to be implemented in some areas, often coexisting with customary law. Arabic language and script (later adapted into Jawi and Pegon scripts) began to be widely used, especially in religious and literary contexts. In the late 15th and early 16th centuries, when Islam had become established in many parts of Indonesia, European nations began arriving in the archipelago. Their arrival was initially for trade, but it eventually developed into colonialism that lasted for centuries. This brought new dynamics to developing Islam and culture in Indonesia.

Before the arrival of Islam, Indonesia had an advanced civilization influenced strongly by Hindu and Buddhist traditions. The introduction of Islam brought about significant changes, but this transition occurred peacefully and gradually. The process of Islamization in Indonesia resulted in a unique form of Islam that integrated with local cultures. Although Islam eventually became the predominant religion, the cultural heritage from the pre-Islamic era persisted, enriching Indonesia's diversity. This historical journey has shaped Indonesia into a nation characterized by a pluralistic, tolerant, and culturally rich society that continues to evolve today.

The Arrival of Islam in Indonesia

The arrival of Islam in Indonesia was a gradual process that began around the 7th century through Arab and Indian traders. This process of Islamization was characterized by its peaceful nature, without significant military conquest. Islam spread primarily through trade routes, marriage, and the preaching of scholars. Islamic kingdoms began to emerge, such as Samudra Pasai in Aceh and Demak in

Java, which played crucial roles in the spread of Islam throughout the archipelago (Pane 2023:15). Despite Islam becoming the dominant religion, the influence of Hindu-Buddhist and local beliefs did not disappear immediately. Instead, there was a process of cultural acculturation that resulted in unique forms of Indonesian Islam. For example, traditional arts like wayang (shadow puppetry) persisted but were adapted to align with Islamic values, and mosque architecture incorporated local elements such as tiered roofs.

The development of Islam in Indonesia brought significant changes to the social and political systems. The traditional Hindu-Buddhist kingdom system began to be replaced by the concept of sultanates. Islamic law (sharia) was implemented in some areas, often coexisting with customary law. The Arabic language and script were later adapted into Jawi and Pegon scripts and became widely used, particularly in religious and literary contexts (Nasution 2020:26). In the late 15th and early 16th centuries, as Islam became established in many parts of Indonesia, European nations began to arrive in the archipelago. Initially, their presence was for trade, but it eventually led to colonialism, which lasted centuries. This marked a new dynamic in the development of Islam and culture in Indonesia.

Overall, the arrival of Islam in Indonesia resulted in significant changes, yet the process unfolded peacefully and gradually. The Islamization of Indonesia created a distinctive form of Islam integrated with the local culture. Although Islam eventually became the majority religion, the pre-Islamic cultural heritage persisted, enriching Indonesia's diversity. This historical journey has shaped Indonesia into a nation characterized by a pluralistic, tolerant, and culturally rich society that continues to evolve.

Indian Theory

Most Dutch scholars believe that Islam arrived in the Malay Archipelago from India. Among them are Pijnappel from Leiden University, J.P. Moquette, and Snouck Hurgronje. Snouck Hurgronje proposed that the spread of Islam in the archipelago likely occurred in the 12th century (Alaeddin Tekin 2024:193). Pijnappel suggested that Shafi'i Arabs immigrated to India and then brought Islam to the archipelago. This theory was further developed by Snouck Hurgronje, who argued that although Islam had a significant influence in the cities of southern India, many Dhaka Muslims lived there and acted as intermediaries in trade between the Middle East and the islands. They were instrumental in spreading Islam to the Malay Archipelago before the Arabs did. However, Snouck Hurgronje did not specifically identify the southern Indian region as the origin of Islam in the archipelago but noted that its spread began around the 12th century. He concluded that Islam did not originate from Arabia but from India, a conclusion supported by the long-standing trade relations between the archipelago and India.

Another Dutch scholar, Moquette, concluded that the origin of Islam in the archipelago was Gujarat. Similar to other headstones found at the tomb of Maulana Malik Ibrahim (died 822/1419) in Gresik, East Java, their form is the same as headstones in Cambay, Gujarat. Based on these headstone examples, he concluded that headstones in Gujarat were produced for the local market and used for import to other areas, including Sumatra and Java. Additionally, by importing headstones from Gujarat, the archipelago people also adopted Islam from there.

The Gujarat theory, which posits that Islam originated in the archipelago, has certain shortcomings. For instance, Marison highlighted this issue. He noted that Fatimi suggested that the headstones found in various parts of the archipelago might have originated from Gujarat or Bangladesh. However, this does not necessarily imply that Islam was introduced in those regions. Maison refuted this theory and pointed out that Gujarat was still a Hindu kingdom during the Islamization of Samudra Pasai (the first king died in 698/1297). It was only a year later (699/1298) that Muslims ruled Cambay in Gujarat. He argued that if Gujarat was the center of Islam and the spreaders of Islam had entered the archipelago since then, Islam would have been established and developed in Gujarat before the death of Malik Saleh. It would have been established and developed in Gujarat before 698/1297.

Arab Theory

In addition to the Indian theory, there is also the "Arab theory," which posits that Islam in the archipelago originated from the Arabs. This theory is supported by many scholars, including Crawford, Niemann, and its most ardent advocate, Naquib al-Attas (Saragih and Siregar 2023:172). This view is based on the similarities between the schools of thought in Coromandel and Malabar and the majority of Muslims (namely the Shafi'i sect) in the archipelago. According to Arnold, since the early Hijri centuries, or the 7th and 8th centuries CE, Arab traders held a dominant position in East-West Islamic trade. Facts from China further support this hypothesis, suggesting that by the end of the third quarter of the 7th century, Arab merchants had become leaders of Arab Muslim settlements along the coast of Sumatra. Reportedly, some of them married local women, forming a core group of Muslims consisting of Arab immigrants and locals. According to Arnold, members of the Muslim community also engaged in activities to spread Islam. At seminars held in 1969 and 1978 regarding the arrival of Islam in Indonesia, it was concluded that Islam came directly from Arabia, not India. It did not arrive in the 12th or 13th centuries but in the 1st Hijri century or the 7th century CE. It is not difficult to believe that Islam that entered Indonesia originated from Arabia, or more precisely, from Hadramaut as an intermediary. This is based on the background of the Prophet Muhammad, who was born and raised, received revelations, and carried out his prophetic duties in Arabia. Regarding the theories that Islam came from Persia and India, Hassan Asari does not deny the existence and contributions of these two regions during Indonesia's development. According to him, given Indonesia's geographical location far to the east of Arabia, the historical process of Islam's arrival in Indonesia inevitably involves a spatial dimension connecting Indonesia with the Arab world.

The theory put forward by the Palestinian National Authority believes that Islam in the Islamic Archipelago originated from Persia. Hossein Djajadiningrat believed Islam entered the archipelago in the 13th century, with Samudra Pasai as its center. His argument is based on cultural similarities between Islamic communities in the archipelago and Persian culture. Ahmad Mansyur Suryanegara cites four cultural similarities between Persia and Islam in the archipelago. The first is the 10 Muharram or Ashura event, which commemorates Shia traditions. Second, there are similarities in teachings between the Iranian Sufi figure al-Hallaj and Sheikh Siti Jenar. Moens also supports this Persian theory. Moens

states that many Persians were in Aceh during the Sassanian dynasty in the 5th century CE. He claims that "Pasai" derives from the word "Persia." Additionally, Moens states that when Ibn Battuta came to Aceh, there were two scholars from Persia, namely Tadjuddin al-Shirazi and Shiraz Jerman (Sayyid Syarif al-Ashbahani).

Chinese Theory

The role of Muslim communities in early Nusantara and their contribution to the Islamization process during the 15th and 16th centuries is significant. These Muslim communities played a vital role in spreading Islam throughout the region, ultimately shaping the cultural and religious identity of Nusantara (Farkhani et al. 2022:421). They contributed to the dissemination of the religion and the economic, social, and political development of the area. Through interactions with traders and sailors from various parts of the world, Muslim communities in Nusantara became a bridge for cultural and knowledge exchange. This facilitated assimilation and acculturation, enriching local cultures with Islamic values. Historical records from China provide valuable information about the existence of Islamic communities in the Nusantara region. These sources document interactions between local inhabitants and Muslim traders from various areas, including Arabia and Persia. Chinese documentation indicates that Muslim communities existed in Nusantara as early as the 7th and 8th centuries. This information offers insights into the early traces of Islam in Southeast Asia and how the religion began to spread throughout the region. The presence of Muslim communities in Nusantara at that time also highlights the strong trade relationships between Nusantara and the Islamic world.

In addition to accounts from Arab sources, Chinese reports indicate the presence of Arabs and Muslims in the archipelago as early as the 7th and 8th centuries. This suggests intense interactions between Muslim communities and local inhabitants. These relationships were not limited to trade but also included cultural and religious exchanges. Arabs and Muslims in Nusantara significantly influenced the region's cultural and spiritual development. They brought knowledge, technology, and Islamic values, which were then adopted by local communities. This suggests that Islam may have been established in China before spreading to other areas. The spread of Islam from China to Nusantara indicates the existence of complex trade and migration routes. These routes facilitated cultural and religious exchanges over the centuries. The spread of Islam through these routes also demonstrates the flexibility and adaptability of the religion in facing various local cultures and traditions. This process allowed Islam to be widely accepted in Nusantara and become integral to community life.

For example, if the Wajinzi Mosque (community) were founded in Guangzhou during the 7th century, the evidence of Muslims in Nusantara at that time would likely be limited to graves or interactions with trade representatives. This suggests that although Muslim communities existed in Nusantara early on, their physical traces might not be widely found. However, the social and economic interactions between Muslim communities and local inhabitants had a significant impact on the Islamization process in the region. The existence of graves and other historical sites is substantial evidence for understanding the spread of Islam in Nusantara. Furthermore, the unique Chinese language

contributed to the presence and functionality of these communities, making information accessible and easier to understand. Language became essential for communication and information dissemination between Muslim communities and local inhabitants. Using the Chinese language in documentation and daily communication enabled effective information exchange. This strengthened the relationship between Muslim communities and local inhabitants and facilitated the spread of Islam in Nusantara.

The role of language as a communication tool cannot be underestimated. Language serves as a means of exchanging information and a medium for spreading cultural and religious values. By adapting to local languages, local societies could accept Muslim communities more readily. This paved the way for a broader and deeper spread of Islam in Nusantara. The role of language in the Islamization process highlights the importance of effective communication in spreading religion and culture. Overall, the role of Muslim communities in early Nusantara was crucial in the Islamization process in the region. They contributed to disseminating religion and economic, social, and political development. Their interactions with local inhabitants and international communities significantly impacted the cultural and religious identity of Nusantara. Through assimilation and acculturation, Islam became an integral part of life in Nusantara, forming a unique and diverse identity.

Turkish Theory

Martin van Bruinessen proposed an alternative theory of Islamization in Indonesia. In two of his works, Bruinessen revealed that in addition to the Arabs and Chinese, the Kurds and Turks also played a role in the Islamization of Indonesia (Hoesterey 2022:1). This approach offers a new perspective that enriches our understanding of Islam's spread in the archipelago. Bruinessen examined a wealth of data to support his hypothesis, demonstrating that the process of Islamization in Indonesia was more complex and involved multiple actors from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This theory challenges conventional views and invites us to reconsider the roles of various groups in spreading Islam in the region. One significant aspect noted by Bruinessen is the crucial role played by Kurdish scholars in disseminating Islam in the Indonesian archipelago. He observed that books written by Kurdish scholars had a substantial influence on Islamic teachings in Indonesia. For example, the book "Tanwir al-Qulub" by Muhammad Amin al-Kurdi is very popular among the Naqshbandi order in Indonesia. Muhammad Amin was a Kurdish scholar whose work became a key reference for followers of this order. The popularity of this book illustrates how the works of Kurdish scholars could reach and impact religious practices in Indonesia.

Furthermore, Bruinessen highlighted the role of Ibrahim al-Kurani, a Kurdish scholar, in teaching Indonesian scholars in Medina. Ibrahim al-Kurani imparted knowledge to scholars from the Shattariyah order, who brought these teachings to the archipelago. Many of his students were from Indonesia, indicating a close intellectual connection between Kurdish scholars and the Indonesian archipelago. This relationship shows that the Islamization process in Indonesia occurred through trade routes, educational networks, and scholarly exchanges. Islamic traditions such as Syukuran and Barzanji also caught Bruinessen's

attention. The Barzanji tradition, popular in Indonesia and recited during every Mawlid of the Prophet on the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal, has strong roots in Kurdistan. Bruinessen noted that Barzanji was an influential scholar in Kurdistan and a family name of the sheiks of the order. The presence of this tradition in Indonesia demonstrates how cultural and religious elements from Kurdistan could spread and adapt to the local context in the archipelago.

Additionally, Bruinessen was struck by the prevalence of Kurdish terms and names, such as Haji Kurdi, Jalan Kurdi, and Gang Kurdi, both in other countries and in Indonesia. These names indicate a cultural influence that has become ingrained in the daily lives of Indonesians. This phenomenon suggests a historical trace of interactions between the Kurdish and Indonesian communities, possibly extending back many years. Bruinessen's theory requires further exploration to understand the extent of Kurdish influence in the Islamization process in Indonesia. Nonetheless, this theory opens new avenues for discussion and encourages researchers to delve deeper into the historical connections between Indonesia and Kurdistan within Islamic history. By recognizing the various actors involved in this process, we can better understand the dynamics of Islam's spread in the archipelago.

Discussion of this theory is also essential in understanding Islamic identity in Indonesia. By acknowledging the diverse cultural and intellectual influences that shape religious practices in Indonesia, we can better appreciate the diversity and richness of Islam in the country. Bruinessen's theory challenges us to revisit history more inclusively and value various groups' contributions in shaping our religious identity. Overall, Martin van Bruinessen's theory on the role of the Kurds in the Islamization of Indonesia offers a fresh perspective that enriches our understanding of Islamic history in the archipelago. Through thorough research and analysis, Bruinessen invites us to reconsider existing historical narratives and opens the door for broader discussions about regional cultural and religious interactions. (Haidar Putra Daulay: 2019).

The Development of Islam in Indonesia

In the development of Islam, preaching and religious teachers are crucial. In a short period, Islam spread throughout Indonesia. Regarding the growth of Islam in Indonesia, Islamic scholars and kingdoms made significant contributions, which is why Islam has become the predominant religion in most parts of Indonesia (Asiah et al. 2022:3). The development of Islam in Indonesia led to establishing Islamic institutions such as those in education, law, politics, and economics. Educational institutions began with mosques as places of worship and teaching. In mosques, children and adults would study the Quran. Educational institutions outside mosques, including pesantren, dayah, and surau, also emerged. Islamic legal institutions were also needed, as Islamic law played a crucial role in society. In Islamic law, society must address many aspects, such as marriage, inheritance, and political systems. The emergence of Islamic kingdoms such as Pasai, Perlak, Aceh Darussalam in Sumatra; Demak, Pajang Mataram, Banten, and Cirebon in Java; and various other islands in Indonesia, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Maluku.

One debatable point is that Islam entered Indonesia at different times. Islam had entered certain regions long ago, while other areas experienced a decline in

Islam. In this context, Islamic historians agree that Islam first entered Indonesia in Sumatra. Meanwhile, the tombstone at the grave of Letima Fatima Bent Maimon (Letima) is believed to mark the arrival of Islam in Java around 475 H (1082 CE). The political situation accelerated the spread of Islam in Java when internal conflicts weakened Majapahit. Coastal regents managed to eliminate the influence of the Majapahit king. With coastal regents embracing Islam, the religion became a new force in societal development. Sufi life also flourished in Indonesia, with some believing that one method of Islamization in Indonesia was through Sufism. The life of Sufism thrived in Indonesia, with figures like Hamzah Fansuri, Abdurrauf Assingkili, Burhanuddin Ulakan, and the saints in Java. Islamization did not stop with establishing Islamic kingdoms; it continued intensively through various methods and channels. These channels of Islamization include:

Trade Channel: In the early stages, the channel of Islamization was traded. The bustling trade traffic from the 7th to the 16th century CE involved Muslim traders (Arabs, Persians, and Indians) participating in trade from the western, southeastern, and eastern parts of Asia. From an economic perspective, Muslim traders had a higher social status than most natives, making them attractive to local inhabitants, especially noblewomen, who became their wives. Before marriage, they would convert to Islam. As they had descendants, their communities expanded. Eventually, Muslim villages, regions, and kingdoms emerged. This marriage channel was more beneficial when it involved Muslim traders marrying the daughters of nobles or kings, as these figures would then accelerate the process of Islamization. This occurred with Raden Rahmat or Sunan Ampel marrying Nyai Manila, Sunan Gunung Jati with Nyai Kawunganten, Brawijaya with a princess from Champa, who gave birth to Raden Patah (the first king of Denmark), and others. Conducted by preachers who arrived with traders. These preachers could also be wandering Sufis.

Sufi teachers taught theosophy, with teachings familiar to Indonesians. They were skilled in mystical matters and had healing powers. Some married local noblewomen. With Sufism, the form of Islam taught to the natives resembled their previous Hindu beliefs, making the new religion easy to understand and accept. Among the Sufi scholars who provided teachings aligned with Indonesian pre-Islamic thought were Hamzah Fansuri in Aceh, Sheikh Lemah Abang, and Sunan Pangung in Java. This mystical teaching continued to develop into the 19th and even the 20th century CE. Islamization was also carried out through education, both in pesantren and religious boarding schools organized by religious teachers, kiai, and scholars. Future scholars, spiritual teachers, and kiai received religious education in these institutions. After leaving the pesantren, they returned to their villages and preached Islam in specific areas. For example, the pesantren was founded by Raden Rahmat in Ampel Denta Surabaya and Sunan Giri in Giri. Many graduates of the Giri pesantren were invited to the Moluccas to teach Islam.

The most famous art channel for Islamization was the wayang (shadow puppetry) performances. Sunan Kalijaga is said to have been the most skilled in staging wayang. He never asked for payment for his performances but instead asked the audience to recite the shahada with him. Most wayang stories were still derived from the Mahabharata and Ramayana, but Islamic teachings and heroes' names were inserted into the stories. Other arts were also used for Islamization, such as literature (hikayat, babad, etc.), architecture, and carving. In Maluku and

South Sulawesi, most people embraced Islam after their kings converted first. The political influence of the king greatly impacted the spread of Islam in these areas. Moreover, in Sumatra, Java, and Eastern Indonesia, Islamic kingdoms fought against non-Islamic kingdoms for political reasons. The political victories of Islamic kingdoms attracted many inhabitants of non-Islamic kingdoms to convert to Islam (Isbah 2020:65).

Figures in the Spread of Islam in Indonesia

The spread of Islam in Indonesia involved various figures who played crucial roles in the dissemination and development of Islam in the region (Upal and Cusack 2021:23). One of the key figures who spread Islam in Java was Sunan Kalijaga. As one of the revered nine saints, he is known for his tolerant and inclusive approach towards local culture. Sunan Kalijaga successfully integrated Javanese cultural elements with Islamic teachings, allowing Islam to be well-received by the local community. This approach not only strengthened the position of Islam in the area but also enriched the local culture with Islamic values. Sunan Kalijaga symbolizes how Islam can adapt and integrate with local cultures without losing its identity. In addition to Sunan Kalijaga, Sunan Gunung Jati was also a significant figure in the spread of Islam in Indonesia, particularly in West Java (Akhmad Jazuli Afandi 2023:1). Also known as Syarif Hidayatullah was the founder of the Cirebon Sultanate and played a key role in Islamizing the West Java region. Through diplomacy and education, Sunan Gunung Jati successfully disseminated Islamic teachings and built a strong foundation for the development of Islam in the area. The Cirebon Sultanate became a center for spreading Islam and Islamic culture in West Java, which continues to thrive to this day.

The Wali Songo, a group of nine saints consisting of Sunan Gresik, Sunan Ampel, Sunan Bonang, Sunan Drajat, Sunan Kudus, Sunan Kalijaga, Sunan Muria, Sunan Gunung Jati, and Sunan Walisongo, played a central role in the spread of Islam in Java during the 15th and 16th centuries (Hasyim 2021:1). They were known for their innovative and adaptive preaching methods, which allowed Islam to be widely accepted in Javanese society. Each saint had a unique approach and contribution to the spread of Islam, creating a strong network to support the development of Islam throughout Java and its surrounding areas. Beyond Java, figures like Syekh Yusuf, known as Tuan Guru Bajang, also played significant roles in the spread of Islam. As an Islamic scholar and religious leader from Makassar, Syekh Yusuf was exiled by the Dutch colonial government to Tanjungpura, Banda Island, and eventually to the Cape of Good Hope (now Cape Town, South Africa). Despite his exile, Syekh Yusuf contributed to the spread of Islam in those regions, demonstrating his resilience and dedication to spreading Islamic teachings.

Another figure who played a role in the spread of Islam in Indonesia was Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, known as Sunan Bonang. He was renowned for his preaching method, disregarding social or economic backgrounds. Sunan Bonang could reach various layers of society and spread Islamic teachings widely with his inclusive approach. His contributions became an essential pillar in strengthening Islam's position in Java. Sayyid Ali Akbar Al-Habsyi, a scholar from Hadhramaut, Yemen, spread Islam in Sumatra and surrounding areas in the 19th century. His

descendants, known as the Habsyi family, became significant figures in the religious world in Indonesia. Through his teachings and preaching, Sayyid Ali Akbar Al-Habsyi successfully instilled strong Islamic values in Sumatra, which continue to develop today.

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah, was also a significant figure in the history of Islam in Indonesia. As a reformist scholar, he sought to unite Indonesian Muslims through the organization he founded. Muhammadiyah plays a vital role in education and community welfare and has become one of Indonesia's most prominent Islamic organizations. Through his vision and mission, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan brought significant changes to the Islamic community in Indonesia. Hamka, or Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, was a scholar, writer, and politician who contributed to the development of Islam in Indonesia through his works, including Islamic books and literature. He was also the founder of the Islamic University of Indonesia (UII), which has become one of Indonesia's leading centers of Islamic education. Hamka inspired many to delve into and develop Islamic teachings in Indonesia through his thoughts.

In Sumatra, figures like Syekh Yahya and Syekh Abdurrauf Singkil played essential roles in the spread of Islam. Syekh Yahya became a preacher who spread Islamic teachings to various regions in Sumatra, including Palembang, Bangka Belitung, Riau, and the Malay Peninsula (Malaysia). Meanwhile, Syekh Abdurrauf Singkil, known as Teungku Syiah Kuala, was a great scholar of Aceh who significantly influenced the spread of Islam in Sumatra and the archipelago in general. Through their preaching and teachings, they succeeded in strengthening the position of Islam in the region.

Challenges and Obstacles in the Spread of Islam in Indonesia

One of the main challenges in the spread of Islam in Indonesia is the cultural and belief diversity that is deeply rooted in society (Arifianto 2020:37). Before the arrival of Islam, various regions in the archipelago already had established belief systems, such as animism, dynamism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Islamic missionaries faced resistance from adherents of these older beliefs and had to find ways to integrate Islamic teachings with local traditions without losing the essence of Islam itself (Al Qurtuby 2020:105). This acculturation process required a long time and a wise approach to be accepted by the local communities. As the largest archipelagic country in the world, Indonesia presents significant geographical challenges for the spread of Islam. The vast distances between islands and the diverse natural conditions made it difficult for missionaries to reach all archipelago areas. The limited transportation and communication facilities during the early periods of Islam's spread also posed serious obstacles. As a result, Islamization occurred at different speeds in various regions, with coastal areas generally being more quickly influenced by Islam than inland areas.

The spread of Islam in Indonesia also faced political challenges, especially from the pre-existing Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms. In some regions, the arrival of Islam was seen as a threat to the status quo, leading to resistance and conflict. An example of this is the Majapahit Kingdom's resistance to Islam's growing political power on the northern coast of Java. Additionally, competition among Islamic sultanates for influence and territorial control sometimes hindered Islam's broader

and more peaceful spread. Another obstacle to the spread of Islam in Indonesia was the limited access to education and a deep understanding of Islamic teachings. In the early stages of the spread, the number of scholars and religious teachers was minimal, while the areas to be reached were vast. The scarcity of Islamic literature in local languages also posed a challenge in spreading a comprehensive understanding of Islam. As a result, in some areas, Islamic practices mixed with local beliefs, sometimes leading to understandings that were not entirely aligned with authentic Islamic teachings. This challenge continues into the modern era, where efforts to improve the quality of Islamic education and a correct understanding of Islamic teachings remain a key focus in the development of Islam in Indonesia.

Marriage, education, and cultural Islamization were among the methods used. Fourth, the figures who spread Islam in the archipelago were kings and scholars. In Java, the Islamic missionary scholars were part of the Wali Songo (Nine Saints), consisting of Maulana Malik Ibrahim (Sunan Gresik), Raden Rahmat (Sunan Ampel), Maulana Makdum Ibrahim (Sunan Bonang), Raden Sahid (Sunan Kalijaga), Syarif Hidayatullah (Sunan Gunung Jati), Raden Qasim (Sunan Drajad), Raden Paku (Sunan Giri), Ja'far Shadiq (Sunan Kudus), and Raden Umar Said (Sunan Muria).

Conclusion

Before the arrival of Islam, Indonesia was primarily influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism. This influence can be seen in various archaeological relics, such as the Borobudur and Prambanan temples in Central Java. Additionally, animistic and dynamistic traditions were deeply rooted in many regions, shaping the social, political, and cultural systems of Nusantara society at that time. Islam entered Indonesia through trade, marriage, education, and the efforts of traders, scholars, and Sufis who preached the religion. This process unfolded over several centuries, beginning in the 7th century and gaining momentum from the 13th to the 16th centuries. The peaceful nature of this spread allowed Islam to blend with local cultures, resulting in a distinct Indonesian form of Islam.

There are various theories regarding the introduction of Islam to the archipelago, each based on the origin of its bearers. These include the Arab, Chinese, Persian, Indian, and Turkish theories. The primary strategies for disseminating Islam in the archipelago involved trade routes, preaching, marriage, education, and the cultural Islamization process. Kings and scholars played pivotal roles in the spread of Islam in the archipelago. In Java, the Islamic missionary scholars known as the Wali Songo (Nine Saints) were instrumental in this effort. They included Maulana Malik Ibrahim (Sunan Gresik), Raden Rahmat (Sunan Ampel), Maulana Makdum Ibrahim (Sunan Bonang), Raden Sahid (Sunan Kalijaga), Syarif Hidayatullah (Sunan Gunung Jati), Raden Qasim (Sunan Drajad), Raden Paku (Sunan Giri), Ja'far Shadiq (Sunan Kudus), and Raden Umar Said (Sunan Muria).

One distinctive feature of Islam's spread in Indonesia is its ability to adapt and integrate with local cultures. Islamic missionaries, particularly Sufis, approached indigenous traditions and beliefs in a manner that respected existing

cultural practices. Instead of seeking to eradicate these practices, they aimed to incorporate Islamic values. This approach led to a unique form of Islam in Indonesia, characterized by a blend of Islamic elements and local traditions, as reflected in art, architecture, and religious practices.

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