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Journal for the Study of Islamic History and Culture



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Democratic Decline: A Comparison between
Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah**

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مجلد اسلام Nusantara

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*Moh Yusni Amru Ghozali, Dien Madjid,
Fariz Alnizar*

Strategies of the Ulama in the Process of Islamization During Colonial Period in Nusantara

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Abstract

This research focuses on the cultural strategies played by Indonesian *ulama* in the process of Islamization in the archipelago (Nusantara) during the colonial period. The cultural strategy built by Indonesian *ulama* is fundamentally inseparable from the seven elements of culture, namely knowledge, technology, economics, society, language, art, and religion. In this research, not all cultural elements are explained. Only the elements that were strategically directly used by *ulama* in Nusantara during the colonial period are explained. The method and concept of explanation is to explain the theory related to cultural elements according to experts, then contextualize it with the historical reality of Nusantara, especially the role of *ulama* in operating cultural elements as an Islamization strategy. Then, continued with relevant analysis, either as a conclusion or positioning it as an inspiration that gives birth to ideas. This research concludes that there are four cultural elements that were intensively played by Indonesian *ulama* in the Islamization process during the colonial period, namely the language system, political system, economic system, and knowledge system.

Keywords: *Ulama*, Nusantara, Strategy, Colonial, Islamization

Abstrak

Penelitian ini fokus pada strategi kebudayaan yang diperankan ulama Nusantara dalam proses Islamisasi di Nusantara pada masa kolonial. Strategi kebudayaan yang dibangun ulama Nusantara pada dasarnya tidak lepas dari tujuh unsur kebudayaan yaitu pengetahuan, teknologi, ekonomi, kemasyarakatan, bahasa, seni dan agama. Dalam penelitian ini, tidak semua unsur kebudayaan dijelaskan kecuali unsur-unsur yang secara strategis langsung diperankan ulama di Nusantara pada masa kolonial. Metode dan konsep penjelasannya adalah dengan memaparkan teori terkait dengan unsur kebudayaan menurut para pakar, selanjutnya dikontekstualisasikan dengan realitas sejarah Nusantara, khususnya pada peran ulama dalam mengoperasikan unsur-unsur kebudayaan sebagai strategi Islamisasi. Lalu, dilanjutkan dengan analisis yang relevan, baik sebagai sebuah kesimpulan atau memosisikannya sebagai inspirasi yang melahirkan gagasan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan ada empat unsur kebudayaan yang secara intensif diperankan ulama Nusantara dalam proses Islamisasi pada masa kolonial yakni sistem bahasa, sistem politik, sistem ekonomi dan sistem pengetahuan.

Kata Kunci: Ulama, Nusantara, Strategi, Kolonial, Islamisasi

الملخص

الاهتمام من هذا البحث هو الاستراتيجية الثقافية التي جرى بها علماء نوسانتارا في عملية الأسلمة (Islamization) خلال الاستعمارية. إن الاستراتيجية الثقافية التي بناها علماء نوسانتارا في الحقيقة لا تنفصل عن عناصر الثقافة السبعة، وهي المعرفة والتكنولوجيا والاقتصاد والمجتمع واللغة والفن والدين. لم يتم هذا البحث في شرح جميع عناصر الثقافة باستثناء تلك التي جرى بها مباشرة من قبل علماء نوسانتارا خلال الاستعمارية. أما طريقة شرحه هو الشرح في نظرية العناصر الثقافية وفقا للخبراء، ثم يتم وضعها في سياقها مع الواقع التاريخي في نوسانتارا، وخاصة دور العلماء في تشغيل العناصر الثقافية كاستراتيجية أسلمة. ثم يتبع ذلك بتحليلات ذات صلة بالموضوع، إما على سبيل الاستنتاج أو على سبيل الاستلهام الذي يلد الأفكار. ويخلص هذا البحث إلى أن هناك أربعة عناصر ثقافية التي جرى بها العلماء في نوسانتارا دورا مكثفا في عملية الأسلمة خلال الاستعمارية، وهي النظام اللغوي والنظام السياسي والنظام الاقتصادي والنظام المعرفي.

الكلمة الرئيسية: العلماء، نوسانتارا، الاستراتيجية، الاستعمارية، الأسلمة

The Relationship between the Cultural Strategy of Indonesian *Ulama* and Colonialism

When Islam first entered Nusantara, and most of the region was still controlled by Hindu kingdoms, there were at least four cultural elements that were touched by the strategy of Indonesian *ulama* in their missionary efforts (Islamization). The first element is the social sector marked by the establishment of Islamic kingdoms, such as Banten, Mataram, Pasai, Demak and others. Second, in the field of language, Arabic began to spread among the people of Nusantara through stories written by *ulama*, chronicles, poems from Sufi *ulama*, and of course books containing themes of Islamic teachings. Third, in the field of arts; The most obvious effect can be felt in wayang plays, where the characters are replaced with Muslim names, through the stories told in wayang. Fourth, in the field of religion; This is evident in the atmosphere of religious rituals. These four cultural elements have been touched from the start by the strategies implemented by Indonesian *ulama* during the Hindu period. This is a strong sign of a cultural transition, or it could also be a transition of civilization from Hinduism to Islam.¹

This explanation implies that before Islam came, the people of Nusantara already had an established social system and cultural system. Islam does not exist in an empty space. In fact, before Hindus came, the archipelago already had a fairly advanced social and cultural system. Just as Islam has had an influence on the four existing cultural elements, so has Hinduism. It has had an influence on the people of Nusantara in the fields of society, language, arts and religion.² Hindu-Buddhist pioneered the birth of the Pajajaran, Srivijaya, Majapahit, and other kingdoms. Hinduism also introduced Sanskrit and its letters. In the field of religion, Hinduism introduced the people of Nusantara to religion. Before, they believed in animism and dynamism in the gods. In the social system, three environments are formed, namely the palace environment, the religious environment (wihara) and the people's environment. Hinduism has a strong influence on Indonesian society in three areas.

The history of the people of Nusantara—from before the arrival of Hinduism, until the Hindu era, then the Islamic era—shows continuity. The strategic patterns used by Indonesian *ulama* in influencing Indonesian society are the same as those used by Hindus. Even in the social field, there is not much difference between the Hindu system of society and the system of society when Islam triumphed, namely that there was a palace environment, *ulama*, and the people. The most prominent difference with the community system in the Hindu era was the existence of traders and the strong position of traders in the Islamic community system. Both Hinduism and Islam entered Indonesian society through the acculturation route where Indonesian society and culture remained the developing subject, enriching themselves with Hindu or Islamic elements.³

During the colonial era, influence came with a completely different and penetrative system of knowledge, technology, and economics. The people of Nusantara began to feel the difference. This is what then gave rise to a new awareness, a nationalist awareness,

1 H.M. Rasjidi, *Strategi Kebudayaan dan Pembaharuan Pendidikan Nasional*, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1980) h. 71.

2 H.M. Rasjidi, *Strategi Kebudayaan dan Pembaharuan Pendidikan Nasional*, h. 69.

3 H.M. Rasjidi, *Strategi Kebudayaan dan Pembaharuan Pendidikan Nasional*, h. 71-72.

which was then fostered by the *ulama* with various strategies that were strong with Islamic elements. Thus, elements of Indonesian culture began to show their strength. Step by step, it began to rise, from small regional, religious movements; from cultural, educational, social movements to political movements and then giving birth to unity. This cultural process ultimately finds expression in political concepts. This is where the cultural strategy began to appear sharply, which emerged from the Indonesian *ulama* movements.

According to Clifford, cultural strategies are people's actions in organizing and representing their identity, as well as in maintaining, changing or criticizing existing cultural norms and values.⁴ Initially, the Islamic kingdoms in Nusantara were kingdoms that did not have political unity. In fact, attacks and wars often occurred between them. For example, the struggle for power between the sons of Sultan Alaudin Riayat Syah, between Sultan Husen, as Sultan of Aceh, was attacked by his two brothers, Sultan Aru and Sultan Pariaman.⁵ It was the teachings (Sufism) and trade that strengthened the relationship between these kingdoms, so that the seeds of unity were born, coupled with a shared awareness of the dangers of colonialism in their midst.⁶ They united their vision and mission in facing entrenched colonialism. *Ulama*, indirectly through the teachings they spread, have instilled critical power in society towards colonialism, especially towards their norms and cultures. In the context of cultural strategy—according to Clifford who specifically explains organizing—the position of *ulama* is that of an organizing figure, a movement leader and one who mobilizes society. Even in the heyday of the Kingdom of Aceh, when Sultan Iskandar Muda was in power, *ulama* had strategic positions such as Hulubalang (Personal Guard of the Palace) and others. They even had the Sultan's blessing to establish religious institutions, such as Balai Setia *Ulama*, Balai Jamaah Association *Ulama*, and Balai Setia Hukama, as study institutions revived by *ulama*. The educational institutions are Meunasah (Ibtidaiyah), Rangkang (Tsanawiyah), Dayah (Aliyah), and Dayah Teungku Cik (Higher Education).⁷ These were educational institutions managed independently by *ulama* with the blessing of Sultan Iskandar Muda which continued to exist until the 17th century under Sultan Iskandar Tsani. Hamzah Fansuri, Abdurrauf al-Singkli, and Syamsuddin al-Sumatrani are figures born from these institutions.⁸

Where Clifford focuses cultural strategy on organizing and representing one's identity, Siegel focuses cultural strategy on community action in its efforts to change or criticize the existing social and political order, through the use of symbols and alternative cultural practices.⁹ Siegel explicitly positions cultural strategy as a critique, not only of the social order, but more specifically of the political order. Reading the Indonesian *ulama* movement during the colonial period, especially the figures who are the objects of this research, not only did they criticize the politics of colonialism, but more than that it was resistance, so strategies in these conditions were really needed. *Ulama* in this context have a quite significant role. Bearing in mind that in Nusantara, often when a kingdom collapses, there

4 James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, (Harvard University, Press, 1997)

5 M. Yahya Harun, *Kerajaan Islam Nusantara Abad XVI & XVII*, (Yogyakarta: Kurnia Sejahtera, 1995), h. 12.

6 Abd. Rahim Yunus, "Benih Kesatuan Nusantara pada Abad Ke-17 Melalui Ajaran Tasawuf," *Jurnal Adabiyah*, Edisi Perdana, Tahun 1997, h. 37.

7 A. Hasjmy, *Kebudayaan Aceh dalam Sejarah*, (Jakarta: Penerbit Beuna, 1983), h. 191-192.

8 M. Yahya Harun, *Kerajaan Islam Nusantara Abad XVI & XVII*, h. 14-20.

9 James Siegel, *A New Criminal Type in Jakarta: Counter-Revolution Today*, (Duke University, 1998)

is a shift in power from the palace group to the *ulama* group. So that *ulama* are no longer just intellectual agents, they are also figures and leaders of movements and struggles.¹⁰ This means that Islamic institutions, which were previously managed by the kingdom, have shifted to individual responsibility without the palace. Most Islamic kingdoms that collapsed were due to colonial attacks. This is what positioned the *ulama* in Nusantara at that time to go face to face with the politics of imperialism. It is not surprising then that it is said that Islamic centers led by *ulama* quickly and potentially became anti-colonial bases.¹¹

It should be acknowledged that Islamic ideology has great social power in facing colonialism. Many of the major and historic wars in the archipelago, as well as small-scale rebellions, were driven by *ulama*. For example, the Paderi war, the Diponegoro war, the Aceh war, the Cilegon incident, Cimareme, and others.¹² In fact, it was the *ulama* who were able to change the perception of a war whose political motives changed to religious motives in the name of jihad against non-believers, for example.¹³ The colonials were very aware of this potential, so they took aggressive and penetrative preventive measures. Dekker himself concluded, "If there was no Islamic spirit in Indonesia, true nationhood would have long disappeared from Indonesia."¹⁴ Therefore, Islamic power was the main colonial target to be paralyzed using various strategies and methods. The peak was in the 19th century when the Netherlands, in dealing with Islam specifically, created a policy initiated by Hurgronje with the term "Islam Politiek".¹⁵ The 16th to 19th centuries were the most intensive periods of struggle between Islam and colonialism and political modernization.¹⁶

This is different to Indriantoro and Supomo. They explained that cultural strategy is society's actions in adapting to cultural and environmental changes, as well as in developing innovation and creativity to create added value and competitive advantage.¹⁷ This cultural strategy's emphasis on innovation and creativity in the Indonesian context can be traced from the preaching patterns carried out by *ulama*. For example, by recomposing Arabic poetry into Malay in the form of stories. These stories are usually created to instill a certain teaching or doctrine. In the Hikayat Patani, for example, it is told that a king and his royal family converted to Islam, so they no longer ate pork, while other habits continued. In this saga (hikayat) the author inserts the doctrine of the prohibition of eating pork. Also

10 Kamaruzzaman Busatamam Ahmad, "Relasi Islam dan Politik dalam Sejarah Politik Aceh Abad 16-17," *At-Tahrir*, Vol. 16, No. 2, November 2016, h. 273.

11 Effendi, "Politik Kolonial Belanda terhadap Islam di Indonesia dalam Perspektif Sejarah," *Jurnal TAPIS*, vol. 8, No. 1, Tahun 2012, h. 93.

12 Sartono Kartodirdjo (dkk), *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia*, (Jakarta, Balai Pustaka, 1977) h. 75. Di Jawa sendiri ada tokoh Kiai Kajoran, adalah *ulama* dimasanya yang memimpin pemberontakan terhadap Susuhunan Amangkurat I pengganti Sultan Agung setelah wafat pada tahun 1646. Amangkurat I terkenal anti *ulama* dan otoriter, bahkan terlibat dalam pembunuhan Sunan Giri sebagai mertuanya. Inilah masa de-Islamisasi di Mataram dan memiliki dampak yang signifikan. (Lihat, M. Yahya Harun, *Kerajaan Islam Nusantara Abad XVI & XVII*, h. 27-30).

13 T. Alfian Ibrahim, *The Ulama in Acehnese Society: A Preliminary Observation*, (Aceh: Pusat Latihan Penelitian Ilmu-ilmu Sosial Aceh, 1975), h. 3

14 Effendi, "Politik Kolonial Belanda terhadap Islam di Indonesia dalam Perspektif Sejarah," *Jurnal TAPIS*, vol. 8, No. 1, Tahun 2012, h. 94.

15 Aqib Sminto, *Politik Islam Hindia Belanda*, (Jakarta: LP3S, 1985) h. 2.

16 Muhammad Sueb, "Penelusuran Pola Islamisasi di Indonesia," *Mozaic Islam Nusantara*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Tahun 2016, h. 70.

17 Nur Indriantoro dan Bambang Supomo, *Metodologi Penelitian Bisnis untuk Akuntansi dan Manajemen*, (BPFE-Yogyakarta, 2011), h. 24.

including the creative efforts made by Indonesian *ulama* at that time as part of their strategy, namely creating myths from the stories of kings converting to Islam, otherwise known as conversion myths. Like the myth of King Marah-Silu's conversion to Islam who later received the title Sultan Malikul Saleh. The next innovation carried out by the *ulama* was mythicization, where this process was carried out because there were internal similarities with the pre-Islamic belief system. Sufism scholars and tarekat who hold the leadership in the Islamization process in Nusantara, are able to provide a new touch in the form of mystical traditions such as supernatural powers. Apart from that, Indonesian *ulama* also initiated the giving of special titles to kings who had converted to Islam. This is the innovation and creativity of Indonesian *ulama* seen from the perspective of the cultural strategy they aim to make the Islamization process a success. For example, Marah Silu received the title *Zhillullâh fî al-Ardh* (God's shadow on the face of the earth). These kinds of titles are even affixed to state currency, such as the title *Nâshir al-Dunyâ wa al-Dîn* (helper of the world and religion). This title was stated on the Malacca currency in the 15th century.¹⁸

Four Cultural Elements Played by Indonesian *Ulama* in the Islamization Process

The experts then made conclusions which aim was to identify the cultural strategies used by Indonesian *ulama* in facing colonialism. Among them is first, by forming religious movements such as tarekat, Islamic boarding schools, majlis taklim, and madrasas, in order to strengthen the identity and Islamic values held by society. These movements then became the basis for spreading Islamic doctrine and education to the community.¹⁹ Second, Indonesian *ulama* strengthened local traditions such as customs that are in line with Islamic values. In this way, the *ulama* tried to integrate Islamic teachings and local culture, as an effort to reject colonial efforts that destroy the cultural identity of the community.²⁰ Third, the use of language and literature. Indonesian *ulama* use local language and literature to spread Islamic teachings and strengthen the community's cultural identity. They wrote Islamic books in Arabic and Malay in the form of thematic, poetry, saga and pantun.²¹

This proves that during the colonial period, Indonesian *ulama* took several steps in realizing cultural strategies to maintain culture amidst the influence of colonialism. This includes converting traditional ceremonies such as weddings, circumcisions, and so on. But in certain cases, Indonesian *ulama* also used western technology that existed at that time in order to advance Islamic teachings and spread them, such as writing religious doctrines in book form. During the colonial period, according to Dawam Raharjo, *ulama* held the view that religion and culture were a unity that could not be separated. Therefore, Indonesian *ulama* struggled to maintain Indonesian culture as long as it does not conflict with Islamic teachings.²² The strategic steps taken by *ulama* in the past were then adopted

18 Muhammad Sueb, *Penelusuran Pola Islamisasi di Indonesia*, h. 70-74.

19 John Anderson dan Pietje van de Lindeloof, "Colonialism and Islam in Indonesia", *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 2B, Tahun 2010, h. 609-634.

20 Robert W. Hefner, "Islam an Era of Nation-States: Politics and Religious Renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia", *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 55, No. 3, tahun 1996, h. 613-634.

21 Taufik Abdullah, "Islamic Literature in Indonesia," the Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy, editor, Khaled El-Rouayheb dan Sabine Schmidtke, Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 359-378.

22 M. Dawam Raharjo, "Pesantren and madrasa: Muslim Educational Institutions in Indonesia," *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 9, No. 4, h. 1-23.

by Lesbumi by creating *al-Qawa'id al-Sab'ah* or seven steps of cultural strategy.²³ Overall, the cultural strategy that has been carried out by Indonesian *ulama* is their effort to design culture. As emphasized by van Peursen, a nation that has a cultural strategy means having a guide in the process of modernization and development, so that it can maintain and strengthen national personality, cultural continuity, and the ability to be independent while strengthening national unity.²⁴ Nusantara *Ulama* have this strategic position in facing colonialism, so it is natural that most of them have been named National Heroes.

Furthermore, more specifically, the following is the role of *ulama* in cultural strategy through its main elements:

1. Language System

The struggle of Indonesian *ulama* in developing the Arabic language during the colonial period has also become an important topic in the cultural history of the archipelago, especially in the context of cultural strategy. According to Burhani, Indonesian *ulama* during the colonial period developed Arabic to strengthen Muslim identity in Indonesia and strengthen relations between Muslims throughout the world. This is done through Arabic language education in Islamic boarding schools and the publication of religious books in Arabic, including through correspondence with Haramain scholars.²⁵

According to Rahmat, Indonesian *ulama* during the colonial period developed Arabic as a means of maintaining Islamic culture in the archipelago. Arabic is seen as an important language for understanding the sources of Islamic teachings and developing more critical religious thinking.²⁶ More firmly, Azra said that Indonesian *ulama* during the colonial period developed Arabic as a tool to fight for independence from colonialism. Arabic was used as a language of struggle and resistance against invaders.²⁷ As a language of struggle, all forms of application of Arabic by Indonesian *ulama* are part of the strategy, whether to fight colonial language hegemony or to help accelerate the process of Islamization in the archipelago.

Arabic became the language of struggle not only in Nusantara during the colonial period in the 17th century. In the 20th century, Arabic had the same power in various regions in this part of the world. For example, Said, when researching Palestine, said that the Arabic language in Palestine, apart from being a tool of struggle against invaders and national identity, was also a tool to oppose orientalism, or the western view which demeans and narrows the understanding of Middle Eastern culture there.²⁸ Hasan, a professor and curator of African art, also highlighted the position of the Arabic language in fighting colonialism in North Africa. He explained that Arabic plays an important role in encouraging nationalist

23 Taufik Bilfaqih, "Islam Nusantara; Strategi Kebudayaan NU di Tengah Tantangan Global," *Jurnal Aqlam, Journal of Islam and Plurality*, Vol. 2 No. 1, Tahun 2016, h. 67.

24 Adi Purnomo Santoso dan Herman, "Strategi Kebudayaan dalam Negara Hukum untuk menyongsong Adaptasi Kebiasaan Baru," *Jurnal Ilmu dan Budaya*, Vol. 41, No. 73, Tahun 2020, h. 8539.

25 A.N. Burhani, "Pesantren in Indonesia: A Brief Overview", *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Vol. 11 No. 2, h. 363-386.

26 Hadijah Rahmat, *Islamic Education in Indonesia: A Continuing Challenge for the Future*. Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Vol. 20, No. 2, h. 201-214.

27 Azyumardi Azra, *Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals and Nationalism: A Review*, *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 41, No. 5, h. 514-533.

28 Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (Vintage Books, 1979), h. 213.

awareness. So according to Hasan, Arabic is not only a tool of resistance against invaders, but also a tool for maintaining identity.²⁹

Lalami, a Moroccan American writer and professor, argues that Arabic became an important means of resistance to colonialism in the Moroccan context. Even in Morocco, Arabic became the main language in the independence movement and its use as a tool of resistance against French colonialism became very important during the Moroccan independence struggle in the 1950s and 1960s. According to Lalami, Arabic provided an identity for the Moroccan people in maintaining their cultural values and allows them to develop their own way of resisting colonialism.³⁰

The facts above are sufficient to confirm that Arabic has an important role as a language of resistance to colonialism in its historical trajectory. Experts have discussed this from various points of view and perspectives. They look for the fundamental reasons why Arabic has such characteristics in the various countries where it is grown and spoken. One popular view states that the use of Arabic has a function as a language of resistance against invaders because of the symbolic power of Arabic itself. As explained by Ajami, a political science professor and writer from Lebanon, Arabic has symbolic power as the language of Islam and as the language of the Koran. The symbolic power of Arabic as the language of the Koran allows the language to be used in the context of resistance to colonialism to strengthen identity and stimulate movement. He further said that the use of Arabic as a tool of struggle against the colonialists was a form of community effort to restore cultural sovereignty that had been confiscated by the colonialists.³¹

In the context of the Indonesian archipelago, Hasyim also mentioned this symbolic power. According to Hasyim, *ulama* played an important role in using Arabic as a symbol of resistance to colonialism. Arabic is used by Indonesian *ulama* to spread Islamic thoughts and values, as well as to strengthen religious identity (Islam) and nationalism, amidst colonial domination. Hasyim further emphasized that Arabic has symbolic power in the context of resistance to colonialism because it is the language of the Koran, which is the holy book of Muslims, and the main language used as the language of instruction for religious knowledge.³²

Meanwhile, Hasan explained that Arabic had an important role in the resistance against invaders in Nusantara, especially as a tool to spread Islamic thought and to reach out to the Muslim community to take part in the movement. When Arabic is used in religious doctrine in the form of published written works such as the Yellow Book, this further strengthens the position of Arabic as a symbolic language and resistance to colonialism.³³

29 Salah Hassan, "The Arabic Language in North Africa: Identity, Resistance, and Culture Heritage," *Journal of North African Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Tahun 2010, h. 33-48.

30 Laila Lalami, "The Roots of Morocco's Protest Movement," *The New Yorker*, 5 July 2017. Lihat, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-roots-of-morocco's-protest-movement>.

31 Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967*, (Cambridge University Press, 1998), h. 123.

32 Syafiq Hasyim, *Kolonialisme, Umat dan Ulama: Menafsir Ulang Konflik-konflik Muslim-Kristen di Maluku*, (2012)

33 Noorhaidi Hasan, *Religion and Politics in Indonesia: The Role of Islam in the 2014 Elections* (2015). Lihat juga Syarifudin Kadir, *Tradisi Islam dan Kekuasaan Kolonial: Sebuah Studi Kasus dalam Perlawanan di Minangkabau pada Tahun 1926-1927*, (2018)

However, some researchers see it from a different perspective. They saw that during colonial times, the Arabic language was under pressure and its development space was narrowed. Therefore, the use of Arabic became a counterproductive strategy, because the colonialists saw the use of Arabic as a symbol of disobedience to colonial authority. An-Na'im in his book, *Islam and The Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Sharia*, explains that promoting Arabic as a language symbol of resistance to colonialism is the best way to sacrifice the interests of the local population and language. As he said, the Arabic language and its use must be integral to the local language and native culture of the community, as an effort to enrich Islamic identity and culture.³⁴

Khan said that it was implied that the use of Arabic in a religious context if used as a tool of superiority over certain religions and cultures could give rise to perceptions of exclusivism and intolerance.³⁵ The colonial authorities read this situation, resulting in a counter-productive attitude towards Muslim communities as language users. According to Gonggong, the use of Arabic by Indonesian *ulama* as a symbol of resistance to colonialism could ultimately be seen by the colonial authorities as a form of rejection of modernity and cultural acculturation that they promoted. This often gave rise to disagreements and excessive reactions from the colonial side, resulting in losses for the people of Nusantara.³⁶

This was an obstacle to the further development of the Arabic language in Nusantara, which was becoming increasingly dim. Moreover, the colonials became increasingly strict in monitoring the circulation of Arabic books for the reason of preventing ideologies that opposed colonialism. Colonialism at that time had reached the stage of controlling the ideology and thoughts of Indonesian *ulama*, especially those who opposed colonialism policies. Moreover, the *ulama* were identified by the colonial authorities as a group that spread Arabic and used it in religious activities.³⁷

Viewed from a theoretical perspective, the cultural strategy developed cannot be separated from the existence of supporting figures. Nuryantim, for example, explained that strategic steps to strengthen national character as a strategy for building culture are through three main things, namely modeling, teaching, and reinforcing.³⁸ From this theory's point of view, the cultural strategy carried out by Indonesian *ulama* in the 17th century was in accordance with methodological steps. Therefore, as a strategy, their steps to achieve the goal of building a spirit of unity and nationalism in an effort to fight colonialism were realized.

As an element of culture, literature always coexists with language. Culture is human activity to cultivate nature. Literature processes nature through writing skills. In the context

34 Abdullahi Ahmad an-Naim, *Islam and The Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Sharia*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008) h. 70.

35 Muqtedar Khan, *Islamic Democratic Discourse: Theory Debates, and Philosophical Perspectives*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) h. 40.

36 Anhar Gonggong, *The Ulama and Their Competitive Interactions: Contesting Authority in Post-New Order Indonesia*, (Belanda: Amsterdam University Press, 2020) h. 8.

37 Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*, (New York: Oxford University, 2002) h. 131-133.

38 Windu Nuryantim 2011, *Karakter Bangsa dalam Pembangunan Kebudayaan, Makalah pada Seminar Nasional Bertajuk Mengukuhkan Strategi Kebudayaan Nusantara untuk Kedaulatan Bangsa yang diselenggarakan oleh Pengurus Pusat KAGAMA, Yogyakarta 16-17 Desember*.

of literature, culture is a human effort to build nature related to the world of words, thereby giving birth to various new works such as saga, poetry, and others. Therefore, literature often gets a narrower and more focused definition, namely human activity in the form of using language, both spoken and written.³⁹

The rich and unique culture of the Islamic Nusantara kingdom, especially in the fields of art, literature, and Islamic religion, became an important factor in expanding the influence and power of the kingdom in the Southeast Asian region, especially in the 16th and 17th centuries. Especially literary art, namely the circulation of monumental works such as Hikayat Aceh, Malay History, and others. According to Ricklefs, culture is an important part of strengthening the identity of the kingdom in Aceh and has made a significant contribution.⁴⁰ In this case, Ricklefs provides many explanations about the role of culture in shaping royal power and identity.

Indonesian *ulama* in the fields of art and literature have played a huge role in producing monumental works. In playing art and literature as da'wah (preaching), *ulama* could not be separated from the support of kings. The majority of kings and sultans in Nusantara did not limit the movements and activities of *ulama* to preach. In Mataram, according to De Graaf, *ulama* occupied a strategic position at the king's side. The Mataram kings, according to De Graaf, viewed or appointed the Kadilangu guardians as advisors or guides to the king. Sunan Kalijaga is one of the figures who is often said to have had this role in the Mataram kingdom. It is also acknowledged that it was Sunan Kalijaga who had the strategy for the Mataram kingdom to build a fort around the palace together with Senopati Kediri.⁴¹ *Ulama* in the Mataram kingdom had an elite position. This position is what allowed Sunan Kalijaga to freely spread Islam, thus conceptualizing da'wah through art and literature that has taken root in society, such as wayang and the creation of musical compositions.⁴²

Regarding this literature, there are interesting facts about the correspondence of Shaykh Abdussomad al-Palimbani. It is said that while studying in Mecca, he often sent letters to Mangkubumi, the King of Yogyakarta, discussing religious matters and various issues related to the dangers of colonialism that hit Nusantara at that time.⁴³ This correspondence is interesting because there is a long-distance relationship between the *ulama* and the *umara* (leader) discussing the dangers of colonialism from two well-known figures from different tribes and kingdoms. Illustrating that the spirit of unity among Indonesian figures from the *ulama* and *umara* circles in facing colonialism was well coordinated. On the other hand, he explains that literature has a big role in the Islamization process and the struggle of Indonesian *ulama*.

2. Political System

According to experts, political systems have many definitions, the differences in these definitions are more due to the different emphasis points of each figure. For example,

39 Kustyarini, "Sastra dan Budaya," *LIKHITAPRAJNA, Jurnal Ilmiah FKIP*, Vol. 16, No. 2, h. 5.

40 Ricklefs, *Aceh The Rise and Fall of Sultanate*, (Singapura: National University of Singapore Press, 2010), h. 50-83.

41 H.J. De Graaf dan Pegeaud, *Kerajaan-kerajaan Islam di Jawa*, terj. Grafiti Press dan KITLV (Jakarta: PT Grafiti Press, 1985) h. 295.

42 Sartono Kartodidjo (dkk), *Sejarah Nasional*, (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, t.k., 1975) h. 295.

43 M. Yahya Harun, *Kerajaan Islam Nusantara Abad XVI & XVII*, h. 48.

Easton defines that a political system is a social process consisting of organized interactions between groups of society.⁴⁴ Laswell defines a political system as an arrangement of values in society.⁴⁵ Dahl defines a political system as a collection of human interactions in society that are organized to take and implement public decisions.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, Almond and Bingham define a political system as a pattern of behavior related to collective decision making and government, including interactions between groups that hold power in a government or country.⁴⁷

This political system has several main components such as diplomacy, military, constitution, legal system, power, civil society, and others. The direct and indirect relationship of the political system in Nusantara with elements of other cultures and its influence as a strategy used by *ulama* and *umara* in the Islamization process is very important to see the components of this political system in the historical reality of Islam in Nusantara. There are at least three main components raised in this research to look at the historical reality of Islam in Nusantara, namely diplomacy, the legal system, and the power system. These three components of the political system have proven to have a strong influence on the acceleration of Islamization in Nusantara. This is based on existing findings and historical data. Of course, this does not deny the influence of other components on the acceleration of Islamization in Nusantara, for example the military component or others.

First, political diplomacy. Diplomacy is a component of the political system because it is a process used by state leaders to achieve foreign policy goals.⁴⁸ Often diplomacy in politics is used to resolve conflicts or to make certain policy decisions between two sovereign countries. As an element of culture, the political system that applies in Nusantara has a strong relationship and influence on the *ulama*'s mindset and the characteristics of Islamization.

Like the diplomatic relation that Aceh built with the Ottoman Turks from the 16th century to the 19th century. Aceh developed three main focuses in this relationship, namely in the fields of politics, trade, and religion. This effort had been carried out since the Sultanate of Aceh under the rule of Alauddin Riayat Syah. The diplomacy built with Islamic countries, including Turkey, is to foster unity among Islamic countries. With the Ottoman Turks, Aceh had the same enthusiasm to fight the Portuguese. This diplomatic relationship was first officially established when an Acehnese envoy came to Istanbul in 1547, after which Ottoman Turkey also sent its ambassador to Aceh in 1565. History records that Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah sent a letter to Istanbul on January 7, 1566, which was carried by the Acehnese envoy, who was also the ambassador there.⁴⁹

Second, the legal system. Regarding the legal system, in historical records it is stated that when they were led by Raden Patah, the kingdom of Demak (Bintoro) already had a *kadi* (a position holding the reins of legal authority) held by Sunan Kalijaga. At that time, Demak

44 David Easton, *The Political System*, (New York: Knopf, 1953) h. 14.

45 Harold Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*, (New York: Meridians Book, 1936) h. 5.

46 Robert A. Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis*, (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963) h. 3.

47 Gabriel Almond and G Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*, (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1966) h. 7.

48 Geroge Modelski, *Long Cycles in World Politics*, (Lynnne Rienner Publishers, 1987) h. 131.

49 Hartono, "Diplomasi Aceh dan Turki Usmani: Kerjasama Dakwah Islam dalam Bingkai Perdagangan Abad XVI-XIX Masehi," *Al-Tsaqafa: Jurnal Ilmiah Peradaban Islam*, Vol. 19, Tahun 2022, h. 161-162.

had succeeded in compiling laws and legal regulations which were called *Salokantara* as the kingdom's official legal book.⁵⁰ If the kingdom has been able to build an established legal system, it can become proof and a benchmark of its authority over society. The legal system manifested in the form of laws is a symbol of direct communication between the ruler and the people. From these communication symbols, the dynamics of the relationship between power entities can be read and analyzed, starting from the relationship between the king and his officials, the relationship between the *umara* and their *ulama*, the relationship between the *ulama* and the community, and so on. It is these dynamic relationships that ultimately create milieu and have an influence on the characteristics of power and society. Based on this reason, reading the legal system in force, especially in the Islamic kingdoms in Nusantara, is very important.

For example, Cirebon, as the first Islamic kingdom in the West Java region, whose founder was Sunan Gunung Jati or Syarif Hidayatullah, also succeeded in building a legal system like Demak with a strict and advanced bureaucracy. The legal system implemented by Cirebon was even able to shift the ancient Javanese law that was in effect previously. This explains that judicial institutions in Nusantara have been advanced since before Islam with concepts that continue to develop. In the Cirebon Sultanate, institutionally, the legal system was already in operation and the legal material as a formal basis also existed. In fact, the court system as an official royal legal institution in Cirebon already existed. *Padawa* at that time was known as the *Pepitu Prosecutor*⁵¹ or also called the *Karta Court*, which consists of seven prosecutors. This court began to exist when the Cirebon Sultanate was divided into three in 1667. The cases that were tried mostly involved debts, property rights, and criminal cases.⁵²

Islamic law, as a product of institutionalized Islamic syariah, has a fairly long history in various Islamic territories throughout the world. All legal institutions in accordance with the agreed *fiqh* studies are always supervised by an institution called *kadi*. *Kadi* is a legal institution that is under royal authority. Therefore, since the beginning of the caliphate, Islamic law has always been strategically monitored by the central government as a party that is considered authoritative. It is not handed over freely and openly to the community because from the start, the material of Islamic law itself has been built on a solid epistemology of jurisprudence. Therefore, in Islamic kingdoms in Nusantara, for example, the *kadi* represent the authority of the sultan or king. The existing *kadi* are selected among scholars who have depth and breadth of religious knowledge and wisdom. This is where *ulama* can be seen as officials who represent the wisdom of the king.

3. Economic System

Economics is defined as the management of a household in the context of decision-making and implementation efforts related to the allocation of limited household resources

50 Musyriifah Sunanto, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam Indonesia*, (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2005) h. 153.

51 Jaksa *Pepitu* adalah dewan jaksa yang ada sejak zaman pembagian Kesultanan Cirebon menjadi tiga kekuasaan hingga masuknya pengaruh VOC ke ranah hukum dan pengadilan. (Lihat, Tendi; Marihandono, Djoko; Abdurakhman, "Between the Influence of Customary, Dutch, and Islamic Law: Jaksa *Pepitu* and Their Place in Cirebon Sultanate History," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol. 57, No. 1, Tahun 2019, h. 117-142.

52 Ibi Satibi, "Produk Pemikiran Hukum Islam di Kerajaan Islam Cirebon Abad Ke-18 M: Studi atas Kitab Hukum Adat *Pepakem*," *Jurnal Saintifika Islamica*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Tahun 2014, h. 125-126.

among its various members, taking into account the abilities, efforts, and desires of each person. Meanwhile, the process of each person fulfilling their daily needs is called economic activity. In economic activity, a person is required to choose activities in order to fulfill their needs. The activities that people choose in their economic activities include distribution, production, and consumption.⁵³ This definition is contextually in sync with the economic activities of Indonesian Muslims in the maritime centuries, the majority of whom were traders or merchants. Even *ulama* were accomplished traders. The trading activities of Muslim merchants in Nusantara apparently not only connected the economic supply-demand chain at that time, but also had a strong influence on other cultural elements. Starting from the culture of trade, society, and even influencing the diversity of the people of Nusantara. Therefore, merchant activities carried out by Muslim merchants in Nusantara in the maritime centuries, especially the 17th century, fall into the category of socio-economic activities.

In society there are always community groups, also called social groups, which carry out various activities together while still following local cultural patterns and rules. It is these relationships between social groups that give rise to the image and characteristics of each society's character. This relationship in the discipline of sociology is included in the theme of social interaction which then gives birth to social emotions. These social emotions then give rise to feelings of mutual need among members, so that communication and interaction becomes more intensive, thus forming peer groups in society.⁵⁴ This is a theoretical explanation of how the economic system was implemented by Muslim traders as part of a strategy to increase the acceleration of the Islamization process in Nusantara. Their interaction and communication as immigrants with the people of Nusantara has created a positive impression so that they have received good reception.

Many historians agree that Islam entered Nusantara through trade routes. This occurred because of the stopover of Muslim traders from Persia, China, Gujarat and Yemen. At that time, Nusantara was still under the rule of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom. More specifically from the 7th century to the 13th century AD.⁵⁵ Many groups believe that Islam entered Nusantara from the merchant route as a way to facilitate Islam's spread to various regions in the archipelago. Dutch researchers that agree with this opinion include Wertheim.⁵⁶ Marco Polo also thought the same way. When he went to Peurlak in 1292 on his way to Venice, he said that many Peurlak people had converted to the religion of Muhammad (religion of Mahomet) because of the Arab traders who came regularly.⁵⁷ The community was more accepting because traders loved peace and stayed away from various factors and sources of conflict which are of course detrimental to their economic future. Muslim merchants themselves had high ethics towards powerful kings and sultans, by giving gifts before being

53 Syafrida Hafni sahir, *Kebudayaan dan Aktivitas Sosio-Ekonomi Masyarakat Menengah Kota Medan Sumatera Utara, Indonesia, Proceedings; International Seminar, Language, Literature, and Culture in Southeast Asia Theme: "Malay and Indonesian Studies"*, (Medan: Graduate School of Linguistics, USU, 2019) h. 164.

54 Syafrida Hafni sahir, "Kebudayaan dan Aktivitas Sosio-Ekonomi Masyarakat Menengah Kota Medan Sumatera Utara, Indonesia," *Proceedings; International Seminar, Language, Literature, and Culture in Southeast Asia Theme: "Malay and Indonesian Studies"*, h. 165.

55 Badri Yatim, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam*, h. 191.

56 Taufik Abdullah, *Tradisi dan Kebangkitan Islam di Asia Tenggara*, (Jakarta: LP3S, 1989) h. 94.

57 Amirul Hadi, *Aceh and The Portuguese, A Study of The Struggle of Islam in Southeast Asia*, (Canada: McGill University, 1992), h. 11.

asked, even apart from the tribute they were obliged to pay.

Because Islam spread through merchants, various Islamic economic systems that have been established in sharia doctrine such as *zakat mal*, as well as other *muamalah* laws such as *muzara'ah*, *hawalah*, *mudharabah*, pawning, and others are of course included in the concept of Islamization of traders in Nusantara. The introduction of the Islamic trading system to the trading system of the Acehnese people was inevitable due to direct and intensive interaction, and because they lived and settled in various cosmopolitan cities.

Most of the *walisongo* (saints who spread Islam in Indonesia) lived and settled and established their preaching in Java, namely in urban areas rather than inland. Especially the saints (*wali*) in East Java and some saints in Demak and Kudus.⁵⁸ The saints in East Java all took their preaching centers in the cities of Bandar, such as Maulana Malik Ibrahim in Gresik, who was later replaced in his preaching role by Sunan Giri. Then, Sunan Bonang in Tuban, Sunan Ampel in Surabaya, and Sunan Derajat in Sedayu.

History has recorded that in the 17th century the nobles and merchants in Nusantara had a central role in overseeing the running of the community's economy. Muslim traders controlled various vital economic fields, such as ownership of trading ships, management of traditional ports and markets, and agents for various basic needs such as food and spices. They lived in Muslim colonies in various areas of the coastal city. In fact, a partnership system in trade had already been established at that time, such as *syarikah* and the commenda system, known in *fiqh* terms as *qiradh*.⁵⁹ The commenda system was often carried out between kings, nobles, and merchants as well as captains who sailed around Bandar Malacca, Aceh, Banten, Demak, Jepara, Tuban, Gresik, Surabaya, and others.⁶⁰ In those days when Muslim merchants played their main role in the Nusantara economy, the relationship between sultans, *ulama*, and traders was very harmonious.⁶¹ Therefore, various strategic meetings involving the three of them gave birth to productive movements in the archipelago. The synergy of these three main elements of society made Islamic kingdoms stronger and stronger in implementing Islamization in Nusantara.

According to historical data, the Portuguese first went to Malacca with the aim of destroying the trade of Muslim merchants. This resulted in a disruption in the trade network of Muslim merchants in Malacca. They were displaced to look for other places, and most of them shifted their trading network to Aceh. Aceh became busy after the arrival of many Islamic traders. Originally a small kingdom, under Pedir's control, Aceh became a large kingdom because it was supported by Islamic merchants and its increasingly strong economic potential. In fact, the Aceh kingdom was able to defeat Pedir, then expanded so that it controlled other small kingdoms on the coast of Sumatra. Aceh became big because of the large number of Islamic traders who came there, namely traders who moved from

58 Dewi Evi Anita, "Walisongo: Mengislamkan Tanah Jawa, Suatu Kajian Pustaka," *Wahana Akademika*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Tahun 2014, h. 250. Sunan Kudus adalah Jafar Shadiq seorang utusan politik atau *plenipotentiary* dari kesultanan Mamalik di Mesir. (Lihat, Mangaradja Onggang Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao*, Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2007, h. 661)

59 Joko Suryo, *Ekonomi Masa Kesultanan*, dalam Taufik Abdillah dkk (ed). *Ensiklopedia Tematis Dunia Islam (Dinamika Masa Kini)*, (Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru Van Hoeve, 2002) h. 281.

60 Syahbudi, "Pemikiran dan Gerakan Sistem Ekonomi Islam di Indonesia," *Hermeneia, Jurnal Kajian Islam Interdisipliner*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Tahun 2003, h. 208.

61 Syahbudi, "Pemikiran dan Gerakan Sistem Ekonomi Islam di Indonesia," h. 208.

Malacca.⁶² In this context, it was very possible for Islamic merchants to play a role in expanding the kingdom of Aceh. This is because before the arrival of Islamic merchants, the kingdom of Aceh was a small kingdom under the kingdom of Pedir.

Apart from being a political escape, Aceh itself was part of the main destination for merchants. Many traders came to Aceh because they were interested in the commodities traded in Aceh such as gold, pepper, tin, fruit, rice, and others. Aceh produced the most pepper. Even in the harvest season it can produce 20 ships full of pepper.⁶³ It was the most popular commodity and with a promising price, not only did people compete to plant pepper, but kings also even had their own pepper fields.⁶⁴

Muslim merchants and other merchants have colored Aceh's civilization, helping to build their culture. The role of merchants in the increasing power of the Acehnese kingdom, of course, was not only due to their financial support and capital, but also strategic support in politics. This is considering that Muslim merchants in Nusantara were not just merchants, but most were also political escapees from big kingdoms in the Middle East.

This is trade as a cultural strategy played by *ulama* in Nusantara - both in Aceh, Java, and other islands in the archipelago - as a system and factor that has quite an important role in the Islamization process. It can also be concluded that the Islamization they carry out is always based first on the stability of the economic system. Their movement is a comprehensive welfare movement, goodness in this world and goodness in the afterlife. This balanced and realistic attitude is what interested many people in Nusantara to convert to Islam.

Muslim merchants had a vital role in the process of spreading Islam in Nusantara from the 13th century. This can be seen from the spread of Islam, which was predominantly in coastal areas from the 13th century to the 18th century. Except after the 19th century, the spread of Islam began to develop in the mainland. This also cannot be separated from the maritime civilization that triumphed during those times.

4. Knowledge System

Culture is the result of human work, whether it is the result of reason, taste, and human will. For this reason, knowledge or science as a result of human reason is also included in culture. Knowledge is essentially the fruit or result of human knowledge of something. It is an activity of the human mind in an effort to understand the object being faced to produce knowledge or also known as science.⁶⁵ Islam is a religion preached and spread by Indonesian *ulama*, practiced with knowledge. Religious sciences or *'ulûmuddîn* are the foundation of every Muslim's religion, including the knowledge of faith, sharia, and morals. If science, including religious knowledge, is directed as an element in developing culture, it must be realized using strategic and systematic steps. First, knowledge and scientific activities are

62 Muhammad Ibrahim (dkk), *Sejarah Daerah Propinsi Daerah Istimewa Aceh*, (Jakarta: Departemen P&K, 1991) h. 73.

63 Hamka, *Sejarah Umat Islam Singapore*, (Singapura: Kerjaya Printing, 2002) h. 106.

64 Hamka, *Sejarah Umat Islam Singapore*, h. 108.

65 Surajiyo, "Hubungan dan Peranan Ilmu Terhadap Pengembangan Kebudayaan Nasional," *Jurnal IKRA-ITH Humaniora*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Tahun 2019, h. 62-63.

harmonized with the culture that grows in society.⁶⁶ This is in line with what Indonesian *ulama* have done when they incorporated Islamic knowledge into the cultural niche, namely language. *Ulama* spread Islamic teachings as a religious epistemic basis through the Malay language. The strategy of Indonesian *ulama* in spreading religion through the Malay language has even given birth to a new genre in written works in Nusantara, such as saga, poetry, and others. It is claimed by some researchers that the great works of preachings by Indonesian *ulama* in Malay language writing was able to shift the literary traditions that previously developed in the archipelago.⁶⁷ The process of cultivating religion through written works, whether in Arabic or Malay, is an Islamization process that is argumentative and persuasive and far from the factors that cause horizontal conflict.

The second strategic step is to build a scientific institution and realize it consistently in accordance with the scientific code of ethics. The strategy of Indonesian *ulama* that is in sync with this theory is their efforts to establish mosques in various regions, both on the coast and inland as centers for religious learning activities.

Third, integrating religious scholarship with philosophy.⁶⁸ In this context, what Indonesian *ulama* encourage in their preaching process is to develop a philosophy of divinity. To be precise, it is philosophical *Sufism*. This model of *Sufism* flourished because it was able to explain the concept of divinity which was not too far from the understanding of the people of Nusantara who were previously Hindu-Buddhist. Nusantara Sufi *ulama* with *Martabat Tujuh* (Dignity Seven) were able to explain God and his manifestations with the concept of *tajalliyât* or *ta'ayyunât* in the process of creating creatures. The relationship between *Khalik* and the creatures described is so intense without boundaries and such a clear distance, which is felt to be reasonable by the people of Nusantara with their previous beliefs. Without saying or categorizing this philosophical *Sufism* thought as the concept of *hulûl* or *ittihâd*, where God is incarnated and integrated into creatures. The development of the concept of divinity using this philosophical model of *Sufism*, apart from being supported by its vibrant development in that century throughout the Islamic world, was also felt to be most suitable for development in Nusantara. It could be that this is based on their observations of the concept of divinity in the previous people of Nusantara, which still smelled of animism and dynamism. If it is distributed according to sharia, of course what is put forward is the concept of idolatry and that is very likely to have the potential for conflict. However, with philosophical *Sufism*, the belief in animism and dynamism can be used as an initial stage in the human process of recognizing the relationship between nature and God, either as its manifestation or *tajalli*, so that it cannot be separated from the divine elements discussed by scholars with the concepts of *asmâ'*, *shifât* and *af'âl* of Allah SWT.

66 Surajiyo, "Hubungan dan Peranan Ilmu Terhadap Pengembangan Kebudayaan Nasional," h. 67.

67 Idris El Harier and El Hadji Ravane M'Baye, *Aspects of Islamic Culture, The Spread of Islam Throughout The World*, (Paris: United Nations Educational, 2011), h. 703.

68 Surajiyo, "Hubungan dan Peranan Ilmu Terhadap Pengembangan Kebudayaan Nasional," h. 67.

Conclusion

The evidence above confirms that *ulama* during the Islamic kingdom had a complex role. The work and role of *ulama* is not only in the realm of religion, but has also entered the political, language, economic and knowledge systems. The existence of *ulama* in the Islamic kingdom was evenly distributed in almost all areas. This kind of pattern is widespread in almost all Islamic kingdoms in Nusantara, both in Aceh and Java. *Ulama* received a high position, not only managing religious education in society, but also taking part in making strategic decisions in the king's government. Therefore, the influence of *ulama* on the running of a kingdom is very important. The various positions held by *ulama* are honorable positions. In fact, there are special positions that can only be held by them, namely high-ranking royal institutions that are equivalent to the Supreme Court. For example, in the Banten kingdom it is called Fakih Hajamudin. *Ulama* were actively involved in maintaining the stability of the kingdom, even fighting alongside the king. The role of the *ulama*, which was very broad and had great influence, was then limited and even castrated by the Dutch, considering the potential dangers they feared. So the *ulama* became the main target for the Dutch to limit their movement, if necessary. Perhaps this is precisely the spirit of uniting the *ulama* to fight against colonialism.

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¹Ryan Sugiarto, *Psikologi Raos: Sainifikasi Kawruh Jiwa Ki Ageng Suryomentaram*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Ifada, 2015), p. 139.

²Nur Syam, *Tarekat Petani: Fenomena Tarekat Syattariyah Lokal*, (Yogyakarta: LkiS, 2013), p. 164.

³Syam, *Tarekat Petani*, p. 173.

⁴Ubaidillah Achmad dan Yuliyatun Tajuddin, *Suluk Kiai Cebolek Dalam Konflik Keberagaman dan Kearifan Lokal*, (Jakarta: Prenada, 2014), p. 140.

⁵Nur Syam, *Tarekat Petani*, p. 99.

⁶M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, vol. 14 (Bandung: Lentera Hati, 2013), p. 167.

⁷Deny Hamdani, "Cultural System of Cirebonese People: Tradition of Maulidan in the Kanoman Kraton," *Indonesian Journal of Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (January-June 2012): p.12.

⁸Hamdani, "Cultural System of Cirebonese People," p. 14.

⁹Deny Hamdani, "Raison d'être of Islam Nusantara," *The Jakarta Post*, 06 Agustus 2015, p. 5.

¹⁰Azyumardi Azra, "Islam di "Negeri Bawah Angin" dalam Masa Perdagangan," *Studia Islamika* 3, no. 2 (1996): h. 191-221, review buku Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

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