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ISLAMIZATION OF THE ARCHIPELAGO: A STUDY OF THE ARRIVAL AND
SPREAD OF ISLAM IN INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA

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Abstract: This article aims to examine theories about the arrival and spread of Islam in Southeast Asia as part of the process of Islamization of the Archipelago. The method used in this study is descriptive-qualitative and is included in the literature review. From the studies conducted, it can be seen that, as a whole, the Indian Theory, Arabian Theory, Persian Theory, Chinese Theory, and accommodation theory are attempts by scholars to answer three main questions, namely when, from where, and who brought Islam to the Archipelago. Indonesian and Malaysian. The differences between these theories are due to the need for supporting data and the partiality that tends only to emphasize specific aspects of the three main issues. Instead of opposing arguments whose debate will never be completed, these theories complement each other and cover up the deficiencies of each other.

Keywords: Islamization, Archipelago, Theory

Abstrak: Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menelaah teori-teori tentang kedatangan dan penyebaran Islam di Asia Tenggara sebagai bagian dari proses Islamisasi Nusantara. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif-kualitatif, dan termasuk dalam kajian literatur. Dari kajian yang dilakukan dapat diketahui bahwa Secara keseluruhan teori India, teori Arabia, teori Persia, dan Teori Cina, dan teori akomodasi adalah merupakan upaya para sarjana untuk menjawab tiga permasalahan pokok, yaitu kapan, dari mana, dan siapa pembawa agama Islam ke Nusantara-Indonesia dan Malaysia. Perbedaan yang muncul diantara teori-teori tersebut disebabkan kurangnya data pendukung dan adanya keberpihakan yang cenderung hanya menekankan aspek-aspek khusus dari ketiga permasalahan pokoknya, Alih-alih mempertentangkan argumen yang pedebatannya tidak akan pernah tuntas, teori-teori tersebut sejatinya saling melengkapi dan menutupi kekurangan satu sama lainnya.

Kata kunci: Islamisasi, Nusantara, Teori

A. Introduction

Islam first appeared in the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th Century A.D. as a social phenomenon. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the first to introduce Islam to the people of Makkah. In just two decades from the beginning of his preaching, the Prophet Muhammad s.aw. had succeeded in making Muslims spread so rapidly that they reached outside the Arabian Peninsula. If seen on a modern map of the spread of Muslims worldwide, Asia and Africa are the most dominant areas (Martin, p.176). Islam grew not only into a belief system or religion adopted by the community but also into a civilization with many empires/kingdoms after the death of the Prophet Muhammad s.aw. and the early generation of his companions (Martin, 175). The Umayyad Empire, the Abbasid Empire in the early period, the Ottoman Turkish Empire, the Safavid Empire, and the Mughal Empire in the late period were powerful and large empires in the world that once controlled the Balkan Peninsula and Central Europe in the North to the Black Africa region in the South. While in the East, there was Morocco in the West to Southeast Asia.

Thus, Islam is not only a religion followed by the nations in the Middle of the earth but also a civilization that stretches from the African Sea to the shores of the South Pacific Sea, from the Siberian Grasslands to the remote islands of Southeast Asia Lapidus, p. vii). Knowledge of the Islamic world is knowledge of Islamic civilization that has spread worldwide. Islamic regional studies are studies that can explain the occurrence of the current situation in the Islamic world. The focus of regional studies is to describe the various regions in the Islamic world and the scope of its institutions from the beginning of growth, development, socio-cultural characteristics, and supporting and inhibiting factors. The objects of study include geographical, demographic, historical, and linguistic aspects and various socio-cultural developments characteristic of each cultural area's overall development (Hidayat et al, p. 5).

Culturally, the population spread across Southeast Asia is very heterogeneous regarding language, culture, ethnicity, religion, etc. Some areas are the base of Islam because almost all the population is Muslim, and they have even succeeded in forming an Islamic kingdom and government. While in other regions, Muslims are a minority group because they live with a larger number of people of different religions and are under non-Muslim governments (Dahlan, p. 2-3). Most of the population in Southeast Asia is Malay and Muslim, crossing over from Malaysia and Indonesia to the Philippines. While the Indo-China Peninsula countries are

Chinese-influenced, many of their inhabitants are Buddhists, such as in Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia (Hidayat et al, p. 4). Therefore, the study of Southeast Asian Islam as a cultural domain and Islam in Southeast Asia as a territorial area is an interesting and relevant object of study.

Recognizing this, the problem that is the focus of the article is how *outsiders* and *insiders* explain the arrival and spread of Islam in Southeast Asia. Why do they differ in constructing theoretical arguments explaining Islam's arrival and spread in Asia? How do scholars attempt to synthesize the Indian Theory, the Arabian Theory, the Persian Theory, and the Chinese Theory? What is the process of Islamization of the Archipelago and its distinctive characteristics compared to other Islamic cultural spheres in the Muslim world?

This paper examines theories about the arrival and spread of Islam in Southeast Asia as part of Nusantara's Islamization process. The discussion focuses on the academic debates among scholars regarding the Indian Theory, the Arabian Theory, the Persian Theory, and the Chinese Theory. In addition to these four theories, the article also discusses the accommodation theory, which attempts to 'synthesize' the previous theories' findings and arguments.

B. Research Methodology

The method used in this research is descriptive-qualitative and is included in the literature study (*library research*). The use of the descriptive-qualitative method is due to its suitability with the object and focus of the study. This study seeks to produce findings that cannot be achieved through measurement or statistical procedures (Soehadha, p. 65). A literature study is used to collect information and data with the help of various materials in the library, such as documents, books, magazines, historical stories, etc.

The process of collecting data in this study is by making observations, in the sense of tracking various references related to the study's focus, both from books, articles, and so on, that support these data (Moleong, p. 6). The data analysis technique used in this study is the *content analysis* method. In this analysis, selecting, comparing, combining, and sorting information obtained from related data sources will be carried out to obtain valid inferences.

C. Results and Discussion

Southeast Asian Islam and Peripheral Islamic Studies

The spread of Islam outside of the Arabian Peninsula has created a distinctive Islamic civilization from one region to another. Theoretically, scholars have mapped the world's regions with a geopolitical approach (Hidayat et al, p. 13), or geographical and ethnolinguistic approach (Hidayat et al, p. 15-17), or ethnic characteristics and the human race. In this context. Azyumardi Azra makes eight categories of Islamic *cultural spheres* worldwide. The eight Islamic cultural spheres are (1) Arabia, (2) Persia (Iran), (3) Sino-Islamic, (4) Nusantara (Southeast Asia), (5) Indian Subcontinent, (6) Turkey, (7) Black Africa (Sub-Saharan Africa), and (8) Western hemisphere (Azra, p. 20).

The differences in Islamic culture in each region above are influenced by local cultural factors and Islamic orthodoxy factors that become the basis of religious practice. As an illustration, the tradition of veiling Muslim women in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, which is fashionable and colorful, differs from the tradition of veiling Muslim women in Arabia, which is ancient and colorful. It differs from the tradition of veiling Muslim women in Persia, Turkey, China, the Indian Subcontinent, Africa, and the Western Hemisphere. Although “veiling” for a Muslim woman is based on the same command to cover the aurat, the choice of models, colors, styles, and accessories varies according to space, time, culture, and Islamic orthodoxy adopted by the community. The differences in Islamic traditions are a socio-cultural necessity that challenges Muslims in each region. With its most important characteristic as peaceful, friendly, and tolerant Islam, Southeast Asian Islam is different from Islam in other regions (O'Brien, p. 104-43).

The problem is that some scholars of Islamic studies still think that the history of Islamic civilization is only the history of Arab Islam. The history of Islam outside the Middle East, It is considered non-existent. These experts and scholars of Islam do not treat the history of Islam and the *Muslim world* outside the Middle East as part of the history of Islamic civilization. The history of Islamic civilization ended with the fall of the Abbasid dynasty in 1258 AD. They argue that the history of Islam is nothing more than the life history of the Prophet Muhammad, *Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn*—the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties. It is, therefore, natural that Indonesian or Southeast Asian Islam is still treated as not an integral part of the Islamic world

and the Muslim world. Islam in this region is practically considered a geographically peripheral and doctrinally marginal part of the Arab Islamic and Muslim entity (Abdullah, p. xv-xix).

Some of the scholars who take a negative view include Harry J Benda, Clifford Geertz, Wertheim, Robert Jay, Howard M. Fiderspiel, And others. They perceive that Islam in Indonesia is ‘syncretic Islam,’ Which has been mixed with the local culture of the indigenous people of the Archipelago (Rabasa et al, p. 31).

According to Azyumardi Azra, this unfavorable view began to be corrected by Western scholars such as Edward Said, Nikki Keddie, William Roff, Richard W. Bulliet, Anthony Johns, and others in the 1980s. They proved that Indonesian Islam is not peripheral and marginal as perceived by experts and scholars of Islam until the last two decades. The level of obedience of Muslims in Indonesia has proven to be better than that of Muslims in the Middle East and other countries. Symptoms of syncretism between Islam and local culture are found in Indonesia and many other Muslim regions from the Maghrib, Arabia, South Asia, and beyond.

Carool Kersten even laments the marginalization of Indonesian Muslims and Islam or Southeast Asia as a whole because, in this region, there is the largest concentration of Muslims in the world with intense historical dynamics and intellectualism. Like leading scholars such as Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Fazlur Rahman, Dale F. Eickelman, Jon W. Anderson, and others, Carool Kersten, agrees that Indonesia’s Islamic intellectual milieu can provide fertile ground for the growth of new ways of relating the Islamic intellectual heritage (*al-turāth al-islāmiyyah*) to the contemporary world, thus having real potential to reshape scholarship in Islamic studies in both Muslim and non-Muslim circles (Testriono, p. 200).

In other words, Indonesia’s Islamic intellectual environment is conducive to producing *indigenous* contributions to handling Islamic heritage and being a gracious host to receive various ideas to formulate a new agenda of Islamic studies introduced from outside. Therefore, Carool Kersten argues that the development of Islamic intellectuals in Indonesia has departed from the *peripheral* province, even challenging the Middle East as the *center*, which has been seen as the source of everything, especially for getting ‘the right’ and the pure (Benda, p. 201).’

The Origins of the Arrival of Islam in the Archipelago-Indonesia and Malaysia

The word Nusantara, etymologically, comes from the Sanskrit word Nusa, which means island or Archipelago, and antara, which refers to the region’s location (territorial). Terminologically, the word Nusantara in the Big Indonesian Dictionary is defined as a name for

the entire Indonesian Archipelago (Zaman, 2021). Azyumardi provides a broader geographical boundary for the term Nusantara, which is an archipelago that includes several countries in Southeast Asia, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Thailand, and Singapore. According to several other figures, the term Nusantara refers to a region that was originally included in the power of Majapahit in its heyday (Azra, p. 178).

A clichéd but still relevant question to ask as a key issue in studying Southeast Asian Islam or Islam in Southeast Asia is when exactly did Islam arrive in the Archipelago? This question can be diplomatically answered by stating that Islam came to Southeast Asia or the Archipelago in the era after Allah SWT sent Muhammad bin Abdullah to become the Prophet and Messenger of Allah SAW. This answer is, of course, correct but does not satisfy curiosity and leaves further academic debate. The debate about the arrival of Islam in Southeast Asia is usually related to three main issues: the time and place of the origin of Islam and the people who brought it (Geertz, p. 76).

The debate on the main issues above has spawned many theories and discussions that still need to be resolved due to the lack of data supporting a particular theory and the partiality of the various existing theories. There is a strong tendency for a particular theory to emphasize only specific aspects of the three main issues while ignoring other aspects. As a result, most theories fail to explain the arrival of Islam, the conversion to Islam that took place, and the Islamization processes involved. However, as is common in academic debates, a particular theory cannot answer the counter-questions posed by other theories (Wertheim, p. 45).

There are at least four main theories about the origin of Islam in the Archipelago that are debated in discussing the arrival, spread, and Islamization of the Archipelago: Indian Theory, Arabic Theory, Persian Theory, and Chinese Theory. *First, the* Indian Theory was promoted by several Dutch scholars, including Pijnappel (Gujarat and Malabar), Snouck Hurgronje (Deccan), T.W. Arnold (Coromandel and Malabar), D.G.E Hall (Gujarat), R.O. Winstead (Gujarat), Brian Harrison (Gujarat), and H.E. Wilson (Gujarat), J.P. Moquette (Gujarat), G.E. Morrison (Coromandel), de Jong, W.F. Wertheim (Coromandel), S.Q. Fāṭīmī (Bengal), Keyzer (Bengal), and G.W.J. Drewes (Bengal). *Second, the* Arabia Theory was proposed by several Dutch, Indonesian, and Malaysian scholars such as Marsden (Arabia), Crawford (Arabia), Keijzer (Arabia), Niemman (Arabia), De Hollander (Arabia), al-'Aṭṭās (Arabia or Persia), Hashimi, and Saifudin Zuhri and Hamka (Arabia). *Third, the* Persian Theory was promoted by Hoesin

Djayadiningrat (Persia). *Fourth, the Chinese Theory* was promoted by H.J. de Graaf, Slamet Muljana, and Denys Lombard.

First, the Indian Theory. The Indian Theory generally states that Islam originated in India. However, scholars supporting this Theory still debate the regions in India (Indian Subcontinent) that became the origin, the carriers, and the period of arrival of Islam. This difference is a consequence of the different historiographical evidence and interpretations. Most orientalist scholars studying Islam in Southeast Asia support the Indian Theory and argue that the place of origin of Islam in the Archipelago is from the Indian Subcontinent, not Arabia or Persia. Pijnappel, the first Malay professor at Leiden University, first expressed this Theory. Pijnappel argued that the spread of Islam throughout the Archipelago was affiliated with the Arabic Shāfi'ī school of fiqh from Gujarat and Malabar. This is because these regions are very often found in the early history of the Archipelago. Nonetheless, Pijnappel maintains that the *proselytizers* who initially spread Islam were Arabs from Gujarat and Malabar, not Indians (Jay, p. 88).

Pijnappel's Theory was later developed by another Dutch scholar, Snouck Hurgronje, who argued that Islam was brought to the Archipelago from India and not directly from Arabia. According to Hurgronje (1883), South India is the origin of Islam in the Archipelago. Hurgronje argued that when Islam had taken control of the port cities in South India, several Muslims from Decca living there were treated as "*middlemen*" in the trade between the *Near-Eastern Muslim states* and the *Malay Archipelago*. These Muslim traders were the first to Islamize the Nusantara population. After that, it was the Arabs, especially from the lineage of the Prophet s.a.w., who completed the proselytization of Islam either as a "preacher," "preaching prince," or Sultān. According to Hurgronje, the year 1200 is the earliest possible period for the Islamization of the inhabitants or people of the Nusantara. The earliest process of Islamization had been carried out by Indians who had been in contact with the Nusantara for centuries. The earliest spreaders of Islam to the Archipelago were *trader-missionaries* and entered peacefully because it appealed to the culturally inferior Indonesians (Fiderspiel, p. 1-3).

In contrast to his predecessors, J.P. Moquette (1912) said Islam was brought to the Archipelago from Gujarat, India. Moquette's Theory is based on the findings of the style of tombstones in Pasai, especially those dated 1424, which are the same as the style of tombstones found in the tomb of Maulana Malik Ibrahim (d. 1419) in Gresik. This evidence is strengthened

by the finding that the tombstones in Pasai and Gresik are similar to those in Cambay, Gujarat. Based on this fact, Moquette assumes that the production of Gujarati tombstones was not only to meet the local market's needs but also exported to foreign markets, especially those in Sumatra and Java. Based on these examples of findings in Pasai-Sumatra, Gresik-Java, and Cambay-Gujarat, Moquette concludes that by importing tombstones from Gujarat, the people of the Archipelago also took Islam from Gujarat (Aly, Effendy, p. 37).

Moquette concludes that Islam in Southeast Asia originated in India. Namely, Gujarat is strongly opposed by Fatimi, who argues that it is wrong to attribute all the tombstones in Pasai, including the tombstone of Mālik al-Shālih, to Gujarat. According to his research, the shape and style of Mālik al-Shālih's tombstone are completely different from those found in Gujarat and other tombstones found in the Archipelago. Fatimi argues that the shape and style of the Gujarati tombstones are similar to those found in Bengal. For this reason, Fatimi concluded that Islam came to the Archipelago from Bengal, not Gujarat. About this "tombstone theory," Fatimi also criticizes scholars who seem to ignore the tombstone of Siti Fatimah (dated 475/1082) found in Laren, East Java. The scholars criticized by Fatimi generally assume that the tombstones found in the coastal areas of the Archipelago are stones used as ballast for ships on voyages. These scholars have clearly ignored the large number of tombstones found as befits a Muslim burial complex (Wahid, p. 81).

Fatimi's Theory that Islam in the Archipelago originated in Bengal is also not free from criticism, for example, regarding the difference in the madhhab of fiqh adopted by Muslims in the Archipelago, which is Syāfi'ī. In contrast, the madhhab of fiqh of Muslims in Bengal is Hambālī. Thus, Fatimi's Theory failed to undermine Moquette's Theory because several other Western scholars who came later took over Moquette's Theory and made Moquette's evidence the basis of their theories about the origins of Islam in the Archipelago. These scholars include R.A. Kern, R.O. Winstead, Schrieke, Brian Harrison, G.H. Bousquet, B.H.M. Viekke, J. Gonda, H.E. Wilson, and D.G.E. Hall. They supported the Gujarat theory because they used evidence from Moquette that stated the similarity of tombstones in Gujarat, Sumatra, and Java. However, some of their arguments were added to support Moquette's Theory. R.O. Winstead, for example, brought up the discovery of tombstones similar in shape and style at Bruas, the center of an ancient Malay kingdom in Perak, Malay Peninsula. Based on this additional evidence, Winstead argued that since all the tombstones in Bruas, Pasai, and Gresik had been imported

from Gujarat, Islam must also have been brought from Gujarat. Winstead adds that the manuscript *Sejarah Melayu* (Part VII) provides evidence confirming the past custom in the Malay states of importing tombstones from India (Kersten, p. 8).

Schrieke, who supports this Theory, emphasizes the significance of the important role played by Gujarati Muslim traders in trade in the Nusantara and their possible contribution to the spread of Islam. Brian Harrison, who also subscribes to the Gujarati theory, states that in the past, India was seen by Southeast Asia as a *cultural inspiration*. India evidences this has begun to change the beliefs of the Archipelago with the religions of India, namely Hinduism, and Buddhism. Then when Islam entered India, it was brought to the Archipelago by Indian Muslims. H.E. Wilson also agrees with the Theory that Islam came to Nusantara from India (Wijaya, p. 26).

The Theory of Gujarat as the place of origin of Islam in the Archipelago also has several areas for improvement. G.E. Morrison proved this by questioning the validity of the proportion of Islam coming to the Archipelago from Gujarat. Morrison argues that although the tombstones of the Nusantara's Muslim leaders come from Gujarat or Bengal, as suggested by Fatimi, it does not mean that Islam has come from Gujarat. Morrison refutes the Gujarat theory by pointing out that at the time of the Islamization of the Samudra-Pasai kingdom, with its first king who died in 698H/1297M, Gujarat was still a Hindu kingdom. While Cambay, Gujarat was conquered by Islamic rule only in 1298, a year later. Suppose Gujarat was a center of Islam that became a stopover for Islamic preachers traveling to the Archipelago. In that case, Islam should have been established, colored, and controlled Gujarat before the death of Malik al-Şālih in 1297 AD (Huda, p. 97).

According to Morrison, before successfully controlling Gujarat, Muslim forces had attacked Gujarat several times, respectively 415 AH/1024 AD, 574 AH/1178M, and 595 AH/1197 AD, but the Hindu king there was able to maintain his power until he fell in 698 AH/1297 AD. Morrison also adds that Bengal was a coastal area on the Indian Continent that was conquered by Muslims at the beginning of the 13th Century and which later began to emerge as a center of Islamic da'wah brought to the Archipelago. Based on this evidence, Morrison put forward his Theory that Islam in the Archipelago did not originate from Gujarat but from the Coromandel coast, which was brought in the late 13th Century. De Jong and W.F. Wertheim support Morrison's argument, who argue that since the ruler of Pasai, Merah Silu,

according to contemporary Chinese sources, used the title *Thakur* from Bengali, Merah Silu must have been of Bengali stock. Morrison's argument is based on the report of Tom Pires (Ziyadi, p. 5).

Morison's Theory is supported by T.W. Arnold, who also claims that Islam was brought to the Archipelago from Coromandel and Malabar, India. Arnold supports Morison's Theory based on evidence of the similarities in the schools of fiqh found in the Archipelago, Coromandel, and Malabar. Until recently, most Muslims in the Archipelago adhered to the Shāfi'ī school of fiqh, which also dominated the Coromandel and Malabar regions of India. This dominance of the Shāfi'ī madhhab has spread since the time of Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's visit to these places. The similarity of the Shāfi'ī madhhab of fiqh in the two regions is the basis of Arnold's argument that Islam was brought to the Archipelago from Coromandel and Malabar, as well as from Arabia. According to Arnold, traders from Coromandel and Malabar played an important role in the trade between India and the Nusantara. A large number of these traders came to various trading ports in the Malay-Indonesian World, where they were not only involved in trade but also in the spread of Islam (Hamid, p. 90).

Second, the Arabia theory. In this Theory, Islam in Nusantara-Indonesia and Malaysia originated directly from Arabia. According to Arnold, as quoted by Azra, Arab traders also spread Islam when they dominated the West-East trade since the early centuries of the Hijri or the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. Although there are no historical records of their activities in spreading Islam, we can assume that they were also involved in spreading Islam to the local population in the Archipelago. This assumption is supported by the fact that a Chinese source mentions an Arab trader as the leader of an Arab Muslim settlement on the coast of Sumatra in the last quarter of the 7th Century. Some of these Arab traders are reported to have married locals, thus forming a Muslim community that was a mix of Arab migrants and locals. Members of this Muslim community were also active in spreading Islam (Drewes, p. 440).

In this context, the book *'Ajāib al-Hind* is the earliest Middle Eastern source (originally in Persian) about the Archipelago that explains the existence of local Muslim communities in the Hindu-Buddhist Kingdom of Zabaj (Srivijaya). The book, written by Buzurg bin Shahriyar al-Rahurmuzi around 390/1000, narrates the visit of Muslim traders to the Kingdom of Zabaj who witnessed the custom of the people "cross-legged" (برسیلا) when going to the king. The

word “cross-legged” written in Arabic script indicates the presence of Islamic influence in the Malay culture of the Archipelago (Hall, p. 250).

The Arabia theory is also held by Crawford, who states that the interaction of the Nusantara population with Muslims from the east coast of India is also an important factor in the spread of Islam in the Nusantara. Meanwhile, Keijzer views Islam in the Archipelago as originating from Egypt on the basis of the similarity of the Muslim population in both regions to the *Syāfiʿī* madhhab of *fiqh*. This Arabic Theory is also held by Niemann and de Hollander, who slightly revised it by stating that Islam in the Archipelago did not originate from Egypt, but from *Haḍramawt*. Some Indonesian scholars agree with this Arabic theory stating that Islam in the Archipelago came directly from Arabia, not from India, not in the 12th or 13th Century, but in the first Century Hijriyah or 7th century A.D. This conclusion resulted from seminars on the arrival of Islam to Indonesia held in 1969 and 1978. In this case, Hamka strongly rejected the Gujarat theory as stated in the Seminar on the History of the Entry of Islam in Indonesia held in Medan from March 17 to 20, 1963. Hamka also rejected the Theory that Islam entered Indonesia in the 13th Century because he argued that Islam had come to Indonesia long before, namely in the 7th century A.D (Fatimi, p. 31-32).

Meanwhile, G.W.J. Drewes also appears to support the Arab Theory. By referring to the Theory of Keyzer, an early scholar of Islamic Law in England, Drewes stated that there had been a connection between Egypt and the Archipelago in the past, as evidenced by the observation that the *Shāfiʿī* school of *fiqh* had occupied an important position in both Egypt and the Archipelago. Niemann (d. 1861) and de Hollander (d. 1861) also mention the role of Arabs in the Islamization of the Nusantara. John Crawford is another scholar who makes the same claim and states that Islam may have been brought to the Nusantara by Arab preachers from the Arabian Peninsula due to its already dominant sea power. Marsden has noted the similar role of Arab preachers in converting the Malays to Islam. Marsden quoted evidence for his assertion from Diego de Couto, a Portuguese historian who had conducted research in India and had reported that Arab preachers had Islamized the ruler of Malacca (Sulistio, p. 84).

Among the defenders of the “Arab theory” who opposed the “Indian theory” was S.M.N. al-ʿAṭṭās. Morison al-ʿAṭṭās could not accept Moquette’s epigraphic findings on tombstones in Pasai and Gresik from Gujarat as direct evidence that Islam had been brought to Pasai and Gresik by Indian Muslims. The tombstones and other items needed by the region’s inhabitants

were deliberately brought from India because of its proximity to the Archipelago compared to the Arabian Peninsula. However, al-'Aṭṭās states that the most important evidence that can be examined when considering the arrival of Islam to the Archipelago is based on the “internal” characteristics of Islam itself (Winstead, p. 173).

al-'Aṭṭās' argument for the continuity of the Arabic origin of Islam in Southeast Asia is in line with local historiographical narratives of Islamization in their world, often mixed with myths and legends. Nevertheless, local historiographical data from several manuscripts remain relevant such as the manuscript *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* (>1350), *Sejarah Melayu* (>1500), *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa* (>1630), *Tarsilah* from the Sultanate of Sulu, *Tuhfah al-Nafis*, *Hikayat Habīb Husin alQadrī* and others. According to Azyumardi Azra, the classical historiography contains four main themes, namely: (1) Islam was brought directly from Arabia, (2) Islam was introduced by “professional” teachers and poets who intended to spread Islam, (3) the first to convert to Islam were the rulers, and (4) most of the “professional” Islamic propagators came to the Archipelago in the 12th and 13th centuries. This suggests that Islam was introduced to and existed in the Archipelago in the first centuries of the Hijriyyah and that Islamization accelerated between the 12th and 16th centuries (Harrison, p. 43).

According to al-'Aṭṭās, from the 17th Century onwards, no literary evidence has been found of Indian authors or works of Indian origin. The few authors described as “Indian” or works of “Indian origin” by Western scholars are ethnically or culturally Arab or Persian. The names of the early preachers also indicate that they were Arabs or Persians. Some came through India, just as others came directly from Arabia or through Persia and then through China. Some works were written in India, but their origins were Arab or Persian, or they could have been Turks or Africans (Maghrībī), and most importantly, their religious content was Middle Eastern, not Indian. Thus, T.W. Arnold, Crawford, Keijzer, Niemann, De Hollander, al-'Aṭṭās, Hashimi, and Hamka proposed the Arabia Theory (Wilson, p. 5).

Third, the Persian Theory. This Theory states that Islam came to the Archipelago from Persia, not India or Arabia. This Theory is based on the similarity of Persian cultural elements, especially Shia, that exist in the Islamic cultural elements of the Archipelago, especially in Indonesia with Persia. Among the supporters of this Theory is Hoesin Djajadiningra, who states three reasons. First, the teachings of *manunggaling kawula gusti* of Sheikh Siti Jenar and *waḥdah al-wujūd* of Hamzah al-Fansūrī in Indonesian Islamic mysticism (Sufism) are the

influence of Persian Sufism from the teaching of *wahdah al-wujūd* al-Hallāj of Persia. Second, the use of Persian terms in the spelling system of Arabic letters, especially for the sign of the harakat sound in the teaching of the Qur'an, such as the word "*Jabar*" in Persian for the word "*fathah*" in Arabic, the word "*jer*" in Persian for "*kasrah*" in Arabic, and *pes* in Persia for "*ḍammah*" in Arabic. Third, the tradition of commemorating the 10th of Muharram or 'Ashshūrā as a Shia day of remembrance of the martyrdom of Hussein bin Ali bin Abi Talib in Karbala. This Persian Theory is refuted by Saifuddin Zuhri, who states that Islam entered the Archipelago in the seventh Century Hijriyah, the reign of Bani Umayyah, so Islam couldn't come from Persia at a time when the Arabs held political power (Marrison, p. 215).

Fourth, the Chinese Theory. This Theory is based on relatively the same argument as the Persian Theory, namely the many elements of Chinese culture in some elements of Islamic culture in Indonesia. H.J. de Graaf, who has edited some classical Javanese literature (Malay Annual Records), shows the role of the Chinese in the development of Islam in Indonesia. The article mentions that great figures such as Sunan Ampel (Raden Rahmat/Bong Swi Hoo) and the King of Demak (Raden Fatah/Jin Bun) were Chinese. Slemat Muljana supports this view in his controversial book, *The Collapse of the Javanese Hindu Kingdom and the Emergence of the Islamic States of the Archipelago*. Meanwhile, Denys Lombard points out the many Chinese cultural crossovers in Indonesian life, such as food, clothing, language, art, buildings, and so on (Arnold, p. 368).

The Fifth is accommodation theory. The differences in the debate on arrival on arrival spread and Islamization of Southeast Asia have prompted several scholars to make accommodations. This accommodation theory states that the initial stage of Islam in the Archipelago occurred in the 7th century A.D. At the same time, the 13th Century was the process of spreading and forming an Islamic society in the Archipelago. The carriers of Islam who came in the 7th to 13th centuries were Muslims from Arabia, Persia, and India (Gujarat, Bengal). In this context, Uka Tjandrasasmita states that the 13th Century was the stage of the Islamization process, while the 13th Century was the growth period of Islam as the first Islamic kingdom in Indonesia. Meanwhile, Hasan Muarif Ambary divides the Islamization phase into three, namely: (1) the phase of the presence of Muslim traders in the 7th to 11th centuries; (2) the phase of the formation of Islamic kingdoms in the 13th to 16th centuries, and (3) the phase of Islamic institutionalization occurred after these centuries (Natsir, p. 52-53).

There are at least two other accommodation theories worth considering, namely the “spring” and “spice” theories. Azyumardi Azra proposed this first Theory. The “spring” theory implies that the spread of Islam was like water flowing from the origin of the arrival of Islam in the Southeast Asia region as a “spring” that may have originated from China, as stated by Slamet Muljana. However, it does not rule out the possibility of other “springs” being the origin of the arrival of Islam in the Archipelago, such as Kelantan, Benggali, Persia, and Egypt. While the largest “spring” is from Arabia, which includes Iraq, Yemen, Makkah, and Madinah (Crawford, p. 259).

Meanwhile, Budi Sulistiono’s “spice” theory shows the existence of Muslim traders in the Archipelago in the *spicy-road* and *silk-road* trade routes. Southeast Asia has experienced an achievement called by Southeast Asian historian Anthoni Reid the “*Age of Commerce*,” This Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia is characterized by the dynamics of global trade involving outsiders and professionals from all over the world. This was during the 14th-16th centuries when Southeast Asia became the *world’s most prosperous trading centers* (Marsden, p. 344).

Based on archaeological evidence, Budi Sulistiyo shows the historical continuity of the Nusantara sultanates from time to time. Budi Sulistiyo states that Islamic sultanates have been established in the Archipelago since the 8th Century Hijri, beginning with the Peureulak Sultanate in East Aceh in 840-1108 AD, Samudra Pasai in Pasai Aceh in 1267 AD, whose first king Sultan Mālik al-Ṣālih died in 1296 AD. Chronologically, the sultanates emerged one after another if seen from the period before the birth of the Majapahit Kingdom and the period afterward (Al-Attas, p. 33-34).

The Spread of Islam in the Archipelago-Indonesia and Malaysia

According to Hamid, when discussing the process of Islamization of the Archipelago, we should not overlook the existence of several reports by *native people* in the region, either in written records or oral traditions. These *native* traditions speak of past kingdoms, and although mixed with fictional elements, they have recorded the region’s history. Some native traditions talk about the process of Islamization in the region. Most of the authors of these indigenous traditions mention that the early Muslim preachers who Islamized their ancestors were Arabs or of Arab origin. They came directly from the Arabian Peninsula, and some even settled permanently in certain areas of the East. Most of these preachers married indigenous women after Islamizing them. Their descendants continued the role of preaching the new religion. Some

of them converted native rulers and married royal daughters and later produced offspring who became sultāns or rulers of certain regions; others took charge of religious offices as *Qāḍī*, *Mufīī*, or religious teachers (Reid, p. 312).

The manuscript *Sejarah Melayu* reports that the initial proponent of Islam who converted the ruler of Malacca, Sultān Muḥammad Shāh, was Sayyīd ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, an Arab from the Arabian Peninsula. The manuscripts *Hikāyat Raja-raja Pasai*, and *Sejarah Melayu*, both state that the Sharīf of Makkah had sent a Shaykh Ismā’īl as the leader of an Islamic mission to preach in Sumatra. *The Kedah Annals* manuscript or *Hikāyat Merong Mahawangsa* tells how Shaikh ‘Abdullah al-Yamanī came directly from the Arabian Peninsula and Islamized the ruler or king of Kedah who was later known as Sultān Muzaffar Shah. An Acehnese manuscript reports that Islam was introduced to northern Sumatra by an Arab preacher known as Shaikh ‘Abdullah ‘Arif. One of his *disciples*, Shaikh Burhān al-Dīn, continued his preaching throughout Pariaman (Al-Qurthuby, p. 151).

The Sulu Genealogy reports that the early Islamic preachers who came to Sulu and Mindanao were Arabs, such as Sharīf Awlya, Sharīf Ḥasan, and Sharīf Maraja. Winstead mentions that the first Islamic preacher who came to Java was an Arab. This preacher, Mawlāna Malik Ibrāhīm, came to Gresik and stayed there until he died in 1419. By the time of the fall of the Majapahit kingdom, another Arab preacher, Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm bin Mawlānā Isrā’īl or Sunan Gunung Jati, had settled in Jati, near Cirebon. Sunan Jati and his family gained great political power and later succeeded in controlling Cirebon. At that time, the Jakarta (Raden Fatah) and Banten (Ḥasan al-Dīn) regions were ruled by his descendants. Raden Rahmat, who played an important role in the Islamization process of Java, was the son of an Arab preacher from Champa. Another Arab descendant who became a preacher of Islam in Java was Mawlānā Ishāq from Pasai, who had succeeded in Islamizing Blambangan in large part of the Eastern Region of Java (Vanisa, p. 154).

New findings on the relationship between South India and the Archipelago have proven the role of Indian Muslim preachers in the Islamization process of the Archipelago. The contribution of the Indian Muslim preachers, their Arab and Persian *brethren*, and the contribution of indigenous settlers themselves; all helped spread Islam throughout the Nusantara. However, it cannot be denied that the early Arab preachers played an important role in paving the way for the spread of Islam in various parts of the Archipelago. Cesar Adib Majul

states that to get a comprehensive picture of Indian influence in Islamic Malaysia, it is necessary to consider the importance of Gujarat and South India together. On the other hand, there is a danger of *overemphasizing* the role of Indian Muslims in changing the beliefs of the local population, as this would negate the role played by Arab Sharīfs, Sayyids, and travelers from the Arabian Peninsula. Such was the role of the Malays themselves in Islamizing themselves (Brown, p. 43).

Several theories on how Islam was introduced to the Archipelago and spread throughout its territory have been advanced. The most common explanation and the oldest Theory is that the arrival and spread of Islam were accomplished through trade, as suggested by Tome Pires, who wrote around 1515. This Theory states that the Islamization of the Archipelago had been carried out peacefully by traders who lived in different areas and intermarried with the indigenous population. N. Kern also held the same view and focused more on the similarities between Islamization and the Hindusiasai of the Archipelago, which, in his opinion, was also carried out by traders. H. Kern also adheres to the same Theory, adding that since wealthy merchants married into the families of various rulers, they were able to gain political power (Fang, p. 228).

Meanwhile, A.H. John, who developed a different theory, maintained that Islam was *unlikely to have been* brought to the Archipelago by traders, as it was unusual to consider merchandise as the *bearer of* religion. Rather what is likely is that there was a particular merchandise, the Sufis, accompanied by shaykhs who carried out proselytization work in the Nusantara. S.Q. Fatimi supports this view by maintaining that the Islamization of the Nusantara was the work of the Ṣūfīs (Majul, p. 54-60).

Van Leur has developed the Theory that the political situation and political motives determined the process of Islamization in the Nusantara. Van Leur based his Theory on the assertion that Malacca was converted to Islam because it wanted political support from Muslim traders. Similarly, Van Leur says that Indonesia's coastal kingdoms accepted Islam to resist Majapahit's influence. These new Islamic dynasties claimed Islamic legitimacy, thus gaining Muslim support. As for the rulers who wanted the growth of trade activities in their kingdoms, converting to Islam could ensure Muslim trade support for them. Van Leur has therefore illustrated how political-economic reasons led to the acceptance of Islam in the small kingdoms of the Archipelago (John, p. 71-72).

According to Van Leur, as quoted by Hall, in its earliest stages, the movement to spread Islam in the Archipelago was entirely political, an *affair of rulers and aristocracy*. Islam brought not only higher civilization but also economic development. According to Van Leur, there could not have been a mass conversion to Islam because Islamic law had no significant effect, and Indonesians continued to adhere to their customary laws.

Schrieke remains of the opinion that the intermarriage of wealthy Muslim merchants with members of royal families in the Archipelago was one factor that influenced the gradual spread of Islam, sometimes even causing mass conversions of the population in certain areas. This kind of intermarriage has created religious conversions in only a small group. Schrieke sought to link the spread of Islam in the Archipelago with efforts to check the expansion of Christianity in this part of the world. The confrontation between Islam and Christianity in the Middle East and the Iberian Peninsula in Europe continued in the Nusantara. A struggle was progressing between the Portuguese on the one hand and Muslim traders, princes from Arabia, Persia, and India on the other. Thus, the expansionary power of Islam in Southeast Asia can be considered a *counter-check* to Christian influence.

Finally, the best explanation for the mass conversion of people in a region is the ideological *appeal of* Islam. Radical change or mass conversion only occurs in any society if there is tension or pressure, and dissatisfaction with the existing system that incentivizes seeking new faith values. Wertheim underscores how the idea of equality and individual respect for human beings within the Muslim community was much more attractive to the Nusantara people than the rigid caste system of Hinduism. This Islamic concept of human equality attracted popular support in the trading areas where Muslim merchants called and within the Hindu kingdoms.

The dynamics of the development of Islamic intellectualism in the Archipelago are further related to the sultans' power, which has become a patron for scholars to work. Therefore, the peak of the glory of Islam in the Archipelago goes hand in hand with the peak of the glory of the institution of power or sultanate in the Islamic kingdoms in the Archipelago. The mapping of the emergence of Islamic intellectualism in the Islamic Archipelago is different; in the 17th Century, it occurred in Aceh; in the 18th Century occurred in Palembang; and in the 19th Century occurred in Java. Until the end of the 19th Century, the works of scholars such as Hasan Mustafa in West Java were still found, which were first collected by Ajengan Wiranata.

The patron-client relationship between the royal rulers and the Islamic scholars of the Archipelago often raises questions about the intellectual independence of the scholars in producing Islamic knowledge and, in particular, the Islamic orthodoxy developed for their adherents.

Islamization in the Malay World, although not representative of the whole of Southeast Asia, occurred in the 7th Century, marked by Muslim traders in the region and the large number of indigenous people who became Muslims. Islam peacefully entered Southeast Asia through the activities of traders and Sufis. The three main factors that caused Islam to spread so quickly and be accepted in the Archipelago are (1) the teachings of Islam emphasize the principle of monotheism in its divine system, which frees itself from any power other than God; (2) the flexibility of Islamic teachings with its universal values so that it is always relevant to different contexts of space and time; (3) the characteristics of Islamic teachings which became one of the factors of resistance to the forces of colonialism.

D. Conclusion

Overall, the Indian Theory, the Arabian Theory, the Persian Theory, the Chinese Theory, and the accommodation theory are attempts by scholars to answer three main problems, namely when, from where, and who brought Islam to the archipelago-Indonesia and Malaysia. The differences between these theories are due to the need for supporting data and the existence of alignments that tend to emphasize only specific aspects of the three main problems. Instead of conflicting arguments that will never be resolved, these theories complement and cover each other's shortcomings.

The Archipelago is an archipelago that can be reached from various directions, and each region has different characteristics. Therefore, Islam in the Archipelago and Islam Nusantara are different but inseparable things. Islam in the Archipelago is historical Islam, which grows and develops in the Archipelago from time to time in the context of space and time. Meanwhile, Islam Nusantara is one of the domains of Islamic culture that is distinctive and equal to seven other domains in the Muslim world. Several factors and channels influence Islam in the Archipelago in Islamization, which forms the basis for forming the distinctive characteristics of Islam in the Archipelago.

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