



Research Article

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Establishing the Historiography of Islamic Sultanate in Nusantara

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Abstract

This article is to show how to formulate historiography of Islamic sultanate in Nusantara and This article aims to explain and explore Islamic civilization from the time of the Islamic sultanate in Nusantara (Southeast Asia). This study uses historical research methods with four procedures that are followed, namely Heuristic, Source Criticism, Interpretation, Historiography and a qualitative approach. The awareness and courage to use local sources will attract new enthusiasm in writing Islam Nusantara. Western scepticism towards the original source will only limit the creativity of local Muslim historians to create works of national identity and ancestry. This does not end with criticizing local sources and scavenging them, but instead honours them using the humanities disciplines to understand past content and information in an honest academic endeavour. If comprehensive mapping and reconciliation with local sources can be carried out, then Islam in Nusantara will gain a status as prestigious as elsewhere. Can strengthen regional Islamic identity and will strengthen the nations of Southeast Asia because of the same historical roots. From an institutional perspective, this study can guarantee the availability of religious data and information, especially those related to the early arrival of Islam and its development. Although many works have been published on the history of Islamic civilization in the Nusantara, there has been no special attention to the historical development of Islamic civilization seen from the side of the Islamic sultanate in the Nusantara.

Keywords: *Islamic historiography, Islamic sultanate, Islamic tradition, Nusantara's Islam, historical methodology*

1. Introduction

In an effort to judge the past, it always ends up looking at some of the views of the phenomena that we value (Wiley et al., 2020), including the various ways that are used in determining which history is factual and what has not happened in the past (Argyres et al., 2020). Which often leaves us in rich disputes about nature and history. Along with the development of Islam in the Nusantara, based on historical evidence, Islam has existed since the Sultanate of Samudra Pasai in the 14th century (Ibrahim, 2020; Nadri et al., 2020). There are those who think that the enforcement of Islamic law by the state existed during the Perlak Sultanate (Yakin, 2015). This proves that the implementation and civilization of Islam in the Nusantara has been going on since the first Islamic sultanate. In which the emergence of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam, the Sultanate of Malacca and several Islamic sultanates on the islands of Java, Kalimantan, Maluku and Sulawesi made a new power after the Sultanate of Samudra Pasai and the fall of Malacca to the Portuguese in 1511 (Kheng, 2012). In this article, I would like to explore some questions that are expected to show the history of the entry of Islam to Southeast Asia in terms of the development of sultanates in Southeast Asia.

The arrival of Islam and the development of Islamic sultanate in Nusantara or in Malay, or else known today as South East Asia, is always one of the most attractive themes to historians. Historians still disagree on such facts as when the exact time of the arrival of Islam in this region, who brought it, which area being influenced for the first time, and how the process of the birth of the sultanates and their efforts to Islamize local culture (Hefner & Horvatic, 1997). These are tasks that are yet to be done. In terms of the development of the sultanate system, there are a lot of aspects that pose many questions. For instance, when did the Islamic community in Nusantara achieve political maturity so that they succeeded to establish a nation on their rights?; did each of the community in different areas share the same process in gaining political power, and what kind the political system that they adopted?; how was the political relation between those Islamic political entities and how they settle down their boundaries.

Ethno-linguistics and geo-political studies on the 16-17th century's Islamic sultanate in Nusantara could be made a specific sub-study and it takes a lot of effort to establish a comprehensive methodology of its own. It might start from the relations between Islamic sultanates, such as Samudera Pasai in Aceh, Malaka in Semenanjung Malaya, Tumasik in Singapura, Demak, Cirebon, Banten, Aceh Darussalam, Palembang, Riau, Goa-Tallo, Ternate-Tidore, Banjar, Sumbawa, and Bima (Saefullah, 2012). It might also include other sultanates in the surrounding regions which spoke Malay as the *lingua franca*, like Pattani sultanate in Thailand, Mindanao sultanate and Sulu in the Philippines, and other areas which are now known as Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam (Gross, 2007). We need to examine them in the most comprehensive way involving not only the sultanate's distinctive diplomatic contacts but also the cultural strategies within their political stances in dealing with non-Muslim political entities as an "effort to unite Islam and local powers" (Thohir, 2009).

Historiography in historical science provides opportunity of self-criticism and develop new ways and new insights in historical study (Popkewitz, 2020). Historians' studies on Islam in Indonesia are still unsatisfactory especially on how they formulate the characteristics of Sultanate as an important icon of Islam in Indonesia. The development of colourful Islamic traditions in Nusantara are the direct results of the development of the Sultanate in the region. Therefore, historiography of Nusantara's Islam must be developed. Without seeing the real sultanate formats in Nusantara, the historiography is impossible to realize. This article is to show how to formulate historiography of Islamic sultanate in Nusantara.

2. Methodology

The scrutiny of the Islamic sultanates in the Nusantara is in the discipline of history. In terms of methodology historical research is a study on various historical sources either primary or secondary. There are four steps in history research: heuristic, criticism, interpretation, and historiography (Abdurahman & Safa, 2007).

2.1 Heuristic

Heuristic is an activity to search and find needed sources. Whether or not the heuristic probing is successful depends of the researcher's knowledge on the sources and her technical capacity in scrutinizing the sources. Based on the media, historical sources are in the form of manuscript, archive, document, book, magazine/journal, newspaper, material archaeological artifacts such as inscription, historical building, tomb, and alike, or non-material sources such as folklore and tradition. In the study of the sultanate we need to find building sites and related cultural products.

2.2 Source Criticism

Based on the characteristic, historical sources might fall into primary or secondary category (Hirschler, 2013). Primary sources are those that are created not long from the event in question. It is

defined also as: Based on the characteristic, historical sources might fall into the primary or secondary category (Hirschler, 2013). The main source is in the form of documents from the official or authorized institution and the secondary source is in the form of books and journal articles.

In the sultanate study, the available heritages of the sultanate in the form of building, tool and inscription should be re-examined to diagnose their authenticity and credibility. It is to assure whether or not they are related to the sultanate entity. As the source of scientific research, those evidences should be valued through external and internal criticism. The criticism in question is to define the sources authenticity and credibility. To gain authentic and credible sources we do source criticism. There are two ways of doing it:

1. *External criticism*, that is used to examine if the data is authentic (true) or forged, that is by examining the date of the making, creator and other evidences of the making such as the letter, inscription style, ink and writing tools, the media and the language (Pace et al., 2011).
2. *Internal criticism*, that is used to define whether the content is valid and credible (Saif Mahmood, 2014).

The aims of the criticism are to select data towards building a fact. Every data is recorded in a different card, so that every data is classified properly based on certain category. The data on the early arrival of Islam is on one category and data on the sultanate on another; material evidences are under material category and tradition and religious rituals under one category and dances are in another and so forth.

3. Interpretation

In the historical method, interpretation of historical facts is derived from archive, internet sources, relevant books or direct interview with actors having direct relation to an event or object or researched subject, or other people who have knowledge on the event in question. On the interpretation stage, one fact is compared to another. The interpretation of a fact should be objective. If it is necessary, subjectivity is acceptable as long as it is rational and not emotional. Historical reconstruction should result in a true or close to the truth. On this stage, analysis is conducted with theories that are adapted to the goal of the research.

To portray sultanates' characteristics and their cultural products, we need other humanities disciplines and to conduct a correlative research on the cultural functionality. Are the cultures preserved and plays role in the community or are they gone? From this aspect, we might also see how the characteristics are embodied and whether a sultanate is heterogenous or homogenous.

4. Historiography

The last step is the historiography, that is to arrange the facts into a systematic or diachronic chronology, and to write it as historical, scientifically trustworthy presentation (Kragh, 1987). Historiography is the summit if history research, and in this study, it takes form as the report of the research. The report is to capture the historical reality and not only to respond to the questions of what, who and when but more critically to how and why.

The aim of the written report is to recreate the totality of the historical fact by writing down the true event in the past by making some synthesis and analysis. In this final stage a researcher reconstructs the events in a historical work. The report is in the form of narrative description or analytical description. A narrative description is to present chronologically a historical event, or in this context the sultanate. This is to make the history easy to read and understand. The analytical description aims to answer the 'why' and in historical method it is to recreate the causal relation between some events.

To write academic historical report needs clear and clean diction and logical, factual arguments and easy narrative. Depicting the Nusantara Islamic sultanates with all their cultural products and their role in shaping local tradition need good and appealing narration. It also needs to explain their

potential in accelerating the socio-cultural development and in contributing the diversity.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 *Ethno-History as a Model of Historical Studies*

At the National History Seminar III in Jakarta, November 1981, there was a panel discussion session discussing ethnohistory. It is called ethnohistory as a method needed to complete the exploration of historical sources, in addition to written sources and archives. So, what is ethnohistorical? It can be said that this ethnohistory is new to Indonesia. Maybe only those interested and academics in the field of anthropology know about it.

To find out what ethnohistory is, the following is a note from the Ethnohistory study enthusiast community which describes that:

First, Ethnohistory originates from the idea that integrates ethnography (in anthropology), and historiography (in history) approaches. This approach originally emerged from American anthropologists who took the initiative to provide a 'voice' in the form of historical ethnography against Native Americans whose history has been viewed from the perspective of white society. However, we move more broadly, and Ethnohistory starts from the assumption that first, the existence of populist historical writings about small non-white people, non-bourgeois and other ordinary people, which turns out to contain as detailed a narrative as ethnography. Ethnohistory tells of people who have not only lived in remote or marginalized places but have also been isolated in history. Our first assumption is strongly influenced by the historian Eric John Ernest Hobsbawm and the great historian of Indonesia: Sartono Kartodirdjo.

Second, Ethnohistory offers the kinds of cultural theories that historians have, so far, been reluctant to accept. History does not contain only linear narratives, but there are structures in history that are embodied in myths, legends, cosmology and other beliefs. We believe that historical events are determined by culture and during the process of cultural change is also determined by history, which ultimately shapes the transformation process. Our second assumption is inspired by Marshall David Sahlins' historical, anthropological theories.

Third, Ethnohistory reflects a critique of ethnographic arrogance, in which empiricism should no longer depend only on direct observation and involvement with careful public life, but also incorporate history as memories that are no longer visible to the senses. Therefore, Ethnohistory expanded the method by studying archives, biographies, diaries and oral history. Thus, Ethnohistory stimulates anthropologists and historians to go beyond their data, explicit observation, narrative, and existing literacy and have the courage to imagine, interpret and most importantly take a stand in favour. We get this assumption from the thought of anthropologists and historians, Jean Comaroff and John Loinel Comaroff.

Fourth, every society must undergo transformation massively and individually. Every society is in fact in a time process in which they undergo changes from small to young and ageing, from traditional to modern, from kingdoms to neat bureaucratic states, and so on. However, Ethnohistory is not like the evolutionist approach, which argues that every society must pass the same ladder to reach the next progressive step. Because every culture must have an action of change and historical value in it, resulting in awareness and practice of its own. We draw this approach from the viewpoint of an Indonesian anthropologist and expert historian, Ann Laura Stoler.

Fifth, so far, history has been considered to find data, while anthropology (called) creates data. With Ethnohistory, therefore, the interdisciplinary character of Ethnohistory collects and creates data through reading of maps, music, paintings, photography, folk stories, oral traditions, archaeological materials, museum collections, literary works, language, place names, and interviews as data. And its analytical tools. We get this fifth assumption from the approach of the anthropologist and expert historian of India, Bernard S. Cohn.

From this description, Ethnohistory serves as a method to reveal ethnographic dimensions such

as nation, human character, cultural life, traditions and spirituality, as well as folklore, and others on the basis of direct research on "space" and the things it studies. In his research, he does not forget about the aspects of the origin and the description of the time when a culture or character is owned by humans and their communities.

Ethnohistory research is carried out by going directly (participant observation) by involving oneself (researchers) in the cultural or ethnic activities they are researching. Conduct interviews with ethnic or community figures and communities and involve themselves in their community activities, so that from that involvement will be felt, known, and at the same time obtaining the related data they researched, However, because it is related to ethnohistory, the aspect of chronology (time) from the beginning to its development and being part of the community is the most important that is raised in the results of the research.

From this ethnohistorical research, the synchronic aspect as the character of social science is integrated with the diachronic aspect that is unique in history; so that cultural or social studies in society do not only expand in space, but the time travel of a research subject is known. Koentjaraningrat calls this descriptive model integration which aims to obtain an understanding of humans and their behaviour by reconstructing their origin, development and distribution as well as various intercultural contacts that occur throughout the ages.

The reasons for choosing ethnohistory for the study of the history of the sultanate in Indonesia:

1. Indonesia has thousands of islands, tribes, cultures, customs and the history of the development of the sultanate
2. Each sultanate entity has its own unique and different historical journey and socio-cultural formation process
3. The writing of local histories of each sultanate has not been completed in a uniform manner and requires accommodating methods

5.2 The Formation of Tradition

To do this kind of research, what we need is the concept of "the formation of tradition". The concept could cover various data and facts related to early history and the sultanates development in a certain area by taking into account the social condition and their view to the past. In E. Shils' *Traditions*, Taufik Abdullah argues that

"as something inherited from the past, tradition is not only related to legitimation base but also to authority system. As a historical concept, a tradition could be understood as a cultural paradigm to see and give meaning to reality. It is because the traditional formation is basically a selection process—when an aspiration should face with reality and when freedom should meet modus vivendi with the structural norms—so tradition could also be seen as a set of value and knowledge that define the characteristics and types of cognitive community. It is the tradition that sets up the identity awareness and relation to what comes earlier (Abdullah, 1987)".

Based on the theory, history does not only pursue the certainty of 5 W and 1 H of an event. However, by taking into account the social condition and their memory of the past recorded in various media, either in the form of archaeological artefacts, manuscripts or oral stories, the zeitgeist of an event can be concluded.

Taufik Abdullah (1987) further says

"history is not a historical certainty requiring that every criticized event should be proved with clear sources, but it also entails fairness, and when history is understood as something interrelated to social and cultural meanings, then the community's view of the past plays a very significant role".

If history is seen as the desired sequence of events requiring historical agents to act actively, the concept of circulation can be used as one way of analyzing local sources.⁶ we could also assume that

in a historical process, the actors do not only react to their environment but also to the concept of propriety (Porra et al., 2014). The behaviour propriety is based on the actors' knowledge and worldview. One of the cognitive and normative warehouses is the traditional historiography (Shomary, 2019). We might, at this point, encounter a thin line between history and myth. But if a myth is seen as the embodiment of narrative worldview, then we might expect to gain some information of a certain past, and at the same time the society's concept of the past and their cultural tension (Purdue, 2004).⁷ The reality that makes a number of local tradition as potential historical sources, as they contain records of events from the past. It might serve the historians the natural ambience, and second, how they record the past with all of their potentials. Therefore, to understand the early process of Islam in the Nusantara and its dynamics, it is also important to have a review on the traditional historiography.

6. The Notion and Approach of National History

There exist several ways to advance history and expand Indonesian Historiography, i.e. by changing philosophy, theory, methodology, method and prospective study (Milliken, 1999). Enriching the object of study related to the phenomenon of Indonesia centric is indeed the easiest way to establish the existence of Historiography as well as to strengthen the heritage of *Islam Nusantara* civilization. Mapping the Sultanate position as the object of study of National History is a strategic step to comprehend the articulation of Islam Nusantara even to comprehend that the civilization establishing diversity of Islamic pattern came from the heritage of former sultanate.

Developing philosophy, theory, methodology and method of history will not at least involve three significant aspects; ontology, ethic and aesthetic (Kuntowijoyo, 2003). The ontology notion will lead to *critical philosophy of history* aspect questioning what role of history is, how could the past be known, what form of knowledge is, asking if a historian can write the past objectively and how to explain it by the causality aspect of history etc. But the most fundamental aspect of a philosophical view of history that we established is again questioning how to put a paradigm shift of thinking Europa centric to Indonesia centric that put Indonesia centric very important in history frame that the theory, methodology, and philosophy of history should be aligned with the Indonesia centric realities. Such a view has also been understood by western scholars. They always argue that many local sources of Indonesia centric cannot be used as historical sources scientifically as full of myths and legends. Such western stereotype has become a crucial issue to immediately resolve academically. Is it possible if they haven't understood yet symbolically concerning mental facts that exist behind myths, legends and religious literature? In fact, all of the phenomena can be understood as independent fact which is academically required to read and to comprehend. Those are the notions of nations to understand more about the reality of their ancestors.

From such a philosophical issue, it will continue to demand aesthetic aspect questioning how Indonesia historians should be able to open secrets and scientific fogs covering the heritage of their ancestors. After the philosophical and ethical issues, it will demand its aesthetic aspect that is how to write the history of sultanate of *Islam Nusantara* properly. Writing academically is undoubtedly the most fundamental aspect because it will be published globally. This is a strategic task of how to present the results, promote and maintain the existence of the heritage, and also risk it with the civilization of other nations in the stage of world history.

Aesthetically, the fundamental issues which are inherent on the concept of establishing national historiography should consider these five things: 1) Writing national history both temporal and spatial scope is still in the space of nationality of Indonesia. 2) Determining the scale of national history requires a good formula, how to connect the local history (Sultanate) with the presence of national history. 3) Which historical perspective to compile their national history reasonably. 4) Understanding the complexities of diversity requires a theoretical framework and multidimensional interpretative approach. 5) What dimensional moral framework that can be given from the results of historical study for the development of national history (Kartodirjo, 1982).

Then how to connect the heritage of Islam Nusantara sultanate with national existence today? Although the existence of Islam Nusantara sultanate physically has largely gone, the spirit and heritage of civilization in the dimensions of the characteristics and nuances of mentality in each region can still be felt, both anthropologically, sociologically and politically. The cultural heritage in the form of cultural products can still be seen. A religious atmosphere, religious thought, and spiritual dimensions of life still has a pulse and is still turned on by his successors, though with varied and minimalist size. Clearly, connecting the past with the present atmosphere will be easily found by the science of history. It should be understood first, that the science of history is a self-sufficient science, meaning as a symbol of an awareness that directly establishes national consciousness. Historical approach has always emphasized continuity and change (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016). No symptoms are not experienced growth and development, while the genetic approach is owned by historians.

7. Malay Sultanate as Islamic Civilization

To bring lights to the Islamic sultanates in South-East Asia and to compare them with smaller kingdoms (*al-duwailât*) in Middle West (C.E. Bosworth, 1989; Philip K. Hitti, 1974), are of big values as it could reveal the role of the South-east Asian Islam and it as well probes the relation and assimilation between foreign religion and local culture. It is said that "South-East Asia is not only a place for big religions—Islam, Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism—to enhance themselves but also expand in such a way that the unifying ties between the observers could diminish as well as amplify the political and regional boundaries (Abdullah, 1989). In this lights, Islam is the most interesting of all as the followers are of the majority in almost in every country in the region, and in some places, it manages to break down the political boundaries (Renre, 2012).

Studies on Islam in South-East Asian growingly attract scholars and historians in the '80s. Some of the researches are published in an anthology *Islamic Tradition and Awakening in Southeast Asia* (Abdullah & Siddique, 1988). However, we should make a greater effort because the previous studies leave a number of problems, especially related to the early history of the development of the sultanate in the region.

There are several great hindrances in the studies of South-east Asian Islam, as raised by Azyumardi Azra (2002). They are, among others: There are several great hindrances in the studies of South-east Asian Islam, as raised by Azyumardi Azra (2002). They are, among others:

1. Scholars should be equipped with other skills such as fluency in the Dutch language.
2. Scholars should be prepared to get exhausted in collecting highly scattered data or archives.
3. Scholars should also be prepared to have eyesight problem as the archives and manuscripts are not easy to read and understand.
4. And no less important reason is that the future studies should be distinguished to what has been written by previous scholars (especially foreign scholars) if he wished her study have important significances.

Looking at the work of Bosworth (1980), it seems that the book could be a source of inspiration for us to rewrite the position, genealogy, articulation and the roles of the Islamic sultanate in shaping the culture of Islam in Nusantara Nusantara. The face of Indonesian Islam today is the embodiment of the politics of the sultanate system. It seems that it is virtually impossible for the historians to observe the overall dynamics of the Muslim community of the Nusantara, but it can be done in an easier way by seeing it through the dynamics of the sultanates' cultural institutions and their religious institutions, given the sultanates had established written documentation which keeps track of the whole activities.

8. The Position of Nusantara and Sultanate Historiography

The position and geographical location (Geopolitical) of Nusantara since 7th to 17 centuries had a lot meaning (had contributed) to the world civilization, such China, India, Arab and Europe, particularly to create cultural communication pattern among nations and unity (united) them in the form of its humanity (Mahbubani & Sng, 2017). The arrival of foreign people, for a resident of Nusantara itself, who're looking directly for trade activity and to find merchandise in Nusantara, has given enormous advantages to their mental development or even to unite and connected them (At least, it has united and connected each indigenous people and contributed for the social mentality development (the development of social mentality, culture, religion and indigenous economy. Nusantara Island, as the world crossroads of trade sea activity, particularly economic activity between continents, has growth become the central area for trading activity. Sriwijaya, as the centre of maritime empire located in Palembang has developed their power since 7th to 8th, was a powerful magnet for those people, particularly the merchant and trading company, who want to come and develop then acquainted Island of Nusantara, Nusantara. The arrival of Islam into various areas in Nusantara Island didn't come simultaneously, even the coastal areas mentioned above had been developed to become the great sultanate. However, Chinese people, in Indonesian trade history, were the first foreign that came to Nusantara Islands rather than Arabian, Persian and India (Evers, 1988). Probably they arrived in Nusantara Island since the T'ang dynasty as well as Sriwijaya. Chinese didn't have religion mission or even political ambition, but they were only just interested in trade and dominated maritively. Otherwise, the Muslim merchant, along with religion mission, had motivated to organized society through Sultanate and even they had spread Islamic social culture to new region/area and develop it as what they did. So that the entire of trading centre, which have been mentioned above, had become the main strategy to spread Islamic missionary through Islamic Sultanate, such Malaka sultanate, Aceh, Banten, Cirebon, Demak, Banjar, Ternate, Tidore, Goa, Tallo and others.

In the other hand, from social perspectives, the geographical location of Nusantara Islands led the nation and the people more interacted easily, particularly with foreign, so that there was no restriction to the process of assimilation and acculturation between them. Meanwhile, from language cultural perspective, Nusantara Islands has a unique language characteristic, Nusantara Islands also known as the Multilanguage, multicultural (Nusantara), and multi-religion country. The geographical location of each tribe in Nusantara Island also created a typology of pluralism people. The separation of each island has reflected a pluralism people because its language is divergent and also because of the character of its environments such as topography and temperature. In that difference characteristic, only religious communication and trading activity can be lingua franca through islands. The reality of that diversity, it is often allied because there were assimilation, Islamisation and acculturation between local culture and other culture, or even with the global culture, known as Islam. In this context, it cannot deny that trade contact and the presence of Sultanate in Nusantara had a role to used Malaya language as a national language between the diversity of Nusantara. Although the user of Malaya language on writing form had spread since 1590th, as the lingua franca in sultanate region and another region in Nusantara, Malaya had been used far longer before the manuscript (Reid, 1993).

Thus, the variety of historical sultanate existence in each region had raised local potentials and increased its power as well as the presence of local wisdom, myths, legend, and folklore. All the various aspects are the source of historical knowledge that need to be explained in the study of Historiography of Nusantara. Today, the interest of historical studies, how the position of historiography in Nusantara and Sultanate Islamic Empire, located between two continents known as Australia and Asia, can be used as the cooperation attraction between ASEAN community or south Asian.

9. The Existence of Sultanate in Western Scholars' Historiography

In the global spatial aspect, the position of Nusantara has been a particular concern since a long time ago, both for the travellers, merchants, and students of the region and experience the rapid spread of culture (Afrianti, 2019; Chalik, 2016). The uniqueness of the Nusantara region should be seen from all the elements in it, particularly against the rulers as well as a power system that is playing the role of power. Western writers frequently skip reviewing the period of Nusantara region by ignoring the period of the Islamic sultanate. They seem to prefer to assess the Nusantara region with periods of Hindu and Buddhist roles, such as periods of Sriwijaya in Palembang in Sumatra, Pajajaran in West Java and Majapahit in East Java. De Graf and Pigeud seem more passionate when writing Islamic sultanate of Mataram which is closer to Java Hindu patterns, rather than others. Then it raises a question among historians lately; is this avoidance is merely the matter of avoiding in writing "religious conflict"? Or this may leave the task for Muslim historians to study Islam Nusantara. Is this reality along with British historians' understanding who also have the same mission, i.e., they are more enthusiastic to raise the role of Hindu in India rather than to raise the role of the Sultanate of Mughal in India? Because the British mission in India require politically being called a "hero" for the people of India and also require removing the role of Islam that has ruled India through the Sultanate of Mughal since a long time ago, British historians wish to make an impression as if they was the one as a nation that liberated and raised the region of India colonized so long by Moslems. Thus most of the British historians' mission always tries to downplay the role of the Sultanate of Mughal in India in any aspect (Means, 2009).

Reflect on western's writing models to their colonies, and it often made "stereotype" to the existence of the Islamic world (Sultanate) even treat them badly mean. Some examples of cases concerning the theory of religious conversion and the Moslem conquest of India has spawned two major opposing theories; the one distress the existence of Islam, and the others claim that the presence of Islam has exempted India from mental retardation and its social system. The first theory states that the presence of Islam to India was always tinged with violence, conquest and swords. This theory was developed and disseminated by the British and the Indian nationalist historians like Elliot, Cousens, Majundar and Vayadya. While the second theory states that the presence of Islam in India was generally peaceful. However, there was fighting only among the kings of India who always wanted to perpetuate their power. Sufism in India entrenched. Even more, Hindus turn their religion to Islam due to the great figure of Sufis, such as Muinuddin Chisty, who is also a member of Sultanate of Mughal. The second theory was developed by Muslim leaders of modern India and Pakistan Nationalists, namely Habib and Quraysh (Derryl N, 1989).

The same thing also occurs to the Dutch historians, for example when conducting a study about the existence of the history of Sultanate of Islam Nusantara by authors such as Bernard H.M. Vlekke in his work (Vlekke, 2008), *Nusantara: A History of Indonesia*, the role of Islamic sultanate Nusantara is not presented in a concrete and clear way. Although described already, but the presence of Sultanate position was merely played and treated as "objects of the sufferer" of trade relations and the power of the people of Europe such as Portugal, Spain, England and the Netherlands. The existence and role of Islam Nusantara in diplomatic relations with the Europeans were not fully disclosed but perceived more as a Moslem community who did not have the "power of culture". H.M. Vlakee illustrates the position and the presence of the Sultanate of Islam Nusantara in such a way that is not fair even putting the description haphazardly so that his works of historiography tends to show the history and existence of the people of Europe that rule Nusantara more dominant than the Islamic sultanate. Similarly, modern Western writers such as Antony Reid in his work, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce (1450-1680)*, he treats the object of Islamic sultanate created not as impressive as the fact. Although he describes fully about the world trade of Southeast Asia, he never tells the existence. The vital role of the Sultanate of Islam Nusantara as a whole in each Nusantara, except a few such as the sultanate in Patani, Aceh, Banten, and Makasar even explained merely enough with one paragraph for each (Reid, 1993).

Pluralism and diversity of the Sultanate of Islam Nusantara have fortified and integrated Islamic culture pattern universally can also be seen from various communication patterns (Aljunied, 2016; Wibowo, 2019), due to the accumulation between the relation of local power and the local network support even from sultanates that already existed. The tradition of writing down the development of Islam Nusantara seems to have grown since the times of Sultanate in each region. It can be proven from the emergence of a number of manuscripts found relating to the history of Sultanates in the respective region. Philology experts have worked hard to be able to reveal the content and substance of each type of manuscript in the former of the Sultanate of Islam Nusantara. Nevertheless, the expectancy to write about the various pattern of the government system in each sultanate is not an easy matter because many manuscripts do not certainly have the uniformity that can reveal the system and government pattern.

10. Mapping and Understanding Islamic Sultanate in the Nusantara from Within

Although the historical sources of each of the kingdoms are limited in number, they still have some historical sites and their stories are kept in the memory of the people, all of which can be reconstructed into historical facts, at least as the first step towards a complete data collection. It is because history always works in stages, such as starting with studies of oral tradition, including folklores. Local resources deserve to be appreciated, and native scholars have the capacity to do it better than their foreign counterparts. Every culture is born in historical space, and a study from within is what we need as Muslim scholars in the Nusantara. Therefore, handling the historical sources of the Nusantara Islam should involve the dynamics of its culture, literature, fairy tales, legends and people memory of the past. According to Al-Attas, there are four reasons for the lack of resources and the historical study of Islam and the history of the spread of Islam in the Nusantara (Kamaruzaman et al., 2016).

First, academic sources and works of Islamic history written in the old Javanese script/*Pigeon* (Arabic Latin). *Second*, there is a huge number of historical sources are lost or untraceable because of the colonization. *Third*, mostly, historical accounts made by the Nusantara people are deemed by the Orientalists as literary facts, as mere fairy tales or legends and not as true and perfect historical sources. *Forth*, because of the limited number of existing historical sources and studies, scholars from the West only use sources, studies and writings from outside the Nusantara, including from the West itself.

One of the bold steps ever taken by the historians in treating local sources in such a way is that done by Hossein Djajadiningrat when he studies the relation between local culture and the Banten Sultanate in his renown book, *Kritische Bescouwing van de Sadjarah Banten*. The doctoral thesis was written in 1913; the first historical work in Indonesian history and by Indonesian people and which used local sources. It academically elevates the Indonesia-city in the eye of Western scholars. He used legends, folklores local manuscripts as his main sources and is able to explicate Banten's local culture in their sultanate in a very detail way (Djajadiningrat, 1983).

And so is what Muhammad Syed Naguib al-Attas has done regarding the first period of the Islamic influence in the Nusantara. Is it true that Sumatra was known by the Prophet during his lifetime, and visited or passed by Arabic merchants in his period? Those questions are answered by Muhammad Syed Naquib al-Attas (al-Attas, 2014) in his newest work *Historical Fact and Fiction* presented in his seminar paper in November 2011. Al-Attas concludes his facts in an "inductive method of reasoning". This method, al-Attas argues, could be used by historians when dealing with a minimal number of sources, such as those related to Islamic history in the Nusantara.

The emergence of Islam and the initial of its spread in South East Asia was closely related to the Malacca Strait's connection to other regions such as Arabia, Persia, India, China and others including Egypt. The evidence of this connection can be found the various studies on the connection and international trade route in the past, especially before Islam came to South East Asia. The various nations and regions would later define the perspectives and theories of the arrival of Islam in the

region; hence any of them is still open to debate. Therefore, the theories that say that Islam in Indonesia came from Arab, India, Gujarat, Persia, or China could be wholly justifiable as there was more than one place in South East Asia being influenced by Islam at the same time. When Islam entered Aceh, for instance, the same region came to Java simultaneously. When a group of Arabic merchants traded with the leaders of Sriwijaya in Sumatera, some others could also arrive at Celebes port, and so forth. It might be possible as the relation of South East Asia and the Middle East has been established even before Islam was given birth in the Arabic Peninsula.

11. Building the Historiography of the Islamic Nusantara

In general, Western scholars' studies tend to diminish the Islamic role in the region. The dwarfing of the significance of Islam in South East Asia is systematic in the name of science and academia, such as those done by Leur (1953), Parsons (1991), Geertz (1982), or Hurgronye (1983). Many criticisms to this conduct came not only from local historians but also from other Western counterparts such as Edward Said, A.H. John and Marshall G. Hudgson. Edward Said sharply criticizes how Western scholars see the East (the Oriental) in general, and Islam and the Islamic world in specific.

The Orientalists and foreign historians retain inaccurate—if not defect—perspective on Islam in South East Asia. The studies on Islam in this region, on the other hand, are not as many as those on the Middle East and from the limited number of studies, they create an inaccurate portrait of the regional Islam. The colonialism of Britain and the Dutch are also responsible for this inaccuracy. Since the first effort to systematically describe Islam in the region, the Orientalists and colonialists had made distorted views on Islam. Unfortunately, the misperceived and distorted framework are referred by the preceding scholars of South-East Asian Islam (Azra, 1989).

In the "Introduction" to *Tradisi dan Kebangkitan Islam di Asia Tenggara*, Taufik Abdullah and Sharon Shiddique, highlights how the colonialists are biased in viewing the Islamic traditions in the region. Islam had been living in the region for seven centuries and developed distinctive traditions in politics and socio-economy. Understanding the traditions need a sophisticated approach not only because the locality itself matters but also the Islamic traditions before and after the development in this area are subject to the analysis. However, there are a lot of aspects in the colonialists' studies to be corrected as their interests are conflicted with colonialism and state administration (Abdullah & Siddique, 1988).

The unbalanced view can be seen from how they use the local sources about Islam in South East Asia. Azra argues that:

"In terms of South East Asia, it is that there are no sources at all—especially about the early spread of. There are written sources, archaeological artefacts and epigraphs, either local or foreign. Local sources, such as myths, legends, chronicles, *Tambo* (a Western Sumatera's version of the legend), or other classical historiography provide information on the local conversion to Islam and the early development of the religion in certain places in the Nusantara. However, there are a lot of Western scholars, as criticized by A.H. Johns, see that local historiography in a negative manner, as those literary genres don't match the Western category of history and historiography. Even scholars like de Graaf argue that the early historiography of early Islam in the Nusantara is not reliable."

De Graaf's conclusion is a little bit biased. It doesn't matter that the western historiography has distinctive characteristics, a serious, honest and objective scholar cannot ignore classical historiography of Islam wholly in the Nusantara. It is because, in any way, the sources provide information on the Islamic characteristics and development in areas; even so, they give a general pattern of how Islam was introduced in the region. More than that, the classical historiography could balance out information from outside worlds such as from the West, China, and even Arab.

In general, the biased studies on Islam by the West are embedded with non-academic reasons. This tendency has been happening so long that "it is clear that there is an unwillingness among the Orientalists to admit Islamic significance as what it is in South East Asia." Even more, in the studies of Middle East Islam where sources are abundant, scholars such as Goldziher, Schacht, Juynboll, and

Crone, deny the reliability of the historical traditions and the traditions of the companions. This attitude sits upon ideological standing and aims to "destroy" historical base and early Islamic doctrines.

He tends to diminish the Islamic significance in South East Asia are similar to colonial misinterpretation of Islamic traditions. This is due to several reasons, other than colonial administration, among others: *first*, the remote distance of the region to Islam in Mid-East. *Second*, local sources, either written or oral, material or immaterial cultures, are set aside as unreliable. *Third*, as a consequence of the second reason, as aforementioned, a number of studies such as conducted by Geertz and Snouck Hurgronje are superficial and interpret Islam from one single perspective. *Forth*, Muslim scholars seldom touch the issues of Islam in South East Asia so that the characteristics of the regional Islam are murky and insignificant within the studies of global Islam.

Henceforth, it might be said that one of the main issues of the early history of the development of Islam in South East Asia is the use of local sources. The so-called local sources are traditional historiographies such as *babad* (the chronicle of a place), *hikayat* (a kind of heroic tale), *+Tambo* (the West Sumatran legend), *Sejarah* (chronicle), *silsilah/salasilah* (kinship), and *kaba* (heroic tale from West Sumatra), and archaeological artefacts and local tradition. Other than the colonial bias, the inaccessibility of the sources is another reason behind the lack of information. This is due to the age of some sources and being scattered in vast areas. Therefore, the re-inventory of the sources are of significant values. The search will hopefully gain the data and facts regarding the early history and development of Islam in the region. The data and the facts are then identified, described, verified and presented as reliable historical evidence. To do this, we need teamwork between all of the existing Study Programs of Islamic History and Civilization in Indonesia. The work should be focused on the islands that hold the sultanate artefacts and historical sites such as Sumatra, Kalimantan, Moluccas, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara Barat, Java and so on.

12. To Formulate the Historiography of the Nusantara Islamic Sultanates

The writing of Nusantara Islam tends to be Euro-centric on the one hand, or nationalistic on the other. The first characteristic fails to place Islam as a significant historical element of the region. Islam is diminished, and its local sources are thought to be unreliable historical evidence. The nationalist efforts—although in some aspects, they are invaluable of enabling the nation to cut off from colonial and imperial dependence—do not wholly use local sources in developing Islamic history within the national history. The two tendencies are similar in lacking efforts to maximize local sources or else known as traditional historiography in describing the early history and development of Islam in this region.

Other than traditional historiography, other sources in the form of archaeological traces can also be seen separately, based on the geopolitical boundaries today of the nations in South East Asia. The nations truly have interrelation in the past, especially from the fact that they speak the same language: Malay. Some part of Thailand and the Philippines and the whole area of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam are also known as *Jawah* or the Java, i.e. a region whose people speak Malay as the scientific and daily language.

Therefore, the study aims to be distinctive from the two approaches above. The search of local sources that is the traditional historiography and archaeological traces will improve the previous approaches. By re-inventing and describing the traditional historiography or manuscripts about the early history of Islam and the development of the sultanate, the history of Islam in the region can be reconstructed in a balanced way, that is by combining the foreign perspective and sources, and local resources. The combination will contribute significantly to the theories of the arrival of Islam, and the development of the sultanate as the internal dynamics can be seen from the local manuscripts and local traditions.

Other than through the traditional historiography, Islamic artefacts in the region such as stone inscriptions, palaces, ancient houses of prayer, or religious traditions could also serve the dynamics of

Islam in one place and the Muslim community in a sultanate. Other than that, the writing of the Islamic sultanate or kingdom will be more accurate and in turn will place the sultanates appropriately within the process of Islamization and the development of Islam in the Nusantara.

By uncovering the early arrival of Islam in the Nusantara, and collecting the whole data and describing the development of the sultanates of the kingdoms, the connection of the assimilation of the doctrines of Islam and local culture. It might also reveal the relation between one sultanate to another. This will not be only valuable in terms of history, but to a reinforcement of the identity of the regional Islam and will strengthen the nations in South East Asia because of the same historical roots.

In the institutional perspective, the effort will guarantee the availability of religious data and information especially those related to the early Islamic arrival and its development, based on local sources, either from traditional historiography or archaeological artefacts. The other advantage is the salvation of religious treasures. On the national level, the research could improve the *National History of Indonesia* volume III, regarding Islam and its development in Indonesia.

The retrace to the local sources is an extensive study. In these lights, we need some limitation and problem formulation so that the research is focused on the development of the Islamic sultanates in the 17th century in South East region. Henceforth, the study should be limited only to the first arrival of Islam and the development of the Islamic sultanates/kingdoms in the Nusantara until today. As a result, what the team should do is:

1. Make an inventory of Islamic historical sources and describe the traditional historiography or manuscripts including the folklores, oral traditions, legends, tales and others that are related to and contain information on the scope of the study;
2. Describe and analyze the sultanates in each and every area and how they play a role in shaping Islamic tradition in their realms;
3. Describe and analyze the Islamic sultanates or kingdoms in this region, regarding the time of its first establishment, the genealogy of the sultans/kings and their position today;
4. Describe and analyze the Islamic development today in each of the sultanates;

13. Conclusion

The main significance of the historiography is to contribute to historical writing and science. Without mapping and concern to development, history and historical science will wilt away. Awareness and courage to use local sources will entice a new spirit in the writing of the Nusantara Islam. Western scepticism on native sources will only limit Muslim local historians' creativity to create works about their national identity and ancestors. This will not end by criticizing local sources and diminish them, but on the contrary, by respecting them using humanities disciplines to understand the content and information of the past in honest academic effort. If a comprehensive mapping and reconciliation with local sources can be done, Islam in the Nusantara will gain prestigious status as those in other places. Islam in Nusantara today is a reflection of the sultanates in the past, and the results of how the sultanates balanced out the Islamic culture with local tradition.

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