
The Application of Malay Islamic Beraja in the State Life of Brunei Darussalam (Historical-Political Review)

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Abstract

After gaining independence in 1984, Brunei successfully established itself as an Islamic state with an absolute monarchy government. Through Malay Islam Beraja (MIB) ideology, Brunei asserts Malay and Islam as core indicators in determining the identity and flow of political and social policies. This journal article aims to elaborate on the history and development of the implementation of Melayu Islam Beraja at the Bruneian state and society level, both Malay and non-Malay, Muslim and non-Muslim. This research is descriptive, analytical, and historical research. The sources are collected through a literature review and then critiqued for validity. The sources were analyzed using a political history approach. The results show that the history of the birth of the MIB has an embryo in the classical sultanate period. Secular Western colonization further strengthened Brunei to maintain Islamic values and the essence of Malay in the state. Implementing the MIB made Brunei a genuinely Islamic state practicing strict Islamic values compared to Malaysia and Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority but secular countries in Southeast Asia. The Sultan's firmness, accompanied by a policy of fair and equitable prosperity for all, has won the support of non-Muslims to follow the implementation of the MIB in harmony. This research recommends to policymakers that in non-democratic countries, prosperity and harmonization of multicultural societies can be achieved, provided there is consistency and seriousness in the implementation of existing development policies. The findings of this research are helpful for history and political science, especially in the study of the implementation of constructive and positive political policies and state philosophies. This is currently needed in the aspect of making community development policies.

Keywords: Brunei Darussalam, Malay Islamic Beraja, Political History.

1. Introduction

Brunei Darussalam has a small geographical area on the island of Borneo and a small population. The population of Brunei Darussalam is predominantly Malay, and the ethnic minority is predominantly Chinese. According to a survey by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion Public Life (October 2009), The population of Brunei Darussalam is 67.2% Muslim, 13% Buddhist, 10% Christian and a further 10% of other faiths. About 20% of the population is ethnic Chinese, of whom it is estimated that some are Christian and others Buddhist. There are also workers from Australia, the UK, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia who follow Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism.

The arrival of British colonization from the south (Serawak area) and Spanish attacks from the Philippines were enough to make Brunei nervous. Finally, in the 19th century, Brunei was successfully colonized by the British government. As with any colonization, especially when the colonized country is a Muslim country, the implementation of Islamic principles will naturally be shaken by the secular system of the colonizers, as well as the immigrants who have also shaped the demographic and socio-political conditions of Brunei Darussalam during the colonial period, right up to the present day.

When Brunei Darussalam merged with Malaysia in the early days of Malaysia's independence in 1957, they realized that Malaysia's political and social conditions were characterized by secularism and plurality. Coupled with the ethnic Malay and non-Malay riots that often occurred in Malaysia in the 1960s to 1969, Brunei was motivated to immediately strengthen the Islamic and Malay ideology in the construction of its state identity, especially in the construction of an absolute form of government to be subject to one direction, namely through the ideology of Malay Islam Beraja (MIB), as an ideology capable of prioritizing Malay customs and Islamic values as the identity of the state and society.

The slogan of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is 'One Vision, One Identity, One Community', promoting a strong holistic approach to regional identity and community building. According to the charter text, the "one identity" that ASEAN seeks to develop is based on "an awareness of the region's diverse cultures and heritage". This principle is articulated in terms of the 'ASEAN way' and non-interference, whereby ASEAN does not infringe on the sovereignty of its member states. While this approach has been successful, it has undoubtedly attracted criticism, particularly in human rights. ASEAN's approach to religious freedom is complex, as religions and governments have different views on what it means and how it can be achieved. Religious freedom should be measured not only by freedom from legal restrictions but also by the social, political, and economic participation of religious minorities and the availability of space for discussion and worship. Because religious freedom is also essential for maintaining stability and promoting an open and non-violent exchange of ideas, promoting and protecting religious freedom is critical to ASEAN's commitment to regional security (B.Jereza, 2016; Markiewicz, 2018).

Indonesia, n.d.) explains the possibility of inequality of religious rights in a country, conflict, and even persecution. According to him, these things can happen because of: the existence of institutions that favor a majority religion; the existence of a static regime that controls a religion; the incorporation of religion into state institutions; the politicization of religion; the confusion of religion with national identity; the normative influence

of religion in law (Scharffs, 2016). The politicization of religion itself is generally seen as negative, as it can affect the guarantee of human rights and religious groups (Ghanea, 2018).

Interestingly, the implementation of Malay Islam Beraja (MIB), apart from demonstrating the Sultan's political absolutism in controlling the state and religion within the state institutions, had a pretty good acceptance by the Bruneian society, which led to the longevity of Brunei with its traditional monarchical style of government. It is essential to highlight the research on the history and development of MIB implementation after comparing Brunei Darussalam's implementation of Islamic values, which is much better than the two largest Muslim-majority 'giants' in Southeast Asia, Malaysia and Indonesia. Indonesia is the country with the highest Muslim population density in the world, at 80%. While Malaysia is known as a state that applies Sharia law properly and evenly, only Kelantan states do so (Pratama et al., 2023). Interestingly, a country as small as Brunei has not experienced Western influence, as Malaysia and Indonesia still have secular laws in their constitutions (Pratama, 2022).

On this basis, this research takes a political-historical approach. The dissection of this topic begins by explaining the factors that drive historical forces. According to Carl G. Gustavson, developed by Kuntowijoyo, 2005, Gustavson in *A Preface of History*, identified six historical forces: economy, religion, institutions/politics, technology, ideology and military. In addition to the six aspects, Kuntowijoyo adds other aspects of history where these aspects are seen as driving the occurrence of an event, the forces of history according to Kuntowijoyo include: economy, religion, institutions/politics, technology, ideology, military, individuals, gender/sex, age, class, ethnicity and race, myths and culture.

Looking at these aspects of power, we can conclude that historical events do not move or happen without a force that moves or triggers them. Sometimes this power is not explicitly visible, but it can be decisive. The above factors can be used as indicators in analysing the policies and political manoeuvres that Brunei Darussalam has undertaken occasionally in implementing the Islamic hope in society and the state. The long-term impact of Islamisation on citizenship and public recognition depends on the type of Islamisation that achieves political hegemony and public ethics (Hefner, 2018). On the other hand, the Brunei government believes that the historical process of forming and implementing MIB is not for the benefit of any group or individual. Malay Islam Beraja is a foothold for the survival of the Malay nation in Brunei and the monarchical institution in Brunei to revive and prosper the country and

Research on the history of the formation of the Beraja Islamic Malay ideology was carried out by Umar, 2013, MIB was born out of the socio-political experiences of the Brunei Malay community from the heyday of the classical Islamic sultanate to British colonialism. Then, research on MIB as a means of strengthening the foundation of Malay and Islamic socio-political cultural identity (Effendi, 2022; Melayong, 2014; Dahlan, 2022). Research by Thoriquttyas et al., 2021 on the formation of the direction of Brunei Darussalam's state policy ideas through the MIB ideology explains that the direction of MIB implementation is a coherent image of the Sultan as the embodiment of absolute monarchy. Research by Haji, 2013, Afiq and D. Haji, 2022 In his writings, he explains MIB from the perspective of Umran Theory, where it is helpful in the development of the state, as well as emphasizing and strengthening the implementation of Islam as the iden-

tity of the monarchical government of Brunei Darussalam. Syahada and Efendi, 2021) explains the gradual implementation of MIB since 2014 and the response. However, the response described by this research is only seen from the point of view of the cons. The novelty that will be explained in this research is the formation of this MIB ideology and the development of its implementation in contemporary Brunei Darussalam society in various aspects, especially on the issue of multicultural Brunei society and the responses (outside the Malay ethnicity and non-Muslim).

Based on the background of the problem, the purpose of this research is to explain the history of the creation of the ideology of Malay Islam Beraja (MIB) as the ideology of the state and social life of Brunei Darussalam, as well as its implementation in the times. Not only for the Muslim community but also for the non-Muslim community of Brunei Darussalam as a minority, in leading life with Malay attributes and the principle of kaffah Islamic law. It is hoped that the results of this research can be a source of study to compare the practice of Islamic values in Brunei Darussalam with Indonesia as the most prominent Muslim-majority country in Southeast Asia.

2. Methods

The type of research used is qualitative research with analytical descriptive reporting. The scientific method used in this research is the historical research method, which consists of four stages, namely heuristics, source criticism, interpretation and historiography. These stages can be explained as follows (Gottschalk, 2021)

First, Heuristics is an effort and a way of finding, investigating, collecting historical research sources (D. Abdurrahman, 2022). The sources for this research were obtained through literature reviews, namely sources in the form of literature, including books, journal articles and popular news sources that contain discussions related to the research topic. The primary sources of this research are reading source that explain the history of Islamic civilisation in Brunei and the formation process of Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB). Then the use of current popular news that provides the development of the implementation of MIB in Brunei Darussalam society. The secondary research is previous journal articles that discuss political, social, economic flows and the implementation of Islamic values in general in the people of Brunei Darussalam Second, Source criticism, is the stage at which researchers assess the strength of the source; Third, Interpretation. Looking at the pattern of qualitative research, the process of interpretation or data analysis is carried out simultaneously from the beginning of the research and source collection or interactive analysis. The data obtained is then interactively compared, reduced in terms of strength, and finally conclusions are drawn. At this stage, the researchers analyse each source that has been criticised with a political history approach to see how the history and chronological development of Brunei Darussalam in establishing Islamic Shari'a law so that it becomes the first contemporary Southeast Asian Islamic country to implement Islamic law nationally; Fourth, Historiography. Once the sources have been grouped, they are described in the form of a historical narrative, using a combination of description-analysis and historical-narrative.

Table 1. The following is a source of data in this study

Data Types	Year	Title	Writer	Need Information
Book	2014	Sejarah Islam Asia Tenggara	Primary Helmiati	The process of Islamisation in Southeast Asia (an explanation of the introduction of Islam to Brunei)
Book Section	2016	The use and status of language in Brunei Darussalam: A kingdom of unexpected linguistic diversity	McLellan, Haji-Othman & Deterding	The latest developments in Brunei's contemporary multilingual society
Book Section	2017	Multilingual and multicultural identities in Brunei Darussalam	Saxena	Recent developments in Brunei's contemporary multilingual and multicultural society
Book Section	2021	MIB and Islamic Education in Brunei Darussalam: An Overview	Muhammad & Baihaqy	The development of Islamic education in Brunei during MIB implementation
Book Section	2021	Malay, Muslim and Monarchy: An introduction to Brunei Darussalam and its national identity	Sharbawi & Mabud	Provides an overview of the three main components of the MIB, namely Malay, Muslim and Monarchy
Book Section	2022	Monarchy in Brunei: Past, present and future	Gin	The history and development of the Brunei Monarchy, from the past to how it continues to exist in the present day
Book Section	2022	Language, Society and Change: Shifting Identities?	Haji-Othman & McLellan	To see whether the existence of the Malay language will be changed (threatened) by the application of foreign language proficiency since school
Article	2014	Some Insights into the Impacts of the Islamic Education on the Non-Muslims in Brunei Darussalam	Kumpoh	Non-Muslim reactions to the implementation of MIB in aspects of Islamic education
Article	2018	Islam beyond religion and politics: Islamisation in Southeast Asia	Arosoaie & Osman	The Islamisation Process to Brunei
Article	2020	Understanding Quality of Life in Brunei Darussalam	Gweshengwe, Hassan, & Maricar	Contemporary Bruneians' quality of life
Newspaper	2017	MIB Bentuk Kemajuan Negara	Pelita Brunei, Hari Sabtu 1 April 2017	The development of Islamic education in Brunei during MIB implementation
Web Site	2014	Hari pertama Brunei terapkan hukum syariah	BBC News Indonesia	Proceeding and responding to the first day of implementing Malay Islam Beraja
Web Site	2019	Sultan Brunei Kembalikan Gelar Kehormatan dari Universitas Oxford	Tempo.co	Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah's rejection of LGBT existence in Brunei, and his stance on Western 'attacks'
Web Site	2019	Brunei pertahankan hukum rajam untuk LGBT: 'Untuk pencegahan dan bukan hukuman	BBC News Indonesia	The development of the implementation of the MIB in the socio-religious aspects of the society and state of Brunei (especially in the LGBT issue, which is becoming a global propaganda)

Web Site	2021	Waduh! Apakah Warga Brunei Darussalam Ramah Terhadap Orang Asing? Begini Kesaksian Wisatawan Inggris di Brunei	Muttaqien (Pikiran Rakyat)	How foreign tourists feel about travelling to Brunei Darussalam
Web Site	2022	Ayomi Kaum Minoritas! Brunei Darussalam Rayakan Imlek	Margajaya, R. (Pikiran Rakyat)	How non-Muslims in Brunei live as minorities during religious celebrations and how the state and majority groups respond
Secondary				
Book Section	2021	Melayu Islam Beraja in the Titahs of His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei (2011–2020): The Leader's Transformative Vision and Aspirations.	Marsidi	The form of political power of the Sultan of Brunei in the implementation of the MIB
Conference Proceedings	2023	K008 Nilai-Nilai Mib Membentuk Negara Zikir Menurut Perspektif Al Quran	Muluk	To understand the concept of Melayu Islam Beraja in the development of the society and the state based on the Islamic ideology
Article	2013	Kanusisasi Fikih Jinayat Kontemporer, Studi Materi Hukum Muatan Qānūn Jināyat Aceh dan Brunei Darussalam	Aziz	Compare and contrast the approach and response to implementing Sharia in Muslim-majority regions (Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam)
Article	2013	Sistem Pendidikan Negara Abad ke-21: Isu dan Cabaran di Brunei Darussalam	Haji	Brunei Darussalam's state of contemporary education
Article	2015	Hukum Keluarga Islam di Brunei Darussalam	Cahyani	The Form of the Shari'ah Family Law in Brunei Darussalam
Article	2015	Islam dan Politik di Brunei Darussalam	Ghofur	The Islamic Correlation in the Political Policy of Brunei Darussalam
Article	2016	Many Identities, Many Communities: Religious Freedom amidst Religious Diversity in Southeast Asia	Jereza	A picture of Southeast Asia as a diverse region. It is then contrasted with the multicultural life of Brunei, which is governed by the rules of Islam
Article	2016	Trends in Regulating Religion in Southeast Asia: Differentiating Core, Important, and Desirable Factors Regarding Religion and the Rule of Law	Scharffs	Patterns of faith-based policy making in South East Asia
Article	2018	Which Islam? Whose Shariah? Islamisation and citizen recognition in contemporary Indonesia	Hefner	The implementation of Islamic law (Sharia) and the response of contemporary Indonesian society. The aim is to compare Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority country in Southeast Asia, with Brunei Darussalam, the remaining traditional Islamic monarchy in contemporary Southeast Asia
Article	2018	Falsafah Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB) Beracuankan Islam Melalui Teori 'Umran	Sahari & Yahya	The Relationship between the Ideology of the MIB and the Islamic Asa in the Review of the 'Umran Theory in the Construction of Civilisation

Article	2021	Dinamika Pembaharuan Hukum Keluarga Islam Di Negara Muslim	Bidayati & Maliki	The dynamics of Islamic legal reform in (majority) Muslim countries
Article	2022	A Resilient Monarchy: The Sultanate Of Brunei And Regime Legitimacy In An Era Of Democratic Nation-States	Talib	The relevance and endurance of Brunei's monarchy in the face of the onslaught of democracies

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. A Brief History of the Islamization and Glory of the Kingdom of Brunei Darussalam

Brunei Darussalam has an absolute monarchy form of government with an Islamic state form of government. So far, the social and political conditions of Brunei Darussalam are quite calm, apart from the small area and not too dense population, the factor of the absence of a democratic stage is enough to make the political conditions of Brunei Darussalam calm. Brunei Darussalam makes Islam the official religion, so Islam and Muslims are privileged in the issue of Da'wah development, as the Sultan is not only the head of state politics, but also the head of religion at the state level. Brunei Darussalam is also very cautious about outside influences. The Fiqh school adopted by Brunei Darussalam is the Syafi'i Madhhab (H, 2016).

There are many versions of writings that tell of the arrival and development of Islam in the land of Brunei. The first record comes from the notes of a Portuguese named de Brito in 1514, in which he said that the King of Brunei had not yet converted to Islam, but that he already had Muslim traders. Another account by Pegafetta is that when he landed in Brunei in 1521, he saw a densely populated settlement with the royal palace in the centre, surrounded by a fort. The king warmly welcomed the settlers and Muslim traders, and in time the king, Awang Alak Betatar, embraced Islam and changed his name to Sultan Muhammad Shah (Holt, Ann, and Lewis, 1977). It can be concluded that Islam did not enter and develop in Brunei until the early 16th century. The ruler of Brunei we see today is a descendant of him.

The arrival of Islam in Brunei brought about changes in several aspects, especially in terms of the beliefs of the Bruneian people at that time. This is because before the arrival of Islam, they were influenced by Buddhism and Hinduism because Brunei had been conquered by the Srivijaya and Majapahit kingdoms (Mustafar, 2021). Then later after the arrival of Islam, Brunei continued to exert its influence and expand its trade network. Brunei's efforts were also strengthened by the expansion of its territory and the preaching of Islam, which successfully touched the Malay kingdoms in the Philippines and other parts of Borneo. Many scholars from Arab countries at the time married members of the Brunei kingdom. Along with this Brunei-Arab connection, the third Sultan of Brunei, Sharif Ali, added the word Darussalam after their name, meaning a peaceful country, to emphasise that they were an Islamic country/kingdom. Sultan Syarif Ali also founded important cities of Brunei Darussalam such as Batu City (Stone Fort) and the eastern part of Brunei City, which is now known as the capital of today's Brunei Darussalam, Bandar Seri Begawan City (H, 2016).

The height of Brunei Darussalam's glory was during the reign of the fifth sultan,

Nahkoda Ragam, whose title was Sultan Bolkiah. He managed to conquer the southern region of the Philippines up to the northern part of the island of Luzon. In his time, Brunei had a strong army and had built fortifications around the royal capital. Sultan Bolkiah's territory included the kingdoms of Sambas, Pontianak, Banjarmasin, Kutai and Belangon. The Portuguese traveller Antonio Pigafetta wrote in his daily diary of the state of Brunei at the time, describing it as very strong and with magnificent architecture. Sultan Bolkiah was later succeeded by his son, Sultan Abdul Kahar, who was the culmination of the spread of da'wah by scholars from the Middle East to Brunei Darussalam (ibid.).

Brunei Darussalam continues to establish itself in upholding Islamic law, where during the reign of Sultan Hasan (1605-1619), before the arrival of the British colonial era, Islamic law was enacted called the Brunei Qanun Law (Law) and then refined again during the time of Sultan Jalilul Jabbar (Othman, 1995). The Qanun Law itself consists of 47 articles, 29 of which are taken from elements of Islamic doctrine, including criminal law (*ḥudūd*, *qiṣāṣ* and *ta'zīr*), muamalah law, family law (marriage, divorce and *fasakh*), all of which are derived from Islamic sharia (Abdussalam Abdul Rahman, 2019). The use of Qanun law is actually the result of an adoption from the family relationship between Brunei and Pahang, Sultan Hasan who ruled Brunei at the time then copied the law to be brought back to Brunei and applied (Haji Baki, 2005).

3.2. Constitution Politics of Brunei Darussalam Colonial Period to Independence

In the 16th and 17th centuries, Brunei was plagued by wars against Europeans. Despite winning the battle against Spain, much of Brunei's territory was lost to Spain, especially in the Philippine Islands. The decline of the Kingdom of Brunei Darussalam culminated in the 19th century with the invasion of the "White King", James Crooke (England) from Serawak. Brunei's territory disappeared, leaving only the present territory of Brunei Darussalam. After that, Brunei entered the period of British colonialism.

With the arrival of the British in 1847, Brunei had no choice but to enter into an agreement with the colonisers whereby the British were authorised to handle cases of disputes between British citizens and disputes between British citizens and other ethnic groups in Brunei, on the condition that these British judges would be accompanied by Bruneian judges. But as time went on, the British tried to interfere in the affairs of the Brunei Royal Court. The Sultans of Brunei continued to be concerned, until finally the Sultans asked the British to allow matters of Islamic law to be decided by Bruneian judges, and asked that local laws not be revised or interfered with. However, only the first demand was granted by the British for civil matters, while British law was applied in criminal cases (Muzdhar, 2021).

The effect of this policy was a more limited implementation of Brunei's Qanun law, with the British only allowing Brunei to implement Islamic family law, while criminal law was replaced by secular means. This is very common in Muslim-majority regions when they are colonised by the West (Aziz, 2014). This Islamic family law dealt with issues such as worship, marriage and divorce of Muslims as stipulated in the "Muhammadan's Law Enactment" No. 1 of 1911 AD. Then, in 1913, a government regulation (PP) was issued regarding the registration of marriages and divorces, which was written in the law "Muhammadan's Marriage and Devorce Enactment No. 2 of 1913". Then, in 1955, the Law on the Islamic Ulema Council, State Customs and the Supreme Court was born, which aimed to unify all laws related to Islamic law (Kholis, Alwi, and Ramad-

han, 2021). Since then, there have been several amendments to this Act, namely in 1957, 1960, 1961 and 1967. When the Brunei Revision Act was passed in 1984, this law was also slightly revised and renamed as "UU Majelis Ulama dan Mahkamah Kadi Penggal 77" (Law of the Ulema Council and Kadi Court Penggal 77) (Cahyani, 2015).

Although it did not cede sovereignty to Britain, the 1888 Treaty made Brunei a British protectorate. A protectorate is a territory/country controlled (not owned) by a more powerful country. Protectorates have autonomy in the management of internal affairs. The controlling country has the task of managing the foreign relations and defence of its protectorate according to the agreement (E, 2022). So basically, the British more or less had a hand in Brunei's state affairs, because Brunei was willing to accept British advisers, in return for consideration or advice that went back to the Sultan, because domestic affairs were the power of the protectorate. Islam remains an important part of the state and society, and identity in the form of Malay remains the main language of communication and media for proselytising Islam in Brunei Darussalam.

The full revival of Islamic law and passion in Brunei Darussalam was achieved during the reign of Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddin (1950-1967), after the British government granted executive powers to the Sultan. Foreign affairs were still the responsibility of the British, while domestic affairs became the Sultan's business. Based on the results of the November 1971 agreement, Brunei gained the right to internal autonomy from Britain, so Brunei was no longer a region that continued to be protected by Britain. However, due to a long history, and in order to maintain the image of Brunei's foreign relations being regulated by Britain, Britain and Brunei signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1979, ending the November 1971 agreement. At the heart of the agreement is the fight for Brunei's independence, which was finally achieved on 1 January 1984 (Syahada and Efendi, 2021).

Sultan Omar immediately addressed the problem of education and state ideology, which needed to be gradually returned to full Islamic principles. The first step was to send children from Brunei Darussalam to study Islamic religious education at the al-Junid Arabic School in Singapore. Sultan Omar also began to improve and establish a religious affairs institution, Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama, in 1954. Sultan Omar also appointed Pegawai Ugama of the Kingdom of Johor in 1955, established religious schools in 1956 and finally Sultan Haji Omar made Islam the official state religion in 1959 and appointed the first Royal Mufti of Brunei Darussalam in 1962. This progress and policy was continued by his son, who became Sultan to the present day, Sultan Hasanal Bolkiah, where Brunei became a country that fully implemented Islamic Shari'a (Aziz, 2014). The Sultan also has absolute power as King, Head of State, Head of Government, Head of several Ministries and Head of Religious Affairs. Brunei also has a Legislative Council whose members are appointed directly by the Sultan. The Legislative Council here is different from the Legislative Councils found in many democratic countries. The Legislative Council of Brunei Darussalam is only advisory and has no power, its role is to review national policies, implement policies and report the results of its work to the Sultan (Talib, 2002).

Upon independence in 1984, Brunei chose the Syafi'i school of jurisprudence as the state-recognised school of fiqh (H, 2016). However, in practice, Bruneians are allowed to choose other madhhabs in addition to the Syafi'i madhhab if the official state law does not regulate certain family law issues (Kholis, Alwi, and Ramadhan, 2021). This shows

the flexibility of Brunei's political views in line with the development of Islamic studies, especially the issue of fiqh and the acceptance of the principles of Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, which has implications for political tranquillity and the application of Islamic Shari'a in Brunei Darussalam.

The process of forming the Melayu Islam Beraja ideology since the 14th century shows the strength of character of Brunei's leaders and political elites in maintaining the integrity of an identity (Gin and King, 2022). Brunei Darussalam, through its MIB ideology, offers an example of a viable and sustainable 'traditional' monarchy in the 21st century, highlighting in particular that Brunei has survived the onslaught of challenging secularism that has permeated Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia.

It should be remembered that if there is a Minangkabau tribe in Indonesia that cannot be separated from its customary life with Islam (adaik basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah: adat based on sharia, sharia based on kitabullah - Al-Qur'an and Hadith -), then the Malay nation is also integrated with Islam as a core part of its identity (Serudin, 1996). This means that Malay culture and philosophy cannot be separated from the influence of Islam, so that the majesty and eternity of Malay depends on the extent to which Islam becomes the foundation and root bulb for the life of the Malay nation. Thus, MIB with the permission of Allah Almighty, still exists today as the foundation of the nation and state for the people of Brunei and is said to be unchangeable with any other form of ideology and philosophy.

As further explained by Effendi, 2022 and Kumpoh and Nani, 2023, although Malay Islam Beraja is a state philosophy from its inception, it is inclusive of non-Malay nations and non-Islamic religions. However, Malay Islam Beraja is still flexible to other philosophies and civilisations as long as they are in line with MIB values. The three integral elements of Brunei nationalism - ethnicity, culture and heritage, represented by Malay, Islam and Beraja (monarchy) - are already a perfect recipe to represent Brunei Darussalam's distinctive identity.

3.3. Implementation of the Malay Islamic Beraja (MIB) Ideology

Regarding the style of MIB implementation, Muller (2018) mentions that the cultural and political position of Islam in contemporary Brunei Darussalam is generally considered conservative and orthodox. This is because the ruling government's Islamic Religious Council and its legal committee de jure follow the 'orthodox principles' of Sunni Islam (Shafi'i school of law/madzhah) in all state policies. Since 1968 until now, Sultan Hasanah Bolkuah has established the state ideology of Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB) (M, 2022). MIB consists of two foundations, namely Islam as a Guiding Principle and Form of Fortification. These two foundations have given rise to three concepts, namely 1) perpetuation of the Malaysian state; 2) securing the Islamic state (Islamic law with the Shafi'i school of fiqh and the Ahlul Sunnah wal Jamaah school of belief); 3) securing the state of beraja (absolute monarchy). The strengthening of MIB ideology has been practised in the curriculum from the lowest to the highest level of education (Syahada and Efendi, 2021). The initial implementation of the Malay Islamic Beraja ideology was done through the application of Islamic values to socio-cultural aspects, which brought about changes in terms of beliefs and aqidah, customs, politics, economy, social (Hj.Abdul, 2022), In particular, knowledge production and education, and the everyday discourses and aspirations

of Bruneians (Sharbawi and Mabud, 2021). Overall, it can be concluded that the people of Brunei have experienced socio-cultural changes as a result of the application of MIB.

In the structure of the government, the Sultan formed a cabinet of ministers as political advisers, although he was the supreme ruler. The implementation of MIB also affected the media's orientation and loyalty to the Sultan and the kingdom. In summary, MIB is an ideology for the people to be loyal to the Sultan and the Kingdom, the full implementation of Islamic Sharia, the true implementation of Malay identity in the state. Since May 2014, Sultan Hasanal Bolkihah has been implementing Shari'a nationwide, which certainly invites international reaction and criticism as it is seen as a violation of human rights. However, Sultan Hasanal Bolkihah remains steadfast in his ideology (Ghofur, 2016). So far it is known that the contemporary superpower supporting this MIB ideology is China. China claims Brunei Darussalam as the oldest Muslim monarchy in Southeast Asia and is known to have a foothold in the region (Kurz, 2020).

3.3.1. MIB in Plurality

Religious communities such as Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism live in harmony but restrictions on non-Muslims are also set, especially the prohibition of preaching by non-Muslim groups. In 2000-2001, the government of the Kingdom of Brunei Darussalam detained several Christians suspected of underground (subversive) proselytizing activities. They were released in 2001 and swore allegiance to the Sultan. Both private and public schools must teach Islamic religious studies, and comparative religious studies are prohibited. This also applies to Christian and Chinese schools which must teach Islamic subjects to their students. In general, Brunei Darussalam's religious diversity is peaceful, but social interaction between the church and its congregation is hindered by the state constitution. At the same time, Muslims are free to carry out da'wah activities and organize a number of activities to teach and spread Islam, although this da'wah seems one-way only (H, 2016).

If Indonesia has the ideology of Pancasila and the state philosophy of "Bhineka Tunggal Ika" (Although different but still one too), the Kingdom of Brunei Darussalam has an ideology namely Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB). The ideology strongly upholds Malay customs and Islamic values in the state and society, both during practical worship and ceremonial events. Non-Muslims themselves are required to wear the national dress of *kupiah* for men and *tudung kepala* for women, an outfit that is synonymous with Malay Muslims (in this case only happen in ceremonial events, not in daily activities). The Sultan who still reigns now in the Contemporary period, Sultan H. Hasanal Bolkihah in 1991 emphasized that Brunei Darussalam will continue to be committed that MIB is able to emphasize the identity of Brunei Darussalam amid other non-secular countries in the world. Islam and Malay are used as indicators of Brunei Darussalam's identity.

In addition to celebrating Islamic holidays, participating and hosting events or activities of international Islamic organizations such as the OIC, Brunei Darussalam also continues to be committed to eradicating Islamic groups that are considered heretical and radical such as Al-Arqam, in order to maintain the value of peace upheld by Islam (ibid.). The Brunei government's crackdown has been in place since the 1990s as part of the state's efforts to 'purify' Islamic practices and beliefs among the population, which have increased since the 1990s, coinciding with significant socio-cultural changes among the majority Malay population (Müller, *The Shaping of Islam in Brunei Darussalam 1*, 2022).

Melayu Islam Beraja shows how Brunei Darussalam's efforts to apply national ideology in the life of the state in order to manage rapid social change, and in nation building.

So far, despite the strong presence of Islamic Shari'a, Brunei Darussalam's diversity life has gone well and calmly. The Sultan is also open to his non-Muslim citizens to celebrate their religious holidays (Margajaya, 2022). Even the experience of foreign tourists when visiting Brunei Darussalam itself leaves positive feedback on the comfort and hospitality and harmonization of multi-religious and ethnic Brunei Darussalam. Even the Sultan is very receptive to visits from his citizens who want to see the Sultan or just enjoy the nuances of the royal palace (Muttaqien, 2021). Therefore, maintaining representation is an appropriate action for the government of Brunei Darussalam in demonstrating an understanding of diversity (Ghanea, 2018).

While it may seem "coercive" to require non-Muslims to live under the rule of Islamic law, the facts show that harmony can be achieved in Brunei's multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. Melayu Islam Beraja is able to implement Islamic values that teach mutual respect, help and cooperation as part of a community. As mentioned by Ibn Khaldūn in his book *Muqaddimah*, man is a social creature by nature. Human beings undoubtedly need the cooperation and help of others to fulfil their lives in this world, regardless of social status, rank and title, and even beliefs that exist in society (Khaldun, 1981). Difference is a blessing (not that unity is a curse) to get to know each other and to compete with each other to achieve better things, not as a tool for discord and hostility.

3.3.2. MIB and Shari'ah on a National Scale in Brunei Darussalam

After his appointment as Sultan of Brunei, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, through the implementation of the MIB, immediately enacted various laws and regulations based on Islamic law that govern various aspects of life, all with the aim of achieving the state of *Baldatun Tayyibatun Wa Rabbun Ghafur*, which produces prosperity in this world and the hereafter (Abdurrahman, 2017). The implementation of Islamic law in Brunei is relatively beneficial both to the orderly and structured aspects of the state and government, and to the peace and welfare of the people. It is aimed at those who are not ethnic Malays or non-Muslims, and is applied evenly and developed equally for all groups of people.

Efforts to expand the use of Islamic criminal law to enforce hudud laws in Muslim-majority countries have presented governments with a difficult choice between modern human rights standards and conservative local perceptions of Islamic tradition. In Brunei, the broad and conservative application of Sharia criminal law, which includes hudud punishments such as amputation and stoning, has been encouraged by a fully monarchical form of government, later reinforced by the MIB. The Sultan vehemently rejects outside human rights criticism and, despite calls, threatens domestic critics with harsher decrees and punishments. (Steiner and Lindsey, 2017).

In 2013, Brunei Darussalam announced the nationalisation of Islamic religious law in the life of the state and society, regardless of religion, and the policy came into effect on 1 May 2014. Brunei became the first Southeast Asian country to implement Islamic criminal law (BBC News Indonesia, 2014). Of course, this issue is carried out with Islamic procedures, it could be that the perpetrator is not punished by the victim and his family if they forgive or only demand a fine (*diyat*). Although this has been criticised by human rights activists and the United Nations for failing to respect human rights, especially in the case of stoning or execution of perpetrators (BBC News Indonesia,

2014), Sultan Hasanal Bolkiah remains steadfast in the implementation of this system, which is already based on the Qur'an and the Hadith. The implementation of this law has been gradual and continuous, namely (Syahada and Efendi, 2021):

First, In May 2014, 55 general regulations were introduced, including respect for the month of Ramadan, the issue of adultery by unmarried people and khalwat, and the prohibition of alcohol consumption. Perpetrators of alcohol and khalwat will be punished and imprisoned in accordance with Islamic law. In addition to the prohibition on supporting and proselytising religions other than Islam, it is forbidden to publish an Islamic odour without government permission. The punishment, in the form of a fine imposed by the judge, is commensurate with the seriousness of the offence, but the prison sentence for this first-level offence is less than 30 years.

Secondly, In May 2015, this stage already contained harsher penalties than the first stage. The issues regulated in this second stage are theft and the production, distribution and consumption of alcohol. The issue of alcohol itself has differences in dosage between Muslims and non-Muslims. In addition, this stage also deals with the issue of adultery by non-Muslims who already have a spouse, while for Muslims it is included in the third stage. The punishment for this stage is cutting off the hands for theft. Another form of punishment is stoning or imprisonment for 30 years plus payment of fines for adultery and alcohol issues, the consideration of this punishment depends on the context of the case and the final decision of the judge.

Third, in May 2016, the sentencing phase for serious offences. The crimes include adultery by Muslims who are already married, insulting Islam, insulting the Qur'an and Hadith, insulting the Prophet Muhammad SAW, LGBT disorder, and claiming to be a prophet or God. The punishment is severe, namely death by stoning or beheading.

Many Western public figures and European LGBT groups have boycotted Brunei Darussalam's human rights policies. They started a boycott movement against Brunei Darussalam-run hotels abroad, especially in the UK (BBC News Indonesia, 2019). A boycott petition was also launched, supported by more than 120,000 people, to revoke Oxford University's honorary degree for Sultan Hasanal Bolkiah. Sultan Hasanal Bolkiah's response was to accept the petition and not question the revocation of his honorary degree. The Sultan did not question this and immediately responded on 6 May 2019 that he was returning the honorary degree that had been awarded to him (Tempo.co, 2019)

From the above, there is a striking difference in how Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, as Muslim-majority countries, implement Islamic principles. While Malaysia and Indonesia do not apply Islamic law nationally, Brunei Darussalam applies Islamic law nationally, including to non-Muslims. This difference is, of course, due to the system of government, the legal system in place and the ideology of the state. While Indonesia applies secular law and enforces Islamic law in Aceh, Malaysia applies secular law in general matters and Islamic Sharia in family matters, and Brunei Darussalam applies Islamic law throughout. In addition, Indonesia is a democratic presidential state, Malaysia is a constitutional monarchy and Brunei Darussalam is an absolute monarchy.

Brunei Darussalam, as an Islamic country, came up with the concept of the Zikir State (Ahim, 2020; Mohd, 2023). When some Muslim-majority countries began to "prioritise" Islamic principles in order to compete and place their respective countries in the group of developed countries that achieved the best index in aspects of development, industry, economy, health, security, education and so on, Brunei Darussalam was able to go

against the grain. Brunei Darussalam was able to go against the grain by making Islam its national identity. Today, it must be acknowledged that the influence of the West, both politically and in the mass media, has greatly influenced the image of Islam, which is known as a "radical religion". Brunei, through the implementation of MIB, is not wavering from the existing propaganda, it is even stronger and continues what has become the command of Allah Swt. in matters of state and society.

3.3.3. MIB and Brunei Darussalam's Economic Issues

In terms of the economy, the Islamic element is also evident in the establishment of Tabung Amanah Islam Brunei (TAIB) or the Brunei Islamic Trust Fund, which is the first financial institution in Brunei to be run on the basis of Islamic Shariah. The purpose of this institution is to promote investment and trade, including investment in the stock and money markets, domestic and foreign economic and industrial development, and to perform other functions on a regular basis. This institution operates through a system of savings, which are invested with the aim of making a profit. These profits, after deducting Zakat and TAIB's management fees, are then returned to the investors over a period of time. Later, Brunei Darussalam conceived and attempted to establish Bank International Brunei, which was expected to be the first model for an Islamic bank in the country (Hasbullah, 2016).

3.3.4. MIB as a Solution to Empower Contemporary Brunei Human Resources

The low potential of Brunei's human resources (HR) is one of the problems that Brunei has faced to date, especially in the context of national management and development. Unsurprisingly, Brunei's current demographics include a large number of foreign workers. This lack of human resources has meant that Brunei still struggles with unemployment and some jobs that still use foreign workers. In anticipation of this, the government of Brunei Darussalam has created a training programme for the younger generation, particularly in the emphasis on Malay and English in Brunei Darussalam education. The government has adopted a policy of compulsory teaching and learning in English after three years of primary education. This policy is also balanced with the introduction of MIB learning in the form of Islamic moral and religious education at school level (Madin et al., 2021). Brunei Darussalam has also established a higher education institution that is expected to be a media solution for the empowerment of human resources and the younger generation of Brunei, namely the University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD), which was established in 1985 (H, 2016). Subsequently, Sultan Hassanal Bolkhiah provided housing assistance to the people of Brunei through the Sultan Hassanal Bolkhiah Foundation (YSHHB). Mail (2018) sees this as the Sultan's implementation of the MIB in terms of public charity.

The Sultan has also established several private madrasahs in Brunei Darussalam under the control of Yayasan Haji Sultan Hassanal Bolkhiah (YSHHB), where the education system is of course steeped in Islamic elements (Syahada and Efendi, 2021). Islamic religious education is central to the formation of a religious, civilised and cultured Malay Bruneian society and must not be undermined, in order to realise Wawasan Brunei 2035 (Pawiro, 2021). The government's seriousness in implementing MIB in the education sector as a medium for personality development and human resources is not only aimed

at students, but all teachers, instructors and lecturers are trained in Islamic Studies (Mubin and Baihaqy, 2021).

Being a totally Islamic country does not mean being identified with old-fashioned and traditionalist things. Under the leadership of the YSHHB, Brunei Darussalam has established a mechanism for the process of Islamic religious education that is integrated with scientific progress and development. According to the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, everything is interconnected and beneficial to mankind, so the state must strive to achieve progress in the hereafter for the benefit of the country and its people (Sumarto, Harahap, and Haeba, 2020; Septemiarti and Hairunnas, 2023).

Through MIB, Brunei has been able to combine the concepts of Malay and Islam as the main basis for the implementation of education. Brunei combines the concept of modernity with its cultural attributes, namely Malay, while mastering foreign languages such as English and Arabic (Thoriquttyas et al., 2021; Mubin and Baihaqy, 2021). English is a widely spoken language in the country, both in the private sphere and in official communications (McLellan, Haji-Othman, and Deterding, 2016; Conrad Ozog, 1996). In the case of Brunei Darussalam, learning a foreign language is not a major threat. It does not necessarily mean a change in identity. Even among non-Brunei Malay groups, Chinese Bruneians have the highest ethnolinguistic vitality. The high ethno-linguistic vitality of the Chinese is partly due to the fact that they form a large part of the economic elite in Bruneian society (Saxena, 2017). Even with the implementation of a multilingual society, MIB has brought a new dynamic to Brunei's demographic national identity. It has become a virtually multilingual and multicultural society.

Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB) has been made a core subject along with Malay Language, Islamic Uagama Knowledge, Mathematics and Science (Haji, 2013). Islamic universities in Brunei also do not hesitate to adapt to the mastery of technology and contemporary learning media, which is still based on the traditional *Madhhab* adopted by the state. The ideology of the MIB colours both the modernist and traditionalist education systems. The attitude of openness to the use of technology reflects the characteristics of moderatism adopted by the education system in Brunei Darussalam.

Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah's policy in developing the state and society reflects what has happened in the past in classical Islamic civilisation, what the Abbasid and Umayyad Daulahs achieved. The Abbasids and Umayyads were able to become advanced Islamic civilisations by producing scholars and scientists who not only mastered religious knowledge but also general knowledge, so that one person could have several scientific skills. Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah did the same thing by strengthening the learning of the MIB ideology among the young generation of Brunei, as the basic foundation of their lives before receiving the knowledge that came later. Instead of following the West in the secularisation of the separation of religion in the elements of the state, Brunei Darussalam, through MIB, is able to respond to the challenge with the development of a country that is sustainable, advanced and remains on an Islamic foundation. To master and follow the development of technological modernisation, but still uphold the principles of Islam in the scope of society and state. This must be an example for Indonesia in implementing its educational needs to further strengthen the values of religious teachings alongside science and other knowledge.

3.4. Positive Impact of MIB

Brunei Darussalam aims to be one of the countries in the world with the highest Quality of Life (QoL) by 2035. High QoL in Brunei is described as, among other things, having basic needs met, being financially secure, being well educated, having a well-paid and stable job, living comfortably without hardship, being healthy, and having a harmonious and happy family. This description of well-being is common to both urban and rural areas in Brunei Darussalam. (Gweshengwe et al., 2020).

Brunei also experienced its economic heyday under Sultan Hasanal Bolkiah with the MIB ideology. Brunei's currency unit, the Brunei Dollar, has the same strong position as the Singapore Dollar. Brunei Darussalam is also rich in natural resources, particularly oil and natural gas, which account for almost half of the country's GDP and more than 90% of its total income. Brunei capitalises on this wealth by spending 59.78% of its total annual government budget on developing the country's infrastructure and health facilities. The country also spends around 21.77% on education. The positive impact of this policy is the achievement of free healthcare for the people of Brunei Darussalam and free education up to university level.

Brunei Darussalam has also been quite successful in organising clean settlements, providing water supply, improving farming and fishing methods, building access roads and bridges, establishing electricity status and installing telephone broadcasting systems. Brunei Darussalam also continues to strive to improve the performance of its banking and tourism sectors, and to broaden its economic base beyond oil and gas (Syahada and Efendi, 2021). This may be evidence of Allah's promise to His servants of blessings, security and prosperity for those who obey and implement His teachings. What this means is that Brunei Darussalam's historical process attempts to navigate the complex configurations of modernity in the context of law, politics, media and education, highlighted by the influence of Islamisation (Arosoaie and Nawab, 2018).

In the case of minority groups, Kumpoh, 2014 research on the impact of the implementation of the MIB on the adoption of the Islamic education system among Brunei's non-Muslim (Animist) minorities in the hamlets of Tutong district showed positive results in terms of acceptance. It is known that the animist minority group has long recognised and accepted Islamic education for decades. This recognition can be seen in the depth of Islamic knowledge they have acquired, where such operational Islamic understanding also facilitates mutual imitation of Muslim ways of life. This mutual imitation is also facilitated by the increasing breakdown of social and cultural boundaries between Dusun and Muslim communities in Brunei. These animist communities saw the appeal and benefits of Islam as a religious system. No wonder many of them later converted to Islam, even though their traditional beliefs were already recognised by the state. The author argues that Brunei's 'subtle' approach to Islamic values (strictly enforced but not harshly and arbitrarily enforced by the government) has allowed non-Muslim communities to adapt to the MIB for decades, and to see the teachings of Islam, which differ from their religious teachings, not as something that restricts and oppresses minorities.

The success of MIB in its implementation in the development of multicultural societies can be measured by three indicators offered by Ibn Khaldun to assess the welfare of a society and a state, namely (Yahaya, 2013): 1) a diverse and noble society; 2) a society that cooperates and tolerates each other in building social and state life; 3) a government that is fair in the welfare of its people and does not discriminate based on ethnicity and

religion. These three indicators are already present in the results of the implementation of the MIB in the development of the state and society of Brunei Darussalam, especially the positive acceptance of non-Muslim communities to live in a country that fully implements Sharia law.

The successful implementation of the MIB is due to the Sultan's responsibility to the people, so the people's trust in the Sultan is unquestionable. For this reason, the people really love the Sultan and obey all the rules that are given to them. There is no reason for the people not to respect and love the Sultan. With MIB as the state ideology, Brunei is positioning itself as one of the countries with economic and political stability in the Asia region.

4. Conclusions

As a Muslim-majority country, Brunei Darussalam has demonstrated its ability to uphold Islamic Shari'a without getting caught up in the complexities of plurality and ethnic diversity. Brunei's long history as an Islamic monarchy has become a fertiliser and seed for Brunei's strong Islamic values. Although it experienced setbacks in implementing Islamic law during the British colonial period, Brunei has been able to survive by continuing to assert its sovereignty in implementing Islamic laws and values. The strong enforcement of Islamic law in Brunei Darussalam cannot be separated from the hard work of Sultan Haji Omar and his son Sultan Hasanal Bolkiah through the ideology of Malay Islam Beraja (MIB), where Malay and Islam are the main indicators of the main identity of Brunei Darussalam society and state. The factor of an absolute monarchy government makes the political scene comfortable and appears to be one-way without any opposition, allowing the implementation of MIB to go well. The success of MIB, which is also applied to minorities, namely non-Muslims, cannot be separated from the Sultan's assertiveness, which is accompanied by the maintenance of harmony in diverse life, as well as facilities and infrastructure that are mostly free for the community.

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