

Teaching Islam in the Palembang Malay During the Dutch Colonial Era

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of Dutch colonial policies on Islamic education in Palembang during the colonial period. Under Dutch rule, strict regulations were enforced on Islamic education, primarily aimed at controlling religious teachers and preventing them from using educational institutions to foster anti-colonial sentiment. The colonial government sought to weaken local resistance, often targeting influential ulama who played a key role in the dissemination of Islamic knowledge. In Palembang, traditional Islamic education was the dominant system during the Sultanate period, but with the rise of Dutch colonial power, Islamic education became marginalized, with a particular emphasis on the role of ulama and traditional Islamic teaching. Over time, the local society began to recognize the need for Dutch-style education, driven by the promise of better job opportunities for those holding Dutch school diplomas. Despite the establishment of Dutch-run schools, educational standards in Palembang remained low compared to other regions of Indonesia. This was due to both the limited public awareness of the importance of education and the inability of the colonial government to fulfill the educational aspirations of the local population. The paper highlights the complex interplay between colonial educational policies, local traditions, and the changing perceptions of education in Palembang during the colonial era.

Keywords: Teaching Islam; Local Rulers; Palembang Malay; Dutch Colonial.

Introduction

Talking about Malay, of course, will be seen in Islam, because both are an inseparable part (Azra, Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII dan XVIII 1998). Like two sides of a coin, Malay will have no meaningful meaning and cannot even be called Malay if Islam is far away or removed or perhaps removed from it. Likewise, Islam (especially in the Malay archipelago) will not be able to exist and develop if it cannot 'compromise' with Malays. Because in the early days of the arrival of Islam in the archipelago, it turned out that it first entered the Malay area on the island of Sumatra, then developed along the coast in the archipelago.

The presence of traders from Middle East to Malay areas has given its own color to the Malay world, the interaction between Malays and people from the middle east is the strongest interaction

(Huda 2016), so that Islam and the style of Arabic tradition brought by these traders were quite easily accepted by the Malay community. Even today, we always identify Malay with Islam. A person will not be considered a Malay if he is not a Muslim himself (Milner 2002). The presence of Islam in the midst of Malays has also greatly influenced Malay culture, such as the mention of the term leadership and leadership positions in society, for example the mention of the king with the Sultan, besides that the position of the ulama played a very important role in the Malay sultanates. When we talk about Malay, in it we will talk about Islam, the Sultanate and Malay itself (Braginsky 2001).

One of the interactions between the Malay world which was included in the early days with the Arab world or the Islamic world was the Palembang Malay community. The interaction between the Palembang Malay community and the Islamic world or the network of scholars from the Middle

East has occurred since around the 10th century, namely during the Srivijaya kingdom. However, the rapid development of Islam occurred before the collapse of the Srivijaya kingdom. Palembang became one of the Islamic powers since the establishment of the Palembang sultanate in the 17th century (Azra, Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII dan XVIII 1998). The role of Arab scholars was quite large in the sultanate, especially in matters relating to religious education policies. The great influence of the ulama in the Malay kingdoms caused the life of the Malay people to become more religious. A person would not be considered a Malay when he was not a Muslim, and vice versa, a person would be considered a Malay when he became a Muslim. When someone is considered to be Malay, then the origin is not something to be contested (Lutfi 2007).

The openness possessed by the Malay community both physically and culturally certainly has an influence both directly and indirectly on the Malay tradition. This influence certainly has a number of advantages as well as provides a number of challenges. The advantages of this openness include connecting the Malay community with the outside world as well as being easier to absorb new information, and the Malay community being closer to modernity. Apart from these advantages, the Malay community must also overcome a number of challenges, especially the Palembang Malay community as a result of this openness. The contestation space is becoming more and more open, not only to Malays, but also to people from outside the Malays and even the wider community.

Observing Islamic education and the process of Islamization in Palembang, Taufik Abdullah argues that the process of Islamization in this region was more visible during the Dutch Colonial era than during the Sultanate Period. In addition to the destruction of relations between regions and cities, the detachment from the sultan's power, was one of the factors for the development in question. Apart from the Menteng incident in 1819 AD, there have never been any incidents of rebellion and war involving South Sumatran clerics throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Umar 2007). This shows that the free ulema of South Sumatra concentrate more on

activities that are religious and socio-cultural in nature, not on political activities. Reporting on these political activities, perhaps because the free ulema were more concerned with community development through Islamic teaching and da'wah and perhaps also because of the freedom granted by the Dutch East Indies colonial government (Suwardi 2008). In carrying out Islamic teaching and da'wah activities, the administration and restrictions imposed by the colonial authorities may still be considered reasonable and tolerable, because especially in the early days, the Dutch colonial authorities basically only continued the principles and procedures of Islamic regulation that had been carried out by the rulers sultanate (Zulkifli 1999).

However, in later times regulations were made regarding the teaching of the Islamic religion, the policy of supervising the teaching of Islam was basically intended to control and prevent religious teachers from using their teaching institutions as a means of gathering strength in hating the Dutch authorities (Rahim 1998). Regulations and provisions made by the Dutch East Indies colonial government relating to Islamic religious affairs. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there was still an attitude of doubt that was more likely to just let it go. Towards the middle of the twentieth century, there were still doubts accompanied by fear of the threat of Islam, so that various strict and sometimes strange rules emerged in dealing with Islamic religious affairs. To perform strategies for political interests and colonial government sometimes the Dutch used cunning tactics to weaken the power of the people so that there was no rebellion. Of course, the first thing the Dutch had to do was get rid of the ulama who played an important role in teaching Islam.

Previous studies has discussed about traditional Islamic institution in Palembang and the role of Ulama during the colonial period. Two major studies that can be elaborated here. *First*, the study from Suradi (2022) becomes the basis in which seems quite similar in spatial scope. It spans a longer historical timeline, from the Sultanate of Palembang through the colonial period to the modern era, considering both the historical evolution and the contemporary transformation of Islamic education, especially through the digital

age. Suradi's study is broadly comparative, looking at the evolution of Islamic education from traditional to modern digital systems. Meanwhile, this study only focuses on the colonial period, with a specific emphasis on how Dutch policies marginalized Islamic education and its long-term impact on the local population of Palembang.

Second, the study by Colombijn (2004) discusses Palembang as one of three major urban centers in Sumatra during the Dutch colonial period and examines the role of Islamic education in these urban centers. Islam played a crucial role in legitimizing the rulers and shaping the development of settlements. According to the study, the morphology of traditional Palembang was altered due to the Dutch impact on urban development, which disrupted some Islamic transformations. These Dutch changes, in turn, made the earlier Islamic influences on the city more pronounced.

This study is based on secondary sources that provide detailed accounts of the history of Palembang during both the Sultanate and Dutch colonial periods. These sources include historical texts, archival materials, and previous scholarly research, which together offer a comprehensive view of the political, social, and cultural developments in the region. The study carefully analyzes these sources to trace the evolution of Palembang's urban structure, its role in regional trade, and the influence of Islam in shaping its political and social fabric. Furthermore, it interprets the impact of Dutch colonial policies on the local governance, economy, and education system, with a particular focus on how these changes disrupted traditional Islamic structures. By engaging with these historical narratives, the study aims to offer new insights into the transformation of Palembang, examining both the continuity and rupture in its development from the Sultanate era to the colonial period.

In the political field, at the Palembang Residency at this time, the ulama continued their duties in the government, especially the ulama who were immediately appointed as employees of the Palembang residency, such as the religion of Pangeran Penghulu Nata and their staff, who were assigned by the Dutch government as members of the customary court, as a giver of advice in matters

of Religious matters, but then were no longer involved as members of the customary court, their presence is only when necessary when a case must be sworn in under the Koran. The placement of ulama's positions in government gave the role of the penghulu and his staff in accelerating the development of Islam to the interior, but this only touches on the quantity of the people, while in the field of government and customary law it did not provide dominant influences, except in the field of marriage law and inheritance (Peeters 2007).

Some of the descriptions above reveal the concept of Malay life in terms of culture and history, Islamic education in Malay history and culture and Malay political traditions. The author to positioning Malay in the eyes of Islamic education, culture and politics in the history of the Dutch East Indies colonialism with the hope of providing a formula in the midst of an increasingly complex life these days. Identity as Malay becomes very important in the political arena and the direction of government policy in the development of Islamic education.

This article performs explanation about the socio-political structure of the Palembang Malay community at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, covering the political, social, cultural, and religious fields. This is considering that social, political, cultural, and religious conditions greatly affect the intellectual formation of a figure or cleric, as well as its relation to the role of a cleric in society. So the author feels the need to paint a picture of Islamic education in the politics and culture of Malay Palembang during the Dutch colonial period.

Malay Cultural Political Strategy

The political tradition of the Malays, Var der Worm commented on the book *Sulalat al Salatin*, he said that "Whoever is interested in the Malay language, should study a book entitled *Sulalat al Salatin* or the descent of all kings, not only because of the language, but also because of the language. because of the language, also because of its content which tells the origins of the descendants of the Malay kings and the fate of the Malay kingdom until the arrival of the Portuguese" (Fang 2011). In this book, we will find the area of Malay origin, it is said

that the origin of Malay comes from *Bukit Siguntung Mahameru* Palembang as follows:

“Once upon a time, those were the words of a country in the land of Andalas, Palembang; the name of the king is *Demang Lebar Daun*, originally from the descendants of King Sulan as well. As for the country of Palembang, this is the Palembang that exists today. Muara Tatang is the name of the river, upstream there is a river, the name is Malay. It is in the river that there is a hill called *Siguntang* Hill; in the upper reaches of Mount Mahamiru, on the land there is a field called *Padang Penjarangan*” (Samad 2008).

The story of the origin of Malay as stated in the *Sulalat al Salatin* has actually mixed facts and mythology. For example, it is stated that Malay leadership came from a great king who ruled the world, namely Iskandar Zulkarnain or Alexander the Great (Suwardi 2008). Furthermore, King Sulan was also mentioned as the ruler who ruled in the Palembang area, precisely in *Siguntung* Hill. This story is believed to have been handed down from generation to generation as the basis for knowing the origin of Malays, it is even mentioned that when Europeans included sources of Malay origin in the 17th and 18th centuries, they still said that the "homeland" of Malays was Sumatra (eastern coast the central or southern part) and then spread to the *Peninsular* Lands. Three of the authors were Petrus van der Worm, Valentijn and W. Marsden (Isjoni 2007).

If we look back, the author's discussion at the beginning has shown how the role of Malays in the historical stage, to becoming a political force in the archipelago, the position of ports in the Malay Archipelago sultanate became central and main in the realization of this political power, starting from the spread of Islam. to the complexity of the problems of social life that surround it. The Islamic kingdoms that flourished in the 13th century were not only symbols of political power, but a religious intellectual power also emerged on the other side.

Now, Malay political culture is at a crossroads, as if the religious intellectual power that has grown and developed within the Malays is being questioned again. Of course, this issue will be responded to in various ways and with various reactions. The slogan "Malay will not be swallowed

up by the Earth" needs to be considered as a common problem (Braginsky 2001). Of course not based on skepticism, pessimism and so on. The success that we have achieved as a Malay nation deserves to be used as a basis for intellectual action and reaction to the problems of the ummah today. The political arena in the country, as we have witnessed lately, seems to have lost its spirit and enthusiasm in the welfare of its people, political disputes followed by criminal acts of corruption by political elites in this country have become daily news, so that it seems to be a normal thing, and reasonable. In fact, the Malay political tradition that has been practiced by the founding fathers of the Malay country has clearly placed the welfare of the people as a top priority, as the will of the Treasurer of the King of Melaka in the book of *Sulalat al Salatin*:

"Let all of you write in your hearts to serve Allah *Ta'ala* and the Messenger of Allah *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*; and do not forget all of you from worship; because in all laws, that the kings of justice with the Prophet *sallallahu alayhi wasallam* are like two gems in a ring; After all, the king is like a substitute for Allah on earth, because he is *zillu 'llah fil'alam*. When you worship the king, it is as if you are worshiping the Prophet, when you are worshiping the Prophet of Allah, it is as if you are worshiping Allah *Ta'ala*..." (Azra, 2006).

A ruler is strongly required to do justice in his leadership, his position is very sacred in the Malay political tradition, likened to "two gems in a ring", close to the Prophet Muhammad, the leadership attitude of the Prophet Muhammad became a model that should not fade, justice, welfare, protection of the people weak and so on must really be implemented in the leadership of the ruler. We also find this kind of leadership model in the laws of the Malay sultanates throughout the archipelago. The ruler or king and the servant or the community must walk on their respective tracks, the ruler carries out his leadership as a mandate that is carried out in accordance with God's provisions, as well as the servant must obey and obey the leader. The threats given to those who disobey are also written in the book of *Sulalat al Salatin* as follows:

“and his kingdom will not be peaceful; for kings are like fire, all ministers are like wood; for there is no fire without wood; as *Farsi said, ar'ayatu juan bakhasta sultan Khasad* (sic), namely the people are like roots and the king is like a tree; If there are no roots, the tree will not stand. So was the king with all the people. O my son, you must do as I have commanded you; so that you may be blessed by Allah *Subhanahu wa ta'ala*.” (Azra, 2006).

Likewise, the political 'promises' given by the authorities must be kept as stated in the *Sulālat al Salātīn*:

“If the Malay king changes the agreement with the Malay Servant, Allah will destroy his country and the throne of his kingdom. That is bestowed by Allah *subhanahu wa taala* on all Malay kings, never disgracing any Malay Servant, if no matter how great the sin, they are not bound and not hanged, are with vile words to the point of death, he is killed. If there is a Malay king who disgraces a Malay Servant, his country will be destroyed.” (Samad 2008).

Loyalty to keep promises in Malay politics is one of the important conditions in prospering and bringing its citizens to better conditions. The moral message contained in the book of *Sulālat al Salātīn* becomes important in our regional political arena. The book of *Sulālat al Salātīn* is one example of guidelines that have been implemented in the politics of the Malay sultanate in the past, so that in the area of the Malay sultanate we find people who lived in prosperity until the sultanate entered its golden age.

The people of Palembang, if we look at the historical trajectory, are actually a society that is rich in cultural values, since the Sriwijaya empire, the Palembang Darussalam Sultanate, until now. During the Srivijaya era, we have seen that this area was one of the most important centers of civilization in Asia, historical records have shown that Srivijaya was a port city in the Malay world which was crowded with traders, even before Islam became the official religion of the kingdom, this area had become a port city that visited by many foreign traders, such as I-Ching a Chinese wandering monk in the 7th century who had

stopped in the Sumatran region known as Sriwijaya, which was centered in Palembang. During his visit to Sriwijaya, he noted that there were a thousand Buddhist monks in Sriwijaya, and advised fellow travelers who wished to study in India to stop and study with the teachers in Sriwijaya.

Islamic Teachings in Palembang

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas clearly explained how the achievements of the Malays in moving the civilization of Muslims in the archipelago, especially Indonesia. In this context, he sees that the historical development of Islam to this archipelago has a very important relationship with the development and spread of the Malay language, so that for him the most important conclusion is about the primacy of the Malay regions in the process of Islamization. It was the Malay kingdoms, such as Sumatera, namely Pasai and Aceh, and the Malay Peninsula, namely Malacca, not Java that took the main role in the spread of religion and Islamic theology and philosophy to all parts of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago (Al-Attas 2000).

Some people, even among us, are trapped in the problem of Islamization that is happening in this country, which boils down to how important the role of the *Da'i* from Java is, because they have a very wise Wali, namely *Wali Songo* (nine guardians) who are so wise and persistent. in carrying out his guardianship role in preaching Islam to people who are still overwhelmed by the 'darkness' of the teachings of their ancestors. This argument is very possible to try to do a re-examination by presenting historical facts about how important the role of the Malay kingdoms was. Not only that, we still feel the influence of the Malays in nurturing the spirit of nationalism against foreign colonialism in our country. Alfian bait said that one of the roots of national culture is Malay culture in accordance with the function of national culture, namely the system of national ideas and symbols that give identity to the nation. Indonesian citizens as well as communication tools and strengthen solidarity (Suwardi 2008).

A big mistake in historical thought has occurred when the results of Western scientific

investigations, which tend to interpret based on the greatness of the value of art in human life, have placed and confirmed the sovereignty of Javanese culture and civilization as a starting point for the history of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, and this assumption continues to adulthood. It is still rampant without a lawsuit in our historical thinking (Al-Attas 2000). The thing to remember in the context of history is that history always paints a picture of the era. Likewise, the arrival of Islam in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago must be seen as characterizing a new era in its history.

Thus, the characteristics and influence of Islam in a nation must be explored not only based on something that only appears on the surface, but the study that must be carried out is even more comprehensive to every hidden aspect that is not visible to the naked eye (Santoso 2021). This conception of deep thinking has actually been taught by our Malay ancestors such as "Language shows the Nation" which we can interpret as the thoughts of a nation, which can be seen from the language they use. The closeness of Islam and Malay is like two currencies that cannot be separated, one part will have no meaning if there is no other part. A person is said to be Malay if he is Muslim. This statement shows that Islam is the difference between Malays and non-Malays. Although in their daily lives they may pay less attention to the teachings of Islam, or even ignore them, Islam remains their identity.

The Sultanate of Palembang Darussalam is a very religious kingdom, closeness to Islam has led Palembang Malays to become a very influential sultanate in the political and cultural arena of the country then, from this area, there are scholars who become teachers for students of religious knowledge in *Haramayn* (Makkah and Medina) and in the Malay Archipelago to spread the spirit of resistance to Dutch colonialism, namely Sheikh Abdul Samad Al-Falimbangi (1704 - 1789 AD), until in subsequent developments Palembang became a very religious city, in fact it was mentioned in the Annual Report of the Resident of Palembang, the Muslim community Palembang is reported to be 'fanatic' towards Islam. This report describes socio-religious life in the 1880s with the phrase "for the 60,000 city dwellers fanatics who recite the Koran aloud" (Peeters 2007).

The growth of the city of Palembang, in this golden age, of course, was not achieved by itself, the times of the Srivijaya empire in previous centuries also took a big part in its later achievements, the glory of Palembang is a necessity that has been carved by our ancestors, continues in the future. The Sultanate of Palembang Darussalam (1550-1823), including the arrival of the Alawiyyin group in Palembang further enriched the culture and Islam of this area (Fasari 2019). The victories that have been achieved in the past must be our passion to develop this area, the barometer is as a center of international trade on the one hand and the development of Islam on the other, which is followed by harmonization between local culture and foreign cultures including, Arabic, Javanese, China and so on.

A travel account by the Dutch missionary A. Kortenhorst describes the condition of the city of Palembang in the early 19th century as follows:

"People actually tend to equate the Musi river with a floating market. The market is actually on land, and there during the day it is at certain times busy and bustling, so that one, forgetting the strange smells, and changing surroundings, will think of being in the center of commerce in Europe. Pedestrians, it is almost impossible to get through the masses, especially on Fridays, the holy day for Muslims. Large groups of hajjis, dressed in long white, green or red robes and wearing traditional turbans on their heads and tasbeih in hand, head to the mosque for prayers and near noon to hear the preacher's sermon. After all, the Palembang people in the capital, and the many Arabs who lived there, obeyed Islamic law, as evidenced by the Mesjid Agung, one of the most beautiful mosques in the Dutch East Indies, and the large number of worshipers who came from there. leave to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca and then return after obtaining the title of Hajj." (Pulungan 2017).

The description of religious activities that occurred in the city of Palembang in the early 19th century shows the function of the Jami' Mosque as a center for religious activities, thus discouraging Christian missionaries. Sources of historical records are

widely available which talk about the conditions of the socio-religious life of the Palembang people until the independence period, but interest in studies in this direction is still very limited (Sunandar 2013). Through these sources, it is very useful in revealing the dynamics of Palembang's social, political, economic and cultural life (Barnand 2000).

At the beginning of the 19th century, it was related to Islamic education, which was a stage of perfecting the understanding of Islamic teachings and their intellectual traditions (Isjoni 2007). At this time we witness the flourishing of literary writing and religious books in Malay. The topics discussed in the Malay books cover areas such as *fiqh* of worship and *muamalah*, *fiqh duali* (state administration), *sharia*, *usuluddin*, *kalam*, philosophical and moral Sufism, interpretation of the Qur'an, hadith science, eschatology, historiography, grammar (*nahwu*), rhetoric, *ma'ani* science (semantics), aesthetics (*balaghah*), astronomy, reckoning, shipping, economics and trade, literature and art, medicine, pharmacy, and others. The progress achieved in this intellectual field strengthened the position and development of the Malay language.

During this period, there was a significant shift towards orthodoxy, with a greater emphasis on Sharia law. This had a profound impact on the development of Sufi orders, as many of them underwent reforms and evolved into religious organizations that increasingly focused on worldly activism. In the 19th century, this process of orthodoxy helped spur the rise of anti-colonial movements across the archipelago. The influence of the religious purification movement from Saudi Arabia, known as Wahhabism, further reinforced the focus on Sharia and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). However, this shift did not hinder the development of philosophical Sufism. At this time, Islam emerged as a powerful force in resistance to colonialism. Simultaneously, the process of Islamization continued to accelerate, and Islam became a key unifying force for the Indonesian nation.

Palembang Malay Islamic Education Institute During the Dutch Colonial Period

The formation of the scientific tradition and teaching of Islam in South Sumatra, especially Palembang, seems to have started in the era of the Palembang Darussalam Sultanate in the 18th century (Ismail 2014). Religious education institutions in the Sultanate of Palembang Darussalam are managed by religious bureaucrats through recitations in mosques and at the homes of religious officials. Therefore, there were no pesantren in Palembang, as in Java. New Islamic boarding schools emerged in the Palembang area in the 20th century (Rahim 1998).

During the Palembang Darussalam Sultanate, the palace was used as a center for Islamic studies and literature. In the tradition of the Malay Palace, writing is an honorable job. The emergence of the kraton as a center for Islamic studies and literature was of course due to the patronage of the Sultan. After the decline of Aceh as a center for Islamic studies, Palembang emerged as a center for Islamic studies and literature (1750-820 AD). The habit of maintaining the ulema of the palace has been initiated since the time of Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin I (1742-1757 AD) (Niswah 2015).

As a center for the study of religion and literature, religious studies activities were quite developed and advanced during the Palembang Darussalam Sultanate. Moreover, the Sultan paid great attention to religion. This is because Sultan Najamuddin and Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin are religious people, even Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II is a hafiz (memorizer of the Qur'an). Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin himself often became the imam of prayers at the mosque. Ulama became a separate place in the life of the Sultan. He was always near the ulama to discuss religious matters (Idris, Sukardi dan Saputro 2021).

Until the collapse of the Palembang Sultanate, the development of Islamic sciences had not touched the general public, especially in Palembang and other areas in South Sumatra. Since the 1830s there have been various indications that the process of Islamization in South Sumatra has shown significant progress. The clearest indication can be seen through the colonial discourse on Palembang which, among other things, stated that the people of Palembang City were very pious and obedient in fulfilling their

religious obligations. In fact, since the 1880s the level of religiosity of the people of Palembang has become increasingly visible, among others, through the crowds of people from various social strata who visit the Great Mosque for Friday prayers. Fasting in the month of Ramadan, and the interest in performing the pilgrimage to Mecca is quite high (Peeters 2007).

The increasing level of religiosity of the people of Palembang can also be seen from the emergence of the tendency and desire of the people to study religion. It was from this religious learning activity that the tradition of Islamic education in Palembang was formed. In the beginning (late 19th century and early 20th century) this tradition took the form of teaching religion at home or at *mushallah* (Ismail 2014). The education teaching system in South Sumatra in terms of Islamic education is almost the same as in Java (Rukiati 2010). Further development of Islamic education systems and institutions in South Sumatra seems to be only slightly different from the development of Islamic education systems and institutions in several other regions in Indonesia.

In South Sumatra, especially Palembang, there are traditional Islamic teaching institutions which were a hallmark of South Sumatran culture prior to formal Islamic education, such as *pesantren* in Java, *surau* in Minangkabau, and *rangkang* (skeletal), *dayah* and *meunasah* in Aceh (Nizar 2011). However, traditional Islamic teaching institutions in South Sumatra take the form of teaching Islam at home, *langgar*, and mosque in the form of recitation which is usually called by the Palembang people by the name *Cawisan* which until now still exists in Palembang, especially at the Palembang Grand Mosque with various curriculum discussions in everyday. The phenomenon of Islamic teaching institutions at home, *langgar* and mosque is certainly often found in various other areas. In fact, Islamic education in mosques, for example, was rife in centers of Islamic scholarship in the Middle East, especially before the era of madrasa revival. However, it only differs in the form of the teaching method (Ismail 2014).

It is estimated that Islamic teaching institutions in South Sumatra will transform the system and institutions of Islamic education in this region starting from teaching religion at home,

langgar or mosque to become more modern systems and institutions by adopting Western educational systems and institutions, in this case Dutch schools transforming it generally takes the form of religious schools or madrasas. Until the first decade of the 20th century, the tradition of Islamic education in the form of non-formal religious teaching still persisted.

Based on the results of research conducted by Ismail in his book entitled *Madrasa and Socio-Political Upheaval in the Residency of Palembang, 1926-1942*, that, during the Palembang Sultanate period, traditional Islamic teaching systems and institutions were the main flow of education in South Sumatra, then there is no long after the colonial government came to power, Islamic education was marginalized in people's lives. Modern education with the Western system introduced and established by the Dutch became the main line in the world of education in this region. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the people of South Sumatra began to recognize and feel the need for Dutch education, partly because of the more open job opportunities if someone has a Dutch school diploma. For this reason, in the early days of the 20th century, it seems that the public's attention was more focused on Dutch schools than Islamic teaching institutions which had not made many reforms (Saputro 2021).

Although several schools had been established by the Dutch since the late 19th and early 20th centuries, some observers pointed out that up to the mid-1920s the education level of the people of Palembang was still lower than in other parts of Indonesia. In fact, until 1927 the people of South Sumatra were indeed quite lagging behind in the field of modern education compared to other areas in the Dutch East Indies (Ismail 2014).

The low level of education of the average people of South Sumatra is at least caused by two things. *First*, there is still unequal public awareness of the importance of education for their children. This situation continued until about 1927's. This is, among other things, marked by the high number of out-of-school children in Dutch schools. *Second*, it was caused by the inability of the colonial government to fulfill the educational aspirations of the people in every area in South Sumatra. In fact, the condition of some children in Palembang City

itself is not better. Due to the condition of the children of the Palembang community in 1927, there were still many school-aged or school-aged children who were less interested in entering school. They are more interested in playing and seeking entertainment than studying at school (Saputro 2021).

However, there is no definite data when the process of transformation from non-formal Islamic education to formal Islamic education begins. However, from 1902 to 1916 among the *'Alawiyyin* community, Arab schools were established which more or less showed a change towards classical schools, although not yet perfect. In fact, there have been efforts towards renewal despite many challenges. One of the challenges to the reform stemmed from Sayid Usman's concern with the efforts of several Sayids in Palembang to add general lessons like Dutch schools and change the tradition of dressing students in coats and pants. In the end, the reform itself was not implemented, while among the *'Alawiyyin* Betawi, the *Jami'at Khair* organization succeeded in establishing a school with a Western system, although at first it also faced many challenges (Rahim 1998).

The existence of formal Islamic teaching systems and institutions that emerged with the classical system in the Palembang Residency was motivated by the following three factors. *First*, there is a kind of awareness from the Muslim community of South Sumatra that education has an important role for the intelligence efforts of Muslims who are far behind compared to those of non-Muslims. It is also considered that the government itself has not been able to fulfill the aspirations and thirst of the community for education as a means of educating their children. Awareness of the backwardness of Muslims is very visible, especially among the community of Arab descent in the city of Palembang. *Second*, the emergence of Islamic teaching institutions in the Palembang Residency, especially in the capital city of Palembang, was driven by the spirit born of the Islamic renewal movement carried out by several reformer organizations in Indonesia in the 20th century. *Third*, although the Dutch government has established many schools, the Muslim community considers that Dutch education is only concerned with world affairs, while religious

lessons are not taught in these schools (Ismail 2014).

In 1907, the so-called *Madrasah* (Arabic School) Al-Ihsan was founded in Palembang by a group of Arab youths who previously founded a social organization also called Al-Ihsan. A few years later, in 1914, in *Kampung 13 Ulu* Palembang, another Islamic teaching institution called *Madrasah Arrabiyyah* was also established by Arab descent, namely the al-Munawwar family, which is a family of high-class Sayyid descent. However, these two early madrasas did not appear to be in a classical form with the facilities and systems of the modern schools established by the colonial government (Sepriady dan Idris 2018). The initial revival of a truly formal Islamic education seems to have only occurred since 1925. Reports from the colonial government state that the establishment of religious schools since 1925 in *Iliran* and *Uluan* Palembang marked a new stage in the process of institutionalizing religion after 1925 (Hanafiah 1997).

Islamic teaching institutions that are truly classical and formal in the form of a government school system only appeared in 1925 in Palembang City with the establishment of *Madrasah Ahliyah Diniyah* in *Sekanak 28 Ilir* Village, near a trading dock (Ibrahim 2018). In the same year (December 8, 1925 to be exact) outside the city of Palembang (*Iliran* Palembang area) an educational institution was established called *Madrasah Islamiyah Tanjung Raja*, this madrasa is located in the village of *Tanjung Raja Ogan Ilir* (Syawaludin, Fikri dan Zalpa 2019). After that, several *Madrasas* in Palembang City such as *Madrasah Al-Ihsan* and *Madrasah Arabiyyah* were established in 1911 which re-emerged with a more modern system in 1926. After that, and until the early 1940s, many Islamic teaching institutions emerged. formal schools (Islamic private schools) both in the city of Palembang itself and in the villages of *Iliran* and *Uluan* Palembang. The majority of educational institutions established by organizations or individual initiatives are in the form of *madrasas* and some are in the form of *Met de Qur'an* public schools or Islamic schools (Ardi 2018). In general, there are three levels of Islamic education in the Palembang Residency area, namely the pre-primary level, elementary level and secondary level.

However, what initially stood were educational institutions at the elementary level, while institutions at the pre-primary and secondary levels only emerged later.

The Islamic teaching institutions that have been mentioned are all located in the capital area of the Residency of Palembang (Palembang City) which was politically the center of government control, both during the sultanate and during the Dutch colonial government (Panji dan Suriana 2014). Meanwhile, in rural areas, in *Iliran* and *Uluan* Palembang, there were also formal Islamic teaching institutions with a classical system, similar to those established by the colonial government. Besides Madrasah Islamiyah in *Tanjung Raja* (1925), several educational institutions also emerged such as, Madrasah Islamiyah Sekayu (1926), Al-Irsyad Pagar Dewa School (1927), Religious School at OKU (1929), Religious School in Rawas (1929), School of Religion in Muara Dua (1930s), School of Religion in Lahat (1930s), School of Religion in Muara Enim (1930s), and School of Religion in Baturaja (1930s) (Peeters 2007).

Meanwhile, according to Peeters, the state of Islamic education in rural areas in the hinterland or uluan Palembang until 1929 began to develop. One of the reasons why Islamic teaching institutions in the *Uluan* village of Palembang have developed quite rapidly since 1925 is the impetus from the increasing economic welfare of the Uluan community due to the unexpected wealth of rubber and coffee cultivation (Fadil 1990). Until mid-1937, in the city of Palembang there were not only "low-teaching" Islamic teaching institutions, but also secondary-level Islamic teaching institutions that "taught more or less like the "Darul General of Mecca". Unfortunately, at this time the madrasa still faces the problem of the lack of available teachers. Some of the available data do show that some middle-level Islamic teaching institutions or colleges have been established in the Palembang Residency since the mid-1930s. Some that can be mentioned are the three-year Wustho Madrasah founded by the Muhammadiyah College in July 1936, the Muara Enim branch of Madrasah Tsanawiyah (NU) which was founded in late 1937 and Madrasah Tsanawiyah Darul Falah which was established in early 1937 (Sunanto 2012).

Furthermore, another secondary-level Islamic teaching institution in Palembang City is an institution called Madrasah Darul 'Ulum which was established in early November 1940. The madrasa which was founded on the initiative of K.H.A. Marzuki is headed by K.H. Zainal Abidin Fikry, former teacher of Madrasah Darul 'Ulum Mecca, and assisted by two teachers with diplomas, namely 'Abbas Husein and K.H. Kadir. Another middle school in the city of Palembang is Madrasatul Muballighin (Tablig School) Sriwijaya which was inaugurated on 15 Shawwal 1359 and managed by K.H. Masjhoer Azhari, K.H. Tjek Wan and K.M. Zainal Arifin (Peeters 2007).

In addition to being in the form of madrasas, there are several Islamic teaching institutions in the Palembang Residency which are in the form of public schools a la Dutch schools but met de qur'an. There are at least two organizations that have opened Islamic education institutions of this kind, namely the Palembang branch of Muhammadiyah and the Nurul Falah Association. In 1937, for example, HIS (Hollandsch Inlandsche School) Muhammadiyah was established in Palembang City, which is located on a small hill. Meanwhile, Nurul Falah started to open a schakel school and MULO (Meer Uitgebreed Lager Onderwijs) in 1938 (Hanafiah 1997).

The formation of the scientific tradition and teaching of Islam in South Sumatra, especially Palembang, seems to have started in the era of the Palembang Darussalam Sultanate in the 18th century. Religious education institutions in the Sultanate of Palembang Darussalam are managed by religious bureaucrats through recitations in mosques and at the homes of religious officials. Therefore, there were no pesantren in Palembang, as in Java. New Islamic boarding schools emerged in the Palembang area in the 20th century.

Conclusion

During the Sultanate of Palembang, traditional Islamic education was the dominant form of learning. However, with the arrival of the colonial government, Islamic education gradually became marginalized. As the colonial period progressed, the local population began to recognize the benefits of Dutch-style education, particularly

because obtaining a Dutch school diploma opened up more job opportunities. Despite the establishment of several Dutch schools by the mid-1920s, the education level in Palembang remained lower than in other parts of Indonesia. One reason for this was the limited public awareness of the importance of education for children, as evidenced by the high number of children not attending Dutch schools. Furthermore, the colonial government's failure to meet the educational needs of the Palembang people contributed to this issue. Before the rise of formal Islamic education, traditional Islamic learning was a key feature of Palembang's culture. This system included practices similar to pesantren in Java, surau in Minangkabau, and rangkang, dayah, and meunasah in Aceh. In Palembang, Islamic education typically took place in homes, langgar (small prayer halls), and mosques. Over time, it is believed that these traditional institutions would evolve and modernize, adopting Western educational methods and structures.

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