

The Value of Islamic Religiosity in the Migration of Admiral Cheng Ho in Archipelago, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explain the value of Islamic religiosity in Admiral Cheng Ho's migration to Nusantara, Indonesia. This research uses library research. The descriptive analysis method collects, compiles, analyzes, and draws conclusions. The results showed that China communicated Islamic culture as an effective way to be accepted in the archipelago. The migration step of Chinese diplomacy through Admiral Cheng Ho is said to have reflected the "Clean Diplomacy" diplomacy theory by emphasizing that diplomacy focuses not only on the ends but also on the means, and all negotiation processes are equally important. The value of religiosity in life practiced by Admiral Cheng Ho, believing in Allah SWT, appreciating, and respecting the people in the archipelago, illustrates the behavior of loyalty to the Chinese ruler by spreading Islam in the archipelago through trade routes.

INTRODUCTION

Islam has a long history in Indonesia, with Arab and Indian traders bringing Islam to Indonesia in the 13th century, according to various sources (Drewes, 1968; Kersten, 2017). Islam spread gradually and peacefully in Indonesia, with many local rulers and cities embracing the religion over time. The emergence of Islam in Indonesia resulted in the establishment of Islamic kingdoms and sultanates such as the Sultanates of Demak and Banten. With more than 200 million Muslims, Indonesia is now the world's largest Muslim-majority country. Indonesian Islam has developed its own distinctive traditions and rituals, influenced by the rich cultural and religious past (Hasan, 2020).

Several previous works describe the journey and life of Islam in the archipelago (Laffan, 1960; Indonesia-investments.com, 2023). First, there is the Indian Theory, which was started and promoted by Pijnappel, a Professor of Malay at Leiden University in the Netherlands. Second, there is the Persian Theory, which is based on some components of Persian culture, particularly Shia, found in Islamic cultures across the archipelago. Third, there is the Chinese idea given by Emanuel Godinho de Eradie, a Spanish researcher. This idea also comes from the account of Ma Huan, a writer who followed Admiral Cheng-Ho's expedition. Fourth, European news from C. Snouch Hurgronje, W.F. Stutterheim, and Bernard H.M. Vlekke. Fifth, the Arab theory of Crawford, supported by Keyzer, was further developed, and adjusted by Niemann and de Hollander, which states that Islam in Indonesia began in Hadramaut (Lestari, 2011).

Political diplomacy in the Indonesian archipelago began in the seventh century, according to P.A. Hoesin Djajadiningrat, a historian of Banten, who believes that Islam entered Indonesia from Persia in the seventh century AD. This study focuses on the socio-cultural basis of Indonesian Islamic society that resembles Persia (Nasution, 2020; Ningsih, 2021). As evidence, there have been gatherings of Persians in Aceh since the 15th century. Similarities include the celebration of the day of Ashura, known as the Ark celebration in various locations in Indonesia such as in West Sumatra and Bengkulu. Second, the emergence of the teachings of Sheikh Siti Jenar, which were similar to those of the Persian Sufi al-Hallaj from Iran. Thirdly, kings in Indonesia used the title Syah, which was traditionally used in Persia. This history is supported by the introduction of the Pegon alphabet in Java by Umar Amin Husein of Persian origin, as well as the use of Iranian terminology in spelling Arabic letters for harakat punctuation, such as "Jabar Jer", which in Arabic is called 'Fathah Kasrah' (Feener, 1999).

Among the many Arab and Persian influences on the existence of Islam through trade. In contrast, China tried to create political diplomacy in the Archipelago through Islamic cultural migration that brought trade missions and left traces of Islam identical to Chinese culture. The uniqueness of what China did was the migration of Sea Admiral Cheng Ho to conduct Islamic diplomacy with the royal territories he passed through while spreading Islam throughout the Archipelago. However, China was not a Muslim-majority region or an Islamic center. Sea Admiral Cheng Ho conducted diplomacy and

migration of Chinese marine military forces and trade activities through Chinese Islam to the kingdoms in the Archipelago but did not provoke hostility between kingdoms/countries (Rohman & Mansyur, 2022).

The primary purpose of Cheng Ho's migration to the Archipelago was to gain recognition from the rulers of the Archipelago for the power of the Chinese emperor during the Ming Dynasty, as well as efforts to fulfill the logistical needs of the kingdom, which were carried out through trade and establish friendly and peaceful relations. Secondly, Cheng Ho's arrival in the Archipelago contributed to future opportunities for Indonesia and China to establish good diplomatic relations with the statement that the symbols and motifs contained in the mosque are signs that are interpreted as a combination of Chinese culture and Palembang culture (Syahbani et al., 2022). Admiral Cheng Ho from China has successfully carried out the task of diplomacy and the spread of Islam. Admiral Cheng Ho has provided much helpful knowledge for the port and kingdom in Cirebon (Rizky et al., 2020). Meanwhile, another study discussed the role of Admiral Cheng Ho in spreading Islam in Semarang, one of the cities in Central Java Province, through trade, marriage, and cultural arts (Putra et al., 2018). Tan Ta Sen, in his book entitled Cheng Ho and Islam in Southeast Asia, states that Admiral Cheng Ho, who was an official ambassador of the Ming Dynasty by migration, had a significant role in spreading Islam in the Archipelago (Ta Sen, 2010; Kadir, 2010). Therefore, it is interesting to examine the value of Islamic religiosity in the migration of Admiral Cheng Ho in the Archipelago.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Islamic Communication

Islamic theology has a significant influence on communication practices in Muslim societies. In the early days of Islam, oral communication was the primary means of spreading the religion. As a result, oral communication remains an important aspect of Islamic communication practices (Galander, 2002). While oral communication is important, Islam also strongly emphasizes written communication. The Quran, for example, is a written text that is considered the literal word of God. As a result, Muslims attach great importance to the written word (Khalil, 2016).

Meanwhile, Islamic theology emphasizes the importance of respecting authority figures, such as religious leaders. This respect is often reflected in communication practices, where respect is shown to those in positions of authority (Kasmani et al., 2017). Islamic communication practices often emphasize the importance of clarity and directness. This is reflected in the use of clear and concise language, and the avoidance of ambiguity (Khalil, 2016). In addition, Islamic theology also has an influence on intercultural communication practices, especially in Muslim-majority countries. For example, the influence of Islam can be seen in the way communication is conducted between different Muslim cultures (Awad, 2015).

Islamic Diplomacy

Diplomacy theory is a broad field that encompasses various approaches to international relations. "Net Diplomacy": This theory emphasizes that diplomacy should not only focus on the ends but also on the means and all negotiation processes, which are equally important. Clean diplomacy is based on Islamic values and can be found in the Quran and Hadith, as well as in the Prophet Muhammad's actions in solving various problems. Clean diplomacy is characterized by justice and *Rahmatan lil 'alamin*, which makes all parties equal, without the oppression or supremacy of certain parties (Pratiwi, 2017). "Maqasid Sharia": This theory is used as a new approach to Islamic diplomacy in resolving minority conflicts. This study argues that Maqasid sharia can be developed as a soft-power diplomacy strategy, which can be distinguished as a model of Islamic diplomacy in resolving minority issues (Fathoni, 2017). "Bargaining": This theory is offered as an alternative strategy to the balance of power theory. Bargaining relies on strategic partnerships as a diplomatic instrument and can increase the relative power of a smaller state while maintaining its political neutrality (Montratama & Yani, 2017).

Previous studies have linked diplomacy and theology, as well as the integration of faith into diplomacy constructively, as a means of reducing identity-based conflict and religiously motivated violence in the contemporary international system (Blakemore, 2019). Moreover, Religion in diplomatic history has been central to European international relations since the fall of the Roman Empire to the present day (Sowerby, 2016). In contrast to previous research, religious thought and actors have also influenced relations between nuclear powers India and Pakistan, and in the consolidation of democracy in Latin America (Farr, 2012). Religion and coloniality in diplomacy: Correspondingly, previous research has also shown that the legacies of colonialism have deep and residual effects on religion and international relations (Tarusarira, 2020). Thus, the international relations research agenda must recognize the unique form of religious diplomacy to properly capture the significant role of religious actors in international relations (Leight, 2011). Finally, previous articles emphasized culture and diplomacy as dynamic processes that influence the history of foreign relations by erasing the distance between officials and the societal context in which diplomacy takes place (Plummer, 2005).

METHODOLOGY

Library research methods refer to the techniques and strategies used to conduct research in a library environment. These methods usually involve searching and analyzing information sources such as books, journals, and databases to collect data and support research projects. Some common library research methods include keyword searches, citation searches, browsing stacks, and guided searches with bibliographies related to *The Value of Religiosity in Chinese Communication Through the Islamic Diplomacy of Admiral Cheng Ho in Nusantara, Indonesia* (George, 2008). Topics should develop research questions, identify and evaluate sources, and organize and present research findings. Literature study is one way of research by looking at and reviewing

previous research which is then looked for existing shortcomings. Literature research methods can be carried out using descriptive analysis methods, namely by collecting data, compiling data, analyzing data, and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Religiosity Value of Chinese Islamic Communication Through Admiral Cheng Ho

The relationship between mainland China and parts of the Indonesian archipelago goes back a long way. Chinese sailors who wanted to sail to the Indian continent often anchored in Java and Sumatra for a few weeks (Nugrahanto, 2007). Cheng Ho was a Muslim who became a close advisor to Prince Yan of the Ming Dynasty, who later became one of China's greatest emperors. Cheng Ho's voyage to spread Islam was the largest in history, including hundreds of fleets and tens of thousands of personnel with diverse abilities. Between 1405 and 1433, China spread its religious message through Admiral Cheng Ho, who led six missions to Southeast Asia, including the archipelago. Cheng Ho's mission was instrumental in spreading Islam throughout the archipelago, which eventually became the majority religion in Indonesia. Cheng Ho's journey to the archipelago took place in the midst of the transition from Hindu-Buddhist to Islamic rule. After a stopover in Champa (now Vietnam), Cheng Ho's fleet arrived in Java. The fleet sailed from the north coast of Java to Sumatra, then to the Strait of Malacca. Cheng Ho's mission was pivotal in the history of navigation, and his navigational charts influenced global navigation until the 15th century.

In exerting its influence, China used Islamic communication as an effective way to be accepted in the archipelago. The value of religiosity is a value related to the beliefs and teachings embraced by a society in the archipelago. This value is related to religious life in the archipelago and has a sacred nature and can be used as a guide for behavior in the realm of religion for the parties concerned. The value of religiosity in life practiced by Admiral Cheng Ho, (1). Believe in Allah SWT (2). Appreciate and respect the people in the archipelago (3). The value of religiosity describes the behavior of Admiral Cheng Ho, such as his loyalty to the ruler of the Ming Dynasty, Emperor Zhong Di. Here are some ways Cheng Ho is said to have spread Islam in the archipelago: (a). Through Trade, Cheng Ho and his crew engaged in trade with the locals and spoke to them about Islam. They then invited the locals to embrace Islam by conveying the message of Islam implied in QS. Fatir Verse 29. During his mission to spread Islam in Indonesia, Cheng Ho met with people who had already embraced Islam. By conveying the word of Allah QS. Al-Hujurat Verse 10:

Chinese culture and civilization: Cheng Ho's expedition also brought Chinese culture and civilization to the archipelago, which may have helped the spread of Islam (Idntimes.com, 2022). Without abandoning human values, Cheng Ho always emphasized the importance of humanity, which is a fundamental aspect of Islam so Admiral Cheng Ho became a symbol of Chinese-Muslim unity and a figure who helped spread Islam in Southeast Asia.

This success became the starting point of China's power relations with the archipelago. The success of Chinese Islamic communication left phenomenal traces in the archipelago, such as: (1) the cultural heritage in Semarang City, Indonesia. (2). Sam Po Kong Temple in Semarang is a popular destination for tourists interested in Cheng Ho's legacy. Uniquely this place is thick with Chinese nuances and nuances of Confucianism (3). Cirebon: Cheng Ho landed in Cirebon in 1415 and left a lasting cultural legacy there, such as batik patterns and fabrics that are used as a symbol of Cirebon culture and its artifacts. So back home in Aceh, there are artifacts of Islamic heritage in Aceh which are believed to have come from Cheng Ho's voyage.

Islamic diplomacy through the migration of Admiral Cheng Ho in Nusantara, Indonesia

It is undeniable that the diplomacy carried out by Admiral Cheng Ho in a peaceful manner is found in the Qur'an and in the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW which teaches how to rule diplomacy in international relations. This is stated in the following verses of the Quran: QS. Al-Baqarah, 30; QS. Al Anbiya', 107; QS. Al-Hujurat, verse 13. Islam also provides teachings related to diplomacy as contained in; First, QS. Al-Maidah 2; QS. An-Nahl 125; QS. Al-Fath 29; QS. al-Hujurat 9. Islamic diplomacy must basically explain the message of Islam which prioritizes *Rahmatan lil al-Alamin*, namely cooperation, and peace.

In the teachings of Islam, believing in the Prophet and Messenger of Allah is one of the Principles of Faith and Aqidah (Iman). Muslims must believe and believe that Allah SWT has messengers who are responsible for delivering His messages to all humanity. The purpose of sending the Prophets and Messengers is to liberate mankind towards happiness, peace, prosperity, and order physically and mentally, hence the need for security and peace of life, world and hereafter. That is the purpose of the Prophet Muhammad SAW sent to this earth. (a). Clean people from polytheistic Aqidah and ignorance of divinity. (b). Form human character and personality of divine morality (c) Teach humanity to develop and relate well with Allah SWT (worship), with people (Muamalah) and maintain the mercy of the universe, (d) Liberate people from misguidance and towards the right guidance (Adz-Dzakiey, 2009).

The first Ming Emperor issued an instruction, which eventually became the backdrop for seafaring diplomacy with China's needs needing to be met. Various agricultural and handicraft enterprises from the eastern part of China had advanced, including the production of silk fabrics, porcelain, ironware and other goods. As a result, the Ming Empire needed quality fragrances, spices, beads and beads, and other goods provided by the archipelago. Diplomacy focused on friendship that also served as a means of trade. Admiral Cheng Ho's earlier visit to Indonesia with great hospitality had built the basis for a very peaceful relationship between the ethnic groups in Indonesia and the ethnic Chinese. This harmonious relationship also encouraged the arrival and development of Islam in Indonesia (Hendro, 2018).

Cheng Ho's journey was also not intended to be violent or expansionist. Cheng Ho's men never occupied an inch of foreign territory. Cheng Ho and his

crew were always warmly welcomed in various countries. As such, it was a diplomatic mission with a religious message as it was aimed at parts of the archipelago that had already accepted Islam. Harmonious interactions have taken place between the Chinese and the people of the Indonesian archipelago since early AD, although historical evidence only dates back to the fifth century AD. With reference to his trip to the kingdom of To-lo-mo (Tarumanegara), a fifth-century AD kingdom in West Java. Harmonious political and trade relations between Chinese sailors and Indonesians lasted a long time and were practically never at odds. Admiral Cheng Ho's friendly diplomacy based on an Islamic approach also expanded the power of the kings of the various dynasties of the Chinese empire, which would not be enforced by armed and military forces.

As a result, the kingdoms that once existed in Indonesia always admired the greatness of the emperors in China by sending envoys to face the Emperor in China periodically as a symbol of respect and recognition. Cheng Ho's diplomatic mission went smoothly, Cheng Ho always met with local businessmen and conveyed greetings from the Ming Emperor in every place he visited. The emperor always sent expensive symbols or gifts to visiting kings and envoys from distant countries, including the archipelago. The voyage group received gifts from Emperor Ming, such as jade ribbons, gold, silver, Dewangga silk, and so on. The real purpose of Cheng Ho's journey was not only to stay in touch but also to spread and introduce Islam to the local population as a rational and worldwide religion.

Admiral Cheng Ho, besides being a devout Muslim, was a pluralist, meaning that he was not only a military figure, a maritime/ admiral who led the sea troops during the Ming Dynasty in the 14th-15th centuries AD, but he was also a devout Muslim who understood the teachings of Islam well, as evidenced by his voyages to several countries, Nevertheless, he always respected and established a friendship with local leaders and kings by giving gifts or souvenirs to them, in accordance with the message of the apostle Muhammad SAW, who ordered his people to give gifts to each other in order to create mutual love, according to the hadith text 'Tahaddu, Tahabbu' (Al-Bukhari, 2013).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through its influence, China, through its migration, instills Islamic culture as an effective way to be accepted in the Indonesian archipelago. This value is related to religious life in the archipelago. It has a sacred nature and can be used as a guide in behavior included in the religious realm of the person concerned. The value of religiosity in life is practiced by Admiral Cheng Ho (1). Believing in Allah SWT (2). Appreciate and respect the people in the archipelago (3). The value of religiosity describes the behavior of Admiral Cheng Ho, such as his loyalty to the ruler of the Ming Dynasty, Emperor Zhung Di. The way Cheng Ho spread Islam in the archipelago was through trade migration; Cheng Ho and his crew traded with the local people and had dialogues with them about Islam.

On every visit of his voyage, including in Asia and Nusantara, Cheng Ho applied the management strategy of Prophet Muhammad SAW, Tou Zhuegong management, and Confucius management to manage thousands of troops with his entourage. So Cheng Ho managed to carry out the diplomacy mission well. China's diplomatic move through Admiral Cheng Ho is said to have reflected the diplomacy theory of "Clean Diplomacy," which emphasizes that diplomacy should not only focus on the ends but also the means and that all negotiation processes are equally important.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so, further research needs to be done related to the topic "The Value of Islamic Religiosity in the Migration of Admiral Cheng Ho in Archipelago". Future research can use different Islamic Religiosity objects to add insight for readers.

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