

Nationalism Ideology in Malaysia Islamic Movements

Ibrahim Majdi Mohamad Kamil

School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 USM, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
ibrahimmajdi@usm.my

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Abstract: This article will focus on the role of Islamic movements in Malaysia in fostering nationalism ideology. The early movement of the nationalism ideology in Malaysia based on Islamic values was spearheaded by a movement called Kaum Muda. The Kaum Muda movement was influenced by figures and reading materials from the Middle East. They brought a reform ideology also called Tajdid or Islah. This writing analyses the development of the reform nationalism ideology based on Islamic values. The results of this found the nationalism ideology brought by Kaum Muda movements and have developed even after independence during the Islamic revival in different groups. Even though the Kaum Muda movement group was only active during the colonisation era, the reform nationalism ideology by Kaum Muda developed after independence with a similar objective.

Keywords: Ideology, Islamic revival, nationalism, social movement

Introduction

Patriotism is the spirit of love for the country. Islam also projects patriotism to its people. To discuss the connection between Islam and patriotism, this article has focused on the nationalism ideology. Before further discussion on nationalism ideology, this article will discuss the definition of nationalism and nationalism from an Islamic perspective. When discussing the term nationalism, this term will be related to a state characteristic.

Nationalism's literal definition according to the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) in the fourth edition gives two definitions of nationalism. The first definition of nationalism is based on the states which means nationalism is a feeling of deep love for the nation and state itself. Secondly, the meaning of nationalism is the movement to achieve economic and political independence from foreign powers, national spirit, Western-educated intellectuals to be pioneers, political and cultural. In terms of terminology, this paper takes the definition from several studies that have been conducted on the concept of nationalism.

Literature Review

In a study by Badri Yatim (1999), he defined nationalism as the word 'nation' which means a nation that referred to the group of people led by a government. In the sense of anthropology and sociology, the nation is a life alliance that stands alone, and each member of the life alliance feels a unity of race, language, religion, history, and customs. According to Stoddard (1966), nationalism is a state of the soul, a belief embraced by many human beings so that they form a nation in the form of togetherness. This article also found some definitions relating Islam with the concept of nationalism. This article is found in the definition carried out in the study by Rahimin Affandi et. Al (2016) which links nationalism with Islam. In his research, he relates nationalism to the concept of the spirit of

'asabiyyah'. He has also associated the concept of nationalism with a passage from two verses of the Quran.

The first is about the nature of loving the homeland, which is a noble nature that is the driving force for the birth of the Islamic kingdom. The Prophet PBUH himself described this feeling with his words when he was expelled from Mecca:

By Allah! Indeed, you (O Mecca) are the best of Allah's earth, as well as the land of Allah that He loves the most. If it weren't for the fact that I was expelled from him (by the people of Mecca) I would never have left you at all.

(Sunan al-Tirmidhi (3860), Sunan Ibn Majah (3099), Musnad Ahmad (17966).

To persuade him to persevere in the face of the alleged separation from the homeland, Allah guarantees the glory of his struggle with His Word:

Indeed, Allah who obliges you (to do good deeds and deliver) the Qur'an (O Muhammad) will certainly convey you again to what you desire and love.

(al-Qasas 28:85)

Even though nationalism ideology started and developed in western countries, however in the history of Islam, there has been a call for Muslims to defend the homeland. In fact, the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) is very famous for his style of rule during his rule over the Islamic kingdom of Medina where there were nationalism characteristics as already mentioned.

A study by Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid (2002) explores the evolution of Islamic political discourse in Malaysia. The research highlights how Islamic movements have historically used nationalist rhetoric to mobilise support and articulate their vision for an Islamic state. This nationalist discourse often involves a critique of colonialism and the promotion of an Islamic identity that is intertwined with national identity. Another study by Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman (2013) examines the role of Islamic NGOs in promoting nationalist ideologies in Malaysia. These organisations often use nationalist language to advocate for policies and actions that align with Islamic values, thereby strengthening the link between national identity and religious identity.

In conclusion, nationalism within Malaysia's Islamic movements is a complex and multi-dimensional topic that involves historical, religious, and sociopolitical elements. The literature on this subject highlights the importance of understanding the different interpretations and manifestations of nationalism within Islamic contexts. By examining the definitions, historical background, and key social movements, we can gain a deeper understanding of how nationalism has evolved and continues to shape the ideologies and actions of Islamic movements in Malaysia.

This article focuses on social movements that focus on *Islah* and *Tajdid* in their nationalism ideology. In Malaysia, the early initiators of this movement were spearheaded by the *Kaum Muda* movement. *Kaum Muda* is a movement established to the spirit of nationalism, especially among the Muslim community in Malaysia. This article attempts to focus on a sociological concept, namely the concept of social movements.

Social Movements Concept

The concept of social movement was chosen as the main concept to discuss in this article. Social movements in general are a structured effort by a group of people to make social changes in the aspects of society (Scott & Marshall, 2009). Social movement later developed as a political movement to counter the status quo. For Malik Bin Nabi, an Islamic thinker and sociologist, he believes that to make social change happen, it is necessary to have two foundations, namely ideology and movement.

Malek Bin Nabi in his views on social movement, stated that there is no change without ideology, so there will be no desired change without a movement (Al-Quraisyiy, 1996). This is among the definitions of the concept that can be explained, especially from the sociological aspect.

The Concept of Islamic Movement

Social movements happen because of a religious base also referred to as a religious movement. According to H. Dadang Kahmad (1999), religious movements occurred due to dissatisfaction with the ruler or leader of the State. Dissatisfaction arises when they see the occurrence of the pleasures of the rulers and conflicts that occur because the parties involved are too controlling of human life. In Malaysia, it happens when there was colonisation by the western colonialists a group of reformers feels they need a movement to create social change through nationalism ideology.

The Kaum Muda movement is a group based on nationalism ideology that have been formed as an opposition to colonialism. However, the opposition was different from bloody opposition with figures such as Tok Gajah and Mat Kilau in Pahang, Tok Janggut in Kelantan, Dol Said in Melaka, and Abdul Rahman Limbong in Terengganu. The nationalism ideology movement by Kaum Muda emphasises the role of intellectuals. In fact, they made Islamic values the centre of nationalism ideology. Kaum Muda also makes some of the Muslim figures their leader. Kaum Muda also claims that they are a movement based on Islam.

Dadang Kahmad (1999) stated that when there is a conflict of opposition to the colonialists, representatives of certain religions will give encouragement and support to their followers to carry out the process of change. In addition, the role of religious members and leaders in providing encouragement and support also has a huge impact on religious movements. From this statement, religious movements have an impact on society even though there are religious movements that are only made up of a small group of people.

The term of Islamic movement, according to Shiozaki Yuki (2007), is an effort that is organised to uphold Islam on individuals and as a social norm, especially for modern Muslim society. This article focused on the role of Kaum Muda Islamic movement through the emphasis on nationalism ideology without denying the contribution of other social movements in the fight for independence. The main method used by Kaum Muda to instil the nation through publications such as magazines and newspapers.

Nationalism Ideology by Kaum Muda

The nationalists among the Malay community who were first mentioned by William Roff (1967) were those who were orientated towards the spirit of nationalism from the Middle East. This group was greatly influenced by the ideology of the Egyptian state at that time. This was proven when these groups created an Islamic magazine called Al-Imam in 1906.

Al-Imam magazine is a Jawi magazine that heavily influenced and closely related to Al-Manar magazine in Egypt. Al-Manar magazine is a magazine published by one of the leading reformist writers in Egypt, Rashid Rida. Rashid Rida's views were heavily influenced by Sheikh Mohd Abduh thoughts, a Sheikh Azhar in Egypt and a well-known thinker. In fact, many articles from Al-Manar magazine have been translated into Malay in Al-Imam magazine.

Those involved in the Al-Imam magazine include Syakh Tahir b. Jalaludin Al-Azhari, Sayyid Shaykh b. Ahmad Al-Hadi, Haji Abbas b. Mohd Taha and Shaikh Mohd Salim Al-Kalali. According to Ahmad Faisal Hamid (2013), Al-Imam magazine is a magazine that disseminates the thoughts of reformist figures, especially from Egypt to Malaya.

Around the 1920s, the first magazines and newspapers that appeared among the Malay community were Al-Islam and Neraca. The early newspapers that emerged were written by Kaum Muda, to instil the nationalism ideology as a fundamental influence from Islamic reformists in the Middle East. Therefore, the early newspapers write a lot about the Islamic things that happened in Egypt and Turkey at that time to instil the ideology.

Al-Islam and Neraca newspapers highlight a lot of da'wah methods from the Middle East. Other than that, among Kaum Muda newspapers, including Idaran Zaman (1925-1930) and Al-Ikhwan (1926-1931) which have many similarities with Al-Imam magazine. Kaum Muda are trying to bring a reform nationalism ideology, which is a different view from the mainstream view by a group called Kaum Tua, which is a more conservative Islamic ideology.

Kaum Muda In Reforming Nationalism Ideology

This effort began to arise when the urban community expanded, and social changes occurred among the Malay Muslim community in Malaysia. At this point, the Malays wanted unity. At that time, the Kaum Muda were actively fighting for social cohesion among the Malay community. For example, Kaum Muda appeals to unity by instilling a reformist nationalism ideology through the *Neraca's* newspaper. However, according to William Roff, the call of Kaum Muda with their reform ideology did not receive a good response from the peasantry especially because this group attacked the upper class. This has upset the peasant community because they consider the Sultan as their saviour. The reform of nationalism ideology of the Kaum Muda considered contradictory with their stand because most of the Malay society during that era was more influenced by the conservative Islamic group.

Prior to the emergence of the reformist religious movement or better known as the Kaum Muda in Malaya, there was a traditional or conservative school that was based on Shafi'iyah scholars in Aqidah, Tasawwuf, and sharia according to Abdul Rahman (2010). This traditional group, referred to in William Roff's book as the Kaum Tua, is a collection of traditional or conservative schools of Islamic thought. The centres for this traditional tradition developed in centres that emphasised Islamic education and made the role of the Ulama' very important. Ulama' figures at that time came from Pattani and Java (Mohamad Kamil, 1996).

Mohamad Kamil added that most of the Nusantara Ulama' at that time could not escape the influence of Sufism. In addition, the ideology of the Malay Nusantara Ulama' at that time only focused on religion and considered that secular and modern knowledge was unimportant. This ideology causes many people to neglect the affairs of world life. This opinion is also agreed upon by Jaffary Awang and Kamarudin Salleh (2007). According to them, the traditional group considers that Western power is not a threat to the Muslim community. This is because this traditionalist society believes in the high status of Muslims compared to non-Muslims.

This is the development that prevailed in the era before independence. These views of Kaum Tua ideology have influenced most of the Malay society. This is in line with what was mentioned by Malek Bin Nabi, who stated that when a movement arises, it will be related to the existence of ideology. Therefore, this article found that the development of nationalism and Islamic movements in the pre-independence era has led to a social change and has formed an ideology. This article will see the connection that the ideology had influenced Islamic movements through reforming nationalism ideology after independence.

The Development Nationalist Ideology Post Independence

After Malaya achieved independence in 1957, the nationalism ideology was actively developed from the 1960s until the 1990s. It happens during the phenomenon of Islamic revivalism in the Muslim world. The phenomenon of Islamic revival started in Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and followed by other countries including Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, Indonesia and Malaysia.

According to Mashitah Sulaiman (2013), the phenomenon of Islamic revival is a wave of awareness to bring the Muslim community back to the teachings of Islam by creating a dominant Islam and creating political power dominated by Muslims. This wave of Islamic revival is holistic, covering every aspect of life. The rise of Islam is not only in terms of religious life, but also other aspects including economy, politics, administrative, education and social aspects. The effect of the colonisers had a great impact on the Muslim community.

The biggest impact was the collapse of Islamic empires during the world war, including the most dominant Islamic empire at that time, the Ottoman empire in 1922, after the outbreak of the First World War. The fall of the Islamic empire that overshadowed many Islamic countries has changed the system of Muslim majority countries. Western countries have introduced democratic states in the country they have been colonised. The system as the result of the reform ideology of western countries during the Renaissance era. This system was brought by Western countries and applied to other countries during the Western colonisation including countries with Muslim majority community. This has formed an issue of secularism.

Secularism in the political system is separation of state administration and politics from religion. Secularism was also initially formed in western countries during the Renaissance when there

was a disagreement towards the government in the Western countries which controlled by the religion authority and the church.

However, this ideology is against the Islamic teachings. This is because Islam does not separate religion from the system of government and politics. The clearest evidence is that the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W was a Prophet and a Messenger, but at the same time, he was also the leader of the Land of Medina. Later, this practice was continued by the reign of Khulafa' ar-Rashidin, then by other Islamic empires until the last Islamic empire, the Ottoman empire. From a historical point of view, Islam does not separate religion and the government. The head of religion in an empire or State is often also the head of the empire or State. Some of the other titles used are such as King, Sultan, Amir and Caliph.

This change had become a fundamental factor in creating an Islamic revival with a different nationalism ideology compared to western nationalism. Nationalism ideology by the Islamic revival movements focused on Islamic consciousness. Islamic revival movements also had a great influence on the Islamic movement in Malaysia, around the 1960s to the 1990s. The nationalism ideology is no longer focused on opposition to the colonisers, but opposition to the political and social system left by the colonisers.

This study found the Islamic revival movements occurred around the 1960s to the 1990s was a continuation of the nationalism ideology that have started by Kaum Muda. This means that the Kaum Muda ideology continued in the era of Islamic revival in Malaysia. The difference is that Islamic revival movement had the same nationalism ideology, but in a different groups and group structure. Nationalism ideology continues by newer reformist figures by forming a religious movement in the fight for the goals and objectives of nationalist reformist ideology.

According to Peter Mandaville (2007), the most important nationalist movement that contained a new vision and brought Islamic politics began in Egypt pioneered by Hassan al-Bana. Hassan al-Bana established a social movement, the Muslim Brotherhood, in 1928. The Muslim Brotherhood and the ideology of Tajdid and Islah then expanded to other countries including Malaysia. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that some Islamic movements until now have been heavily influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood movement.

The second factor of Islamic revival is because of the decline of Islamic cultural heritage in line with the fall of the Islamic empire during the world war. Therefore, some Muslims are trying to revive the Islamic cultural heritage. In addition to the cultural heritage factor, the Islamic revival movement was also driven by dissatisfaction by a group of Muslims with a secular political nature in a Muslim-majority country which is seen as a failed Western system. This realisation came especially when there was a conflict between the Arabs and Israelis in 1967. In Southeast Asia, conflicts such as the conflict with the communists in Indonesia, as well as the ethnic conflict that occurred in Malaysia were also one of the impetuses for the Islamic revival movement (Kersten, 2009). In addition, the Iranian revolution that occurred in 1979 also had a lot of impact on the world Islamic revival movement. The movement also have put Ulama' as their centre figures to gain support from the society.

Previously, the Ulama' was associated with conservative groups that taught a lot about Islam in huts by focusing on learning the Quran, Hadith, Fiqh, as well as the study of classical jawi books (Shiozaki Yuki, 2007). However, during the Islamic revival era, Ulama' and the reformist are together in the same ideology. In addition, the charisma of the Ulama' and their lectures can greatly influence the Muslim community who respect and praise the Ulama' group. The reformist movement also in this era began to highlight the Ulama' as the leaders of the Islamic movement, especially by bringing nationalism ideology in a new way in creating awareness of nationalism.

Therefore, in the 1960s and 1990s, many new terms emerged in Arabic in fighting for a more progressive Islamic movement. According to Kamarudin Salleh (2012), there were various slogans during the Islamic revival, including Al-Usulliyah Al-Islamiyyah, Al-Sahwah Al-Islamiyyah, Al-Tajdid and Al-Islah and Al-Bath Al-Islamic. Although Islamic movements prefer to use Arabic terms, there are also some Islamic movements that also use Western terms such as Renaissance, Regeneration, Revitalisation, Re-emergence, Resurrection, Revolution, Upsurge, Awakening and Islamism. Although some of the terms in Arabic and English have the same purpose and meaning, this group of Islamic movements emphasises and mentions Arabic terms so that society can distinguish

between the rise of Islam and modernisation by Western society. The terms used are also according to the suitability of the social environment in a movement.

The Rise of Nationalism Ideology in Malaysia

All the causes and events that occurred also occurred in Malaya and then Malaysia after 16 September 1963. In this era, Islamic revival in Malaysia appeared as a social movement that brought a new form of nationalist ideology because Malaysia had experienced previously. At this point, the nationalist ideology, which focused on Islamic values, is no longer limited to beliefs and rituals but also emphasises morality, economy, politics, and social aspects.

In addition, in recent years, more social organisations have emerged, and each of them claims to carry the true nationalism ideology based on Islamic values. Even though some similar movements are becoming weaker, causing many new Islamic non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to emerge to replace the previous movements but continue the nationalism ideology. Apart from the growth of social organisations, the change in the administration of the prime minister after the era of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and Anwar Ibrahim's involvement in the country's politics has also impacted the ideology through the policies and leadership traits of leaders that influence social control over the newer Islamic movements.

Discussion

The ideology had a form of awareness of the spirit of nationalism that influenced the process of Islamisation among the Malay Muslim community especially. The desire of the Malay community to live a more Islamic life has caused the government to introduce more Islamic elements in the administration of the Malaysian government. Apart from establishing Islamic institutions such as Tabung Haji, Bank Islam, and Islamic Universities, the government has also established Islamic organisations based on da'wah such as the Malaysian Islamic Welfare Organisation (PERKIM) and the Malaysian Islamic Da'wah Foundation (YADIM).

Conclusion

The development of a reformist nationalism ideology based on Islamic values that focuses on public awareness began to grow with the emergence of social movements known as the Kaum Muda. The existence of the movements based on nationalism ideology is seen as successfully influencing the intellectuals of the Malay community in Malaysia to oppose the colonialism of western powers. The rise of the Kaum Muda in the form of reform preaching has affected a large part of the Malay community. This kind of ideology movement continued to develop during the post-independence era. The Islamic revival era that occurred in the 1960s to 1970s also focused on nationalism ideology to create awareness of nationalism among Malaysians to oppose the secular rule brought by the western colonialists. The effect of the ideology in the form of nationalism awareness has led to the process of Islamisation and the establishment of new Islamic institutions in government agencies and organisations.

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