

The Spread of Islam in Lampung: History, Figures, and Routes

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the history of the arrival and development of Islam in the region of Lampung by highlighting the routes of dissemination, key figures, and the methods of Islamic propagation (da'wah) employed. The research utilizes a historical-qualitative method, incorporating document analysis, observation, and interviews with primary sources such as local manuscripts, mosque archives, and narratives from community leaders. The findings indicate that Islam spread across Lampung through three main routes: the western route from Minangkabau (via Belalau, West Lampung), the northern route from Palembang and Komering, and the southern route from Banten to the Keratuan Back region. Central figures in this Islamization process include Sheikh Al Hajj Ngali Hasyim, KH Ahmad Nawawi, KH Muhammad Thaib, as well as spiritual leaders (mursyid) of the Qadiriyyah and Naqshabandiyah Sufi orders. The Jami' Al Anwar Mosque in Metro emerged as a major center for Islamic education and propagation. The spread of Islam was carried out through integrated strategies involving trade, Islamic boarding school -based education, intermarriage, and spiritual approaches via Sufism. These findings reinforce the understanding that Islam in Lampung is accommodative of local culture, and they emphasize the crucial role of religious scholars and institutions in the broader Islamization process of the Indonesian archipelago.

INTRODUCTION

Islam is one of the fundamental elements that forms mosaic Indonesian history and culture (Green, 2003) . The spread of Islam in the archipelago took place gradually and peacefully, through non- violent channels. like trade, marriage, education Islamic boarding schools and cultural approaches (Iqbal Ghafiri Enhas, Nawaziru Zahara, Basri, & Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2023). This ongoing process over centuries has not only resulted in spiritual transformation with transition belief public going to the teachings of monotheism and Islamic ritual practices but also brings impact in-depth in various aspects of life (Handoyo & Supriyanto, 2023). In social structure, Islam introduces loosening egalitarian values system previous hierarchy, at the same time give birth to new institutions and elites such as Islamic boarding schools and ulama (Hasanah & Verawati, 2022). In the political

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field, the kingdoms Islamic in character (sultanate) emerged with legitimacy religious, adopting elements of sharia into state law (Aris & Sabir, 2020). Meanwhile, in the realm of culture, there is a rich acculturation such as art, literature, architecture, and traditions local areas filled with Islamic values, giving birth to new forms such as wayang as a medium for da'wah, domed mosques tumpang, as well as Arabic- Jawi script literature (Syah & Muhid, 2020). Islamization become a comprehensive process of civilization transformation, forming a unique and moderate Nusantara identity (Naja, 2021).

The process of Islamization in each region has unique characteristics, influenced by factors geographic, network trade, the role of propagators (mubaligh), as well as interaction with traditions that have been There is (Fitriana, Hanif, Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, & Author, 2023). The process of Islamization in each region of the archipelago has unique characteristics that are formed from interaction of several factors key (Binarto, 2020). Geographical factors determine speed and pattern distribution, coastal areas and ports such as Aceh and Malacca became early centers were directly exposed to Islamic influence through traders, while the areas interior experience a slower and more gradual process (El Hanif Azwanda, Yusuf, Roza, & Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, 2024). Then network trade acts as the main route and driving force Islamization, where strategic ports like the Strait of Malacca is not only a center economy but also a point of religious dissemination (Andriyanto & Muslikh, 2019). The role of the preachers (mubaligh) greatly influenced the developing character of Islam, the cultural and accommodating approach of the Wali Songo in Java differed from the intellectual approach of Acehnese scholars such as Hamzah Fansuri. (Permatasari & Hudaidah, 2021). Interaction with tradition local that has there (local genius) produces unique and diverse forms of Islam, such as syncretism in Javanese Islam or patterns adaptation in the Balinese Muslim community (Azizah, Sari, & Haryanti, 2025). The combination fourth factor this is what creates mosaic The colorful Islam of the Indonesian archipelago, where each region displays different faces of Islam without losing the essence of its teachings.

In this context, Sumatra Island holds important role as one of the the gateway and initial center of the spread of Islam in Indonesia, with regions such as Aceh, Minangkabau, and Palembang often became the main focus of the study. Among the regions that have Lots researched, Lampung occupies an interesting position at a time Still keep plenty of room for further in-depth study. Its strategic geographical position at the tip of south of Sumatra and borders the Sunda Strait, a vital shipping route between Java and Sumatra, making it a

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crossroads region culture and politics (Adji, Gunarto, & Ratih, 2022) . Lampung becomes area of influence from The Sultanates of Banten and Cirebon in Java, the Sultanate of Palembang in South Sumatra, and tradition public Lampung customs that have established (Bappenas, 2006) . However, the narrative the history of the process of Islamization in this region is still relatively limited and often just a side note from history sultanates (Deslima, 2021). Historical sources like chronicle local, ancient manuscripts, and archaeological sites have not been fully comprehensively managed and analyzed. Fundamental questions about the main actors in the spread of Islam, the chronology arrival, dominant entry route (trade, politics, or education), and dynamics interaction between Islamic teachings with a system beliefs and customs customs local Still need more serious exploration and research (Junaidah, 2008) . Therefore, the study of Islamization in Lampung is not only an effort complete map history of the archipelago, but also an opportunity to understand variation unique from the process of Islamization shaped by specific geographical, political, and socio-cultural contexts.

As a region located at the end south of Sumatra and directly borders the Sunda Strait, a vital shipping route connecting Java and Sumatra. Lampung is of course exposed to dynamics the trade and civilization that it brought The influence of Islam. The history of the spread of Islam in Lampung is thought to have strong connection closely related to the Islamic sultanates in Java (such as Banten and Cirebon) and Sumatra (such as Palembang), which made this region an area of influence and a destination for da'wah. However, the narrative comprehensive history regarding how Islam first entered, developed, and was accepted by the Lampung community in various ways is still relatively limited and scattered (Idris, 2019).

Based on this background, this research is designed to answer several problem formulations, namely, how did Islam enter the Lampung region, which includes: the role of trade routes Sunda Strait maritime, political expansion of the sultanate neighbors (such as Banten and Palembang), as well as network intellectual scholars, preaching methods what Islamic figures used to spread it Islamic teachings in Lampung, including cultural approaches, education Islamic boarding schools, Sufism, or adaptation to the structure customs local ; who are the central figures in the process of Islamization in the land of Lampung, both those who come from from outside the region such as missionary from Java or Sumatra, as well as local figures who act as successors and adapters teachings and how the social and cultural impacts from the process of spreading Islam in this region, especially in changing or

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interacting with the system community customs, traditions, arts and identity collective Lampung society.

This research aims to systematically examine the process of the spread of Islam in Lampung, its history, figures, and routes. The focus of this research is to reconstruct chronology the arrival and development of Islam in Lampung, identifying key figures both from from outside and son areas that play a role in spreading religion, as well as mapping the routes of entry of Islam, both through trade routes sea, political relations between sultanate, and network education (Islamic boarding schools). This research is expected to can fill the gap historiography at a time give contribution to a more complete understanding of the process of Islamization in the archipelago, especially in the Lampung region which is a meeting place between influence Javanese, South Sumatran, and local culture.

METHOD

This research uses a historical- qualitative approach to examine the process of the spread of Islam in the Lampung region through historical channels. local, central figures, and the methods of preaching applied (Sun et al., 2023) . This approach was chosen because it allows browsing traces historical, both material and non-material, as well as analyze it interpretively to understand dynamics and meaning behind events history. This research applies a systematic historical method through four stages: heuristics (collecting sources), source criticism (verifying the validity of sources), interpretation (interpreting data), and historiography (compilation). narrative history). The data sources used consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include local texts such as manuscripts and ancient documents related to Islamization in Lampung, archives of old mosques (for example, the Al-Anwar Jami' Mosque in Metro City), inscriptions or historical artifacts, as well as the results of in-depth interviews with scholars, traditional figures, local historians, and descendants of Islamic boarding schools who have special knowledge about the history of Islam in Lampung. Secondary sources include reference books, scientific journals, articles, theses/dissertations, and other publications that discuss the process of Islamization in Lampung and the broader context in the archipelago.

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentary studies of written and archival sources, semi-structured interviews with key informants, and field observations at historical sites such as ancient mosques, clerics' tombs, and locations considered centers of the early spread of Islam. Observations aimed to confirm and complement written data

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with material evidence and geographical-cultural context. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively and descriptively with a historical interpretative approach. Data from various sources were verified through triangulation (source, method, and theory) to ensure their validity and reliability. Furthermore, the data were interpreted to identify patterns, causal relationships, and socio-cultural meanings of the Islamization process, while still taking into account the local context of Lampung (Ottoman, 2018). The final stage is the preparation of a comprehensive and systematic historical narrative based on the analyzed findings, so that it can answer the established problem formulation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Dynamics and Strategy

The research results confirm that Islamization in Lampung is a highly contextual, multilateral process, meaning that the spread of this religion did not originate from single source but from several different paths and actors simultaneously. This process is fundamentally shaped by the unique geographic characteristics and social relations in each corridor. The arrival of Islam. The Southern Route which is the coast allows for a direct political approach from Sultanate of Banten, while the Northern Route that was passed river big become an arena for distribution through the network trade and intellectual from Palembang. On the other hand, the West Route consists of land and mountains facilitate the entry of Islam through migration and exchange culture with Minangkabau. In other words, the form and success Islamization in each region of Lampung is very much determined by specific conditions. local, such as access geography, local power structures, and pattern social interaction between immigrants with society customs. Therefore, Lampung Islam is not product uniform import, but rather the result of a creative synthesis of various influences external that has been adapt to diverse local contexts.

The Western Route emphasized cultural and trade approaches, reflecting a subtle acculturation strategy. The Northern Route emphasized intellectual dimensions and religious networks, demonstrating Lampung's integration into the broader Islamic network of the Nusantara archipelago. The Southern Route, driven by the political authority of the Banten Sultanate, demonstrated a top-down model of Islamization through political legitimacy and marriages with traditional elites.

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These differences emphasize that there was no single model for the spread of Islam, but rather a diversity of complementary strategies adapted to local socio-cultural conditions.

As the following data demonstrates:

Table 1. Routes of the Spread of Islam in Lampung

No	Path/Corridor	Geographical Characteristics	Main Actors & Sources	Dominant Strategy & Approach	Dynamics & Impact
1	South Line	Coast)	Sultanate of Banten	Authoritarian Politics (Top-Down). Through political legitimacy, expansion of power, and marriage with traditional elites.	down model of Islamization. The spread was driven by the central political authority of the sultanate, resulting in new political integration and power structures.
2	Northern Line	Sungai Besar (In-depth via river)	Trade & Intellectual Network from Palembang	Intellectual Networks. Through trade, religious (Islamic intellectual) and educational networks.	Integrating Lampung into the broader Nusantara Islamic network. Emphasizing the scientific dimension and cultural- religious connections between regions.
3	West Line	Land and Mountains	Migrants and Culture from Minangkabau	Cultural-Acculturative. Through migration, local-scale trade, and subtle cultural exchange.	Emphasizing an acculturation approach. Islam spread through social interaction, kinship, and adaptation to the culture and structures of local indigenous communities.

Characters as Adaptive and Multidimensional Agents

The success of Islamization is largely determined by the ability of local figures to adapt da'wah methods. Figures such as Sheikh Al- Hajj Ngali Hasyim demonstrate how a multidimensional approach combining spirituality (tarekat), economics (trade), and

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education (pesantren) can reach rural communities still strongly adhering to tradition. KH Muhammad Thaib, with his literary works, and KH Ahmad Nawawi, with his introduction of formal education systems from the Middle East, represent two poles of strategy. These include strengthening classical Islamic scholarly traditions and modernizing teaching methods. Efforts to strengthen classical Islamic scholarly traditions went hand in hand with the modernization of teaching methods in the Islamization process in Lampung, forming an adaptive synthesis. The strengthening of classical traditions is manifested through the teaching of yellow books, the sorogan-bandongan method in pesantren, and the maintenance of the sanad of knowledge, which serves to preserve the corpus of authoritative knowledge and shape the habitus of ulama. Meanwhile, the modernization of teaching methods is reflected in the adoption of a formal class structure, a structured curriculum, the integration of general knowledge, and more systematic institutional management.

The collaboration of these two approaches can be understood through Roland Robertson's theory of glocalization. This theory explains that global practices—both transnational Islamic scholarly traditions and modern educational systems—are not accepted raw, but rather rearticulated and creatively adapted to the local context of Lampung. This synthesis gives rise to hybrid forms, such as Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools that incorporate the madrasa system, or madrasas that retain the study of yellow books. Thus, this strategy is not a dichotomy, but rather a resilient response: maintaining the core of religious identity and authority through classical traditions, while ensuring relevance and sustainability amidst the demands of social change through modernizing methods. Figures such as KH Muhammad Thaib, who worked within the framework of classical traditions, and KH Ahmad Nawawi, who brought influences from modern Egyptian thought, together built an infrastructure of Islamic knowledge in Lampung that was solid in principle yet flexible in its application. These figures were not only transmitters of teachings, but also social architects who built a sustainable religious and intellectual infrastructure.

Mosques and Congregations as Socio-Spiritual Infrastructure

The synergy between mosques and religious orders creates a robust socio-spiritual infrastructure because these two institutions complement each other in building a complete and sustainable religious ecosystem. The mosque serves as a public and inclusive physical and symbolic infrastructure, providing a multifunctional space for obligatory worship, general education, social deliberation, and the consolidation of community identity. Meanwhile, the religious order functions as a personal and intensive communal network infrastructure, building strong spiritual bonds among members through bai'at (allegiance) to a leader (murshid), the discipline of collective dhikr (remembrance of God), suluk (prayer), and an emphasis on purification of the soul. This synergy manifests itself in a symbiotic relationship: the religious order often provides the core actors (murshid and his followers) who fuel and drive the religious dynamics in the mosque, while the mosque provides a stage for social legitimacy and a physical space for the group's activities. This collaboration creates an effective mechanism for the reproduction of authority, where a cleric can derive formal legitimacy from his role in the mosque and charismatic legitimacy from his leadership within the order. Furthermore, this synergy ensures the continuity of religious transformation, with

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mosques serving as the initial gateway to attracting the wider community, while the tarekat (Islamic order) offers a path to spiritual deepening for individuals with a more serious commitment. This creates a resilient ecosystem, where community ties are not only based on geographic location (the mosque), but also on spiritual bonds, discipline, and social networks (the tarekat). This explains why Islamic legacies such as the Al-Anwar Grand Mosque and the tarekat network in Lampung have survived, thrived, and remain the foundation of the community's Islamic identity to this day.

The mosque serves as a physical and symbolic center that integrates ritual, educational, and social activities. Meanwhile, the tarekat acts as a social and spiritual network that binds members horizontally through shared practices (zikir, suluk) and loyalty to the murshid. This combination allows Islam to be accepted not only as an individual faith but also as a collective identity and value system that regulates community life. The continued function of the Al-Anwar Grand Mosque as a center of community activities and the rapid development of the tarekat network to the present day are strong empirical evidence of the effectiveness of a synergistic model between physical-spiritual infrastructure and socio-religious networks. The mosque's continued role for more than a century—from an early center of da'wah to a consistently relevant educational, social, and cultural hub—demonstrates its ability to adapt to changing times while maintaining its primary function. Furthermore, the expansion and consolidation of tarekat, particularly the Qadiriyyah-Naqsyabandiyah, in various regions of Lampung demonstrates the appeal and resilience of a spiritual model that offers inner deepening, collective discipline, and strong communal bonds. The sustainability of both not only marks historical success, but more importantly, confirms that the synthesis of formal institutions (mosques) and personal spiritual movements (tarekat) has successfully created a dynamic, inclusive, and self-reproducing religious ecosystem. Thus, the effectiveness of this model lies in its ability to meet the diverse needs of the congregation, from public rituals and education to the search for deeper spiritual meaning in an integrated and sustainable manner.

The synergy between mosques and religious orders as socio-spiritual infrastructure can be analyzed through two main theories. First, Robert D. Putnam's Social Capital theory explains that social capital consists of networks, norms, and trust that facilitate cooperation. In this context, mosques function as generators of inclusive bridging social capital, bridging various community groups and building broad social trust through public activities such as Friday prayers and religious study groups. Meanwhile, religious orders act as generators of bonding social capital, creating strong, cohesive, and loyal bonds among members through bai'at (pledge of allegiance), collective dhikr (remembrance of God), and spiritual discipline. The combination of the two produces comprehensive social capital, forming a community that is both open and deeply rooted, explaining the long-term resilience of institutions like the Al-Anwar Jami' Mosque and the religious order network in Lampung. Second, Max Weber's Charismatic Authority theory provides a lens for understanding the reproduction of religious legitimacy.

A leader who acts simultaneously as a tarekat leader and a figurehead in the mosque combines charismatic legitimacy (derived from the tarekat's spiritual qualities and lineage) with formal-traditional legitimacy (derived from its position within the mosque structure).

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This synergy allows for the routinization or institutionalization of charisma through the mosque, while simultaneously deepening and personalizing formal authority through the tarekat. The mosque-tarekat model is not simply a functional partnership, but rather a sophisticated system for building community resilience through the accumulation of dual social capital and the reproduction of hybrid authority, ultimately establishing Islam as a living and sustainable collective identity and value system.

Acculturation as the Key to Sustainability

The process of Islamization in Lampung did not result in a direct conflict with local culture, but rather a creative acculturation that gave birth to a synthetic tradition. This pattern emphasized accommodation and the assignment of new meanings, where Islam did not appear as a closed system that forcibly replaced custom, but was interpreted by preachers to organically integrate with existing cultural structures. Practices such as Njalang, Customary Circumcision, and lifecycle rituals combined with prayer and tahlil (religious remembrance) are concrete evidence of this strategy. In Njalang, for example, the tradition of pilgrimage to sacred sites is imbued with the values of friendship and communal prayer, shifting the focus from worship to respect and contemplation. Customary Circumcision enriches Islamic tradition with a series of community ceremonies, transforming religious moments into social events that strengthen cohesion. Meanwhile, birth, marriage, and death rituals are imbued with Islamic readings, creating a hybrid format that fulfills both emotional-cultural needs and spiritual demands. This acculturation provides dual legitimacy: Islam is accepted out of respect for the old order, while custom acquires a new, more universal framework of values.

The acculturation between Islam and Lampung culture creates a mutually beneficial dual legitimacy, a process that can be understood through the theory of Glocalization (Roland Robertson) and the theory of Hybridity (Homi K. Bhabha). Through the theory of glocalization, this process is seen as a creative adaptation of universal (global) Islamic values into a local cultural framework, producing a form of Islam that is uniquely Lampung. On the one hand, Islam gains a legitimate foothold in the customary structure, while local traditions gain a new framework of values and broader spiritual legitimacy. Bhabha's theory of hybridity clarifies how the meeting of these two systems gives birth to a third space that is not merely a mixture, but a new synthesis that has its own cultural authority, as seen in the tradition of Njalang or Customary Circumcision.

Furthermore, the connection of Lampung's ulama to intellectual networks in Islamic centers in Sumatra, Java, and the Middle East demonstrates that this process was not an isolated phenomenon. This aligns with Azyumardi Azra's theory of the Nusantara Ulama Network, which emphasizes the existence of an intellectual network that unites the Islamic world through the journey of seeking knowledge (*rihlah ilmiah*). This connection ensures that Islamization in Lampung remains integrated with the mainstream development of global Islamic thought and spirituality, while enriching local treasures with broader insights. Thus, Lampung Islam is the product of complex dialectical dynamics, a synthesis born from the interaction between transnational authority, extensive scholarly networks, and adaptive local cultural wisdom.

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This research makes a significant new contribution to the historiography of Indonesian Islam. Its primary innovation lies in its systematic attempt to fill a gap in the study of an often-overlooked region. While previous studies have focused on major centers of Islamization such as Aceh, Java, or Palembang, this article specifically highlights Lampung as a strategic cultural and political "cross-over zone." This research has succeeded in comprehensively mapping the three main routes of Islam's spread in Lampung: the Western Route from Minangkabau, the Northern Route from Palembang, and the Southern Route from Banten. This mapping goes beyond simply listing but also analyzes how the geographical characteristics of each route—coastal, riverine, and mountainous—shaped unique strategies of da'wah and social interaction. This reinforces the understanding that Islamization in the archipelago was a multilateral and highly contextual process, not a simple diffusion from a single center.

Furthermore, this article presents an in-depth analysis of the role of local figures. Figures such as Sheikh Al-Hajj Ngali Hasyim, KH Ahmad Nawawi, and KH Muhammad Thaib are no longer merely mentioned as historical figures, but are analyzed as adaptive and multidimensional "social architects." They are portrayed as agents of change capable of designing an integral da'wah strategy, combining spiritual (tarekat), economic (trade), educational (pesantren), and intellectual aspects. Another novelty lies in the theorization of socio-spiritual infrastructure. This article cleverly utilizes the theories of Social Capital (Robert Putnam) and Charismatic Authority (Max Weber) to analyze the synergy between mosques and tarekat. Mosques are analyzed as producers of inclusive bridging social capital, while tarekat function as generators of strong bonding social capital. This synergy creates a resilient and self-reproducing religious ecosystem, explaining why Islam has been able to survive and thrive in Lampung. Finally, this study provides concrete empirical evidence of creative acculturation as a norm in the Islamization of the archipelago. By showcasing practices such as Njalang and Khitanan Adat, the article demonstrates that peace processes and cultural synthesis are not exceptions, but rather the prevailing logic. This process is also placed within a broader context through the theory of the Nusantara Ulama Network (Azyumardi Azra), which suggests that the Islamization of Lampung is part of the intellectual and spiritual dynamics of global Islam that has been adapted locally (Azyumardi Azra, n.d.).

CONCLUSION

Fundamentally, Islamization in Lampung has proven to be a multilateral and creative process that did not originate from a single source, but rather through three main channels (West, North, and South) with different characters, actors, and missionary strategies. This diversity of channels reflects Islam's ability to adapt to various geographical and social contexts, resulting in a unique, synthesized form of Islam in Lampung. This process was driven by prominent Islamic figures who acted as multidimensional social architects. They served not only as transmitters of teachings but also as builders of a robust religious infrastructure through the synergy between mosques (as public and educational centers) and

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religious orders (as spiritual and communal networks). This synergy, analyzed through theories of social capital and charismatic authority, is key to the resilience and sustainability of Islam in the region. This research confirms that peaceful and adaptive acculturation was the norm in Islamization in Lampung. This process did not erase local culture, but rather carried out a creative synthesis that gave birth to new traditions, while connecting Lampung with the broader Islamic intellectual network in the archipelago and globally. This research has succeeded in filling a significant historiographical gap. It not only complements the grand narrative of Indonesia's Islamization with perspectives from a cross-cultural region, but also provides a valuable analytical model and empirical foundation for future local history research and studies of Islam Nusantara. The legacy of this peaceful, accommodating, and locally wisdom-based Islamization process remains relevant as a foundation for Lampung's community identity today.

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