



**PARTI ISLAM SE-MALAYSIA (PAS)
IN MALAYSIA POLITICS:
A History of Tuan Guru Nik Aziz's Scholarship and
Leadership in Establishing an Islamic State in Kelantan**

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Abstract: The study seeks to examine the brief history of political Islam in Malaysia with a focus on Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party/*Parti Islam Se-Malaysia* (PAS). The emergence of PAS in the early 1950s marks the beginning of the involvement of Islamic Movements in politics as a platform for the revivalism of Islam in the region. In addition, the role of PAS leaderships also briefly discussed with a great emphasis on the leadership of PAS political maestro, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz bin Nik Mat*. His piety in Islam is translated into his political thought which are influential during his involvement in politics. *Tuan Guru's* upbringing and his education background had biggest influence towards his worldview on politics. This study described his contribution on Islam and in Malaysian politics, especially his grand idea on the establishment of Islamic state in Kelantan. The idea of ideal Islamic model of a state was established in Kelantan. It is in line with his perspective of how a society should operate and the functions of government in micro-managing the society. As a conclusion, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* plays an important role within PAS and to the establishment of the model of Islamic State in Kelantan.

Keywords: *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz*, *Parti Islam Se-Malaysia* (PAS), Islamic State, State of Kelantan, Politicians, and Ulama.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v25i1.433>

Introduction

MALAYSIAN modern political history has a very long and interesting drama, taking place since before the independence in 1957. The term modern in political history of Malaysia refers to the time where Malaysia receives the notion of modernity brought by the West, particularly British through their mission of colonialism.

Before colonialism, Malaysia or formerly known as *Tanah Melayu*/Malaya was ruled by kings through kingdoms of Malay rulers for instance the kingship of Perak, Kedah, Johor, Malacca and others. The colonialism did bring major changes to Malaysian political landscape especially towards the end of their occupation in this part of the world and also after their colonial power was challenged by others; the rise of Japan by challenging them militarily which for the short time of period they have to retreated from Malaya and also the rise of nationalism spirit among people of Malaya which saw their influence was challenged by the native of Malaya.

For the purpose of this writing, the focus will be on the emergence of political parties in Malaya and after the formation of the federation, Malaysia and how the change in political landscapes changes the socio-political and socio-economy of the Malaysians in general. There are several political parties' emergences after British decided to leave Malaya for good and after they realized that Malaya is ready to be governed by the people of the land. United Malay National Organization (UMNO) is the earliest political party existed in Malaya. UMNO is a party that fight for the rights of native Malays and by 1951, the emergence of Pan-Malaysian Party (PAS) which was the splinter party of UMNO extend their struggles towards the rights of Islam and Malay especially rural area Malays.

This study will discuss a brief historical background of PAS. Beginning with the clash of *Kaum Tua* and *Kaum Muda* thoughts in reforming the society of Malaya in the early days of colonialism. Then a brief discussion on PAS leaderships since the inception of the party until the period of its glorious days under the leadership of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat*. This paper will focus on the contributions of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* towards the development of PAS and the state of Kelantan by understanding his thought and style in administering PAS.

Historical Background of PAS

Clash of Kaum Tua and Kaum Muda

The establishment of Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party is a reaction towards the notion of modernity brought by the colonial master in

the Malaya. Modernity is reflected by the import of secularism mode of government system to this part of the world. The secularism brought by the west caused a disruptive force towards the socio-political nature of the natives. From the beginning of the era of colonialism, the British were deliberately separating the state governing functions from religious affairs of the people¹. The separation of state and religious management of Malaya remained until today in Malaysia where the political functions are under the supervision of elected politicians at federal and state levels. Whilst religious affairs are under the supervision of the Sultan of the state, every state in Malaysia except the federal territories which are under the power of the *Yang Di-Pertuan Agong* (YDPA) of Malaysia.

The introduction of secularism in Malaya leads to the emergence of what was known as *Kaum Muda* (Young Group). *Kaum Muda* is referred to those young Islamists that emerged as a result of modernity itself where they were exposed to the idea of global Islamism.² In other side of it, *Kaum Muda* was the disruptive force for a normality of the society in Malaya post-colonial by the British especially during the 1920s. *Kaum Muda* was influenced by Islamic Movement in the Middle East such as the one that pioneered by *Mohd Iqbal*, *Rashid Rida* and *Imam Hassan Al-Banna*.³ These movement emergences in Egypt at the first place after they believe that there are the needs for Muslims to break out from the notion of secularism in Muslim world that being instantly getting traction among Muslims. The nature of *Kaum Muda* in Malaya is

¹ The political governing function of the state is under the supervision of British governors and the religious affairs is under the supervision of the Malay rulers (Sultan and raja). A Farish Noor, *The Malaysian Islamic Party PAS 1951–2013: Islamism in a Mottled Nation*, Amsterdam University Press (Amsterdam, 2014), 18-19.

² Kamarudin Salleh, "Transformasi Pemikiran Pembaharuan Dan Modernisme Di Malaysia: Satu Penelitian Awal," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 2, no. Dec 2012 (2012): 23–37. Global Islamism or *Kaum Muda* refers to those who believed that Islamic Revivalism is needed urgently to counter the notion of Modernism and Secularism brought by the colonial masters.

³ Hiroko Kushimoto, "Islam and Modern School Education in Journal Pengasuh: Review of the *Kaum Muda* - *Kaum Tua* Dichotomy," *Studia Islamika* 19, no. 2 (2012).

very cosmopolitanism and internationalism,⁴ which lead them to be exposed to new idea which ironically, they were sent there by British and bring back something to fight against them.

On the side note, *Kaum Muda* emerged after for them, the *Kaum Tua* which was the conservative Islamic figures were unable to overcome the secularism brought by the colonizer. For them, *Kaum Tua* or conservative ulama put too much focus on learning at *madrasahs* and *pondoks* whilst government issues are not their concern which later further showing their agreement with the notion of secularism.⁵ Therefore, it can be said that the emergence of PAS is the result of activism brought *Kaum Muda* to fight against the 'normality' introduced by the colonizer. With the clash of *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua* it shows the dynamism of Muslim society in the Malaya before and after colonialism. The dynamism indicates the conservative nature of *Kaum Tua* which embedded since the first Islam coming to Malaya in 14th century. In contrast, the globalist and reformist idea of *Kaum Muda* which originated by the exposure of young Islamic preachers as the result of modernity itself.

Emergence of Organized Political Movement in Malaya: A Path for PAS Emergence

The early era of Malay struggle against colonialism started in the 1940s with the earliest organized political movement demanding independence from the British. The inception of Malay Nationalist Party (MNP) which is the continuation of *Kesatuan Melayu Muda* (KMM) is the beginning of all other movements and parties in Malaya post-World War II, including PAS.⁶ The MNP inclination towards socialism and nationalist in nature saw the path of Malaya liberation is under the pretext of socialist

⁴ The global nature of the *Kaum Muda* is also the result of modernity brought by the British to Malaya where these *Kaum Muda's Ulama* were sent abroad to study and at the same time being exposed by the new idea introduced by the Islamic Revivalist scholars. Kushimoto "Islam and Modern", 21-22.

⁵ They reluctant to involve in issue of state administration but does not mean they embrace secularism. Ibid., 21-23.

⁶ C Joseph Liow, *Piety and Politics: Islamism in Contemporary Malaysia*, 1st ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 21.

movement. The MNP is taken into the limelight of the discussion because of its significant in the emergence of the parent party of PAS which is UMNO (United Malay National Organization) as well as the ideology possessed by the earlier PAS leaderships. For instance, the second PAS president, *Dr Burhanuddin Al-Helmy* and the third *Muhammad Asri Muda* were the member of MNP and forming their own Islamic Wing known as *Hizbul Muslimin* (Noor, 2014).

The struggle put forward by MNP and formerly KMM path the way for the one and only British's approved political movement which was UMNO. UMNO was formed among the Malay elitist groups and led by Malay aristocrats, its first president came from the Johor Royal family, *Dato' Onn Jaafar*. The main objective of UMNO is to seek for Malaya independence from the British and it is nationalist in nature, where issue of the rights of Malay essential. With the emergence of UMNO and its discourse to protect Malay, it later opened up a path for new political movements with different set of ideologies and objectives in order for them to challenge the colonial power in Malaya. Uniquely, the discourses emerged in Malaya in the early period of political activism is varied from the right-wing ideology that demands Malay rights and what not. The leftist movements which were inclined to the idea of socialism is also present and eventually, the leftist is converging their struggle with Islamist brought by the aforementioned *Kaum Muda*. Throughout UMNO's history as a sole political party that act as the voice of Malay and Muslims in Malaya, there were several issues that deem unsatisfactory by the Muslim faction within it. The issue of Maria Hertogh or *Natrah* that saw UMNO did not managed to fight for the cause of Islam where *Natrah* was sent back to the Holland even though she has converted to Islam in Malaya.⁷ In addition, gambling and alcohol beverages license granted by UMNO also one of the reasons Muslim faction revolt and demanding a change in the party objective.⁸

⁷ Farish Noor, *The Malaysian Islamic*, 38-39.

⁸ Liow, *Islamism in Contemporary Malaysia*, 64.

With the un-Islamic moves by the UMNO leaderships, the hardline Islamic faction within the party demands a more Islamic nature of the party. Obligated by the demands, UMNO leadership sponsor Islamic conferences to cater the voices of this groups. The first was held in Johor, as a result to the conference, the *Persatuan Ulama se-Malaya* (PUM or Ulama Association of Malaya) was formed in the light of demanding general education and welfare for the Muslims in Malaya. The second conference was held a year later in Kuala Lumpur with the attendance prominent leaders from *Hizbul Muslimin* and the third conference which was held in Penang saw the earlier emergence of PAS. The formation of *Persatuan Islam Se-Tanah Melayu* (Pan-Malaya Islamic Association or PMIA) marks the beginning of unity among Muslims in Malaya to the discourse of Malay rights and to uphold the role of religion.⁹

PMIA along the history of Malay acted as the voices of Islam and Malay especially the underprivileged, rural area Malay that have a very limited access to politics and administration of Malaya. Even though PMIA was formed and having minority of voice in the administration, but it did not afraid to voice out their demands against the nationalist party of UMNO where for PMIA, seem a little too much appeasing the non-Malay community especially Chinese. For instance, jus soli birthright to the migrants brought by the British, the role of Malay leader in spearheading the country path and what not. Therefore, PMIA later in 1955 was changed to *Parti-Islam Se-Tanah Melayu* (Pan-Malaya Islamic Party) PAS after the leadership of PMIA believes that in order to bring changes to the political landscape of a newly formed country is by joining politics and challenging the supremacy of UMNO as sole Malay party.

PAS: The New Force of Islam and Malay Rights in Malaya

As mentioned in previously, PAS was formed due to the unsatisfaction of Malay people in general toward the elitist nature of UMNO which somehow left out the need Malay in rural area. The inclination of UMNO towards the needs of the urban Malay which comprises the minority of Malay and the needs of Chinese

⁹ Ibid., 65.

who were deemed as migrants seem irrelevant to PAS members and leaderships. However, among the reason PAS was separated from UMNO is due to the departure of *Dato' Onn Jaafar* from the party and replaced by *Tunku Abdul Rahman* (the first prime minister of Malaya).¹⁰ The change of leadership in UMNO urges *Haji Ahmad Fuad Hassan* the first PAS president to set its own way with PAS as he believes that UMNO is no longer relevant to the struggle of Malay and Islam in Malaya. In the beginning PAS is considered as a very poor party and this is only the reason why they gained popularity among rural Malay population because the party shows the real condition of Malay in their own land.¹¹ Since its inception, PAS has always been favorable to people who live in the rural areas which are affected by the unfair policies by the government, even until today PAS is popular among the Malay communities compared to non-Malays. For example, since the revival of PAS after the short stint of its fourth president; *Muhammad Asri Muda*, PAS managed to create a stronghold in Kelantan and occasionally Kedah and Terengganu. These three states are considered as the majority Malay constituents in Malaysia. Thus, PAS is very popular among Malays especially those who live in rural and underdeveloped areas.

Since the 50s to present time, PAS has undergone many phases of struggles and changes. To understand PAS journey throughout the history, one needs to take into consideration of its leaderships which have a very big influence towards the party objectives and directions. Thus, it can be said that PAS is a hierarchical/ top-down political party which the agenda is being set up by the leadership. Therefore, since its first inception until now, PAS has at least seven presidents that are very much influencing its directions.

¹⁰ Liow, *Islamism in Contemporary Malaysia*, 82.

¹¹ According to Farish Noor in his *Islamism in Mottled Nation*, PAS is so poor mainly because the members of the party is commonly among peasants, farmers and religious preachers which also the main demography targeted by the party. The nature of PAS shows the real condition of Malay in Malaya compared to UMNO which the members are among the elitist Malay from royal families and what not. The condition of PAS resulting in their incapability to rent an office for operation and, they were incapable to have their own typewriter. Farish Noor, *The Malaysian Islamic*, 44.

Meanwhile, after the disastrous period of the 4th president, the direction and objective of PAS mainly depends on the ideological background of its Council of Ulama (*Dewan Ulama'*). This shows how pragmatic is PAS in order for it to remain relevant in Malaysian Politics which are considered as diversified political landscape.

Brief Background of PAS Leaderships: From De Facto of Presidency to the Rising of Ulama Faction.

In brief, the first president of PAS, *Haji Ahmad Fuad Hassan* which was the president from 1951-1953 had so little to contribute to the journey of PAS. His dual membership indicates that he still had other priority besides PAS which the only contribution of his was to separate PAS from UMNO¹² and creating the discursive force of Islamism promoted by the party.

The second president of PAS from 1953-1956, *Dr Abbas Elias* was an English-educated medical doctor, and he was heavily considered as moderate and Anglophile which did not suit the party ideology of creating Islamic State in Malaya.¹³ Therefore, the main focus of *Dr Abbas Elias* was to organize the structure of the party as well as abolishing the dual membership and also creating the platform for Islam to be presented by PAS. During his short stint of leadership PAS or formerly known as PMIP was registered as political party and the flag¹⁴ was introduced in order for them to be eligible to contesting the 1955 election.¹⁵

¹² *Haji Ahmad Fuad Hassan* retained his UMNO membership even though during that time he was the president of PAS. A Farish Noor, *Islam Embedded: The Historical Development of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party PAS (1951-2003) Volume I*, 1st ed. (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 2004), 61-73.

¹³ Liow, *Islamism in Contemporary Malaysia*, 27.

¹⁴ The earlier flag of PAS introduced by him was known as 'Tangan Terbuka' an open hand. Where the white hand with green background depicted the nature of PAS to open handedly accepting people to be part of the party. Unfortunately, the opposition of PAS translated the flag as the evidence that by voting PAS their hand will be chopped off (as the parody to the issue of hudud brought by PAS).

¹⁵ A Farish Noor, *Islam Embedded: The Historical Development of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party PAS (1951-2003) Volume II* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 2004). 46-54

Later, in 1956 to 1969, PAS received the most prominent leader into the rank of president, *Dr Burhanuddin Al-Helmy*, a former leftist activist of *Kesatuan Melayu Muda* (KMM) and revolutionist in nature had a significant role in put PAS forward into the political arena in Malaya.¹⁶ That is another reason why his tenure lasted 13 years. His idea is fresh, and PAS needed the revolutionist minded leader to bring PAS into the limelight of the Malaysia's political arena. The mainstream political parties try to ignore the significance of PAS especially during the second presidency of PAS, *Dr Abbas Elias* where PAS was mocked as the party that practices barbaric law (referring to *Hudud* Law).

The 4th president of PAS, *Muhammad Asri Muda* was considered by PAS members as the one who brought PAS into its downfall in the 1970s election.¹⁷ The decision to work together with UMNO and becoming the president of PAS with despotism and corruption issues are destroying PAS image as an Islamic party in general. This is particularly happening after the quite unsuccessful tenure of *Asri Muda* as the president of PAS.

The internal structure of PAS changed dramatically after the position was taken by *Ustaz Yusuf Rawa*. He was the 5th PAS president and he rise to occasion from the *Dewan Ulama* faction in PAS which later saw the internal structure of PAS change dramatically. The *Dewan Ulama* has taken a more significant role in pathing the party objective and direction from that day onwards

¹⁶ Dr Burhanuddin Al-Helmy had active in Malaya political landscape since the 1939 where he first active with KMM with his idea of creating greater Malaya-Raya which consists of Indonesia and Malaya under one leadership. Besides, he also actively participates in *Kesatuan Rakyat Indonesia Semenanjung* (KRIS) which was formed by Japanese army in gaining support from Malays to fight British colonialism in this part of the world. KRIS was short lived but the idea of creating Indonesia-Malaya unification idea, such as KMM remained in the mind and soul of Dr Burhanuddin. After the end of Japanese occupation, Dr Burhanuddin later joined *Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya* (PKMM) another radical Malay party which later he became the second president before joining PAS as its third president. Farish Noor, *Islamism in Mottled Nation*, 26-47.

¹⁷ Asri Muda was considered the president who brought PAS down in its stronghold of Kelantan in which his move to work together with UMNO in the election leads to the domino effect of how PAS lose its grips in Kelantan, especially to BERJASA, which was the splinter group of PAS. Farish Noor, *Islamism in mottled Nation*, 250-260.

until today. Most of the presidents who came after *Ustaz Yusuf Rawa* are from the *Dewan Ulama*, for instance the 6th president, *Ustaz Fadzil Noor* and *Ustaz Abdul Hadi Awang*, the 7th and current incumbent of president of PAS. The period of the rising of Ulama faction which later be known as Ulama Consultative Council (*Majlis Syura Ulama*) led to the re-aligning of de facto leadership of the party to the hands of the Ulama. The direction of the party later is under the supervision of this faction and it marks the beginning of the successful political career of the main subject of this paper, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz*. The reason *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* was chosen for this particular study is to look at the success behind his political career in establishing Kelantan as the fortified bastion of PAS politically speaking. It is his ability to steer Kelantan out of hands of the party main nemesis such as UMNO and BN. Besides, his ability to administered Kelantan to be a model Islamic state as dubbed by Malaysians in general is also interesting to be understood. In addition, the thoughts of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* in managing inter-ethnic discourse which later lead to the coalition with Democratic Action Party (DAP) and *Parti Keadilan Rakyat* (PKR) (the so-called liberal party by PAS members themselves) also fascinated majority of Malaysians and PAS members themselves. Therefore, this study seeks to understand briefly the contributions of the influential Muslim leader in Malaysian political arena.

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz: The Man Behind “Membangun Bersama Islam” (Develop with Islam) and the Emergence of Islamic State of Kelantan.

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz had his own loyal supporters and followers all across the nation. There are plenty of writings on him by Malaysian scholars, mainly to understand his socio-political thoughts that managed to put him in the world compass that later put him among the 500 most influential Muslims in the world, 2009.^{18 19} In order to understand his socio-political thought that

¹⁸ Ed Marques and Usra Ghazi, *The 500 Most Influential Muslims 2010*, *The Royal Islamic Starategic Studies Centre*, 1st ed. (The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, 2010).

bring him to the level he was, it is best to briefly analyze his upbringing from his childhood to the man he was as seen by the Malaysians before his demise.

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz: A Brief Background of His Upbringing

He is a true Kelantanese, born at *Kampung Pulau Melaka* located at *Bachok* district in 1931.²⁰ He was a royal descendant of one of the oldest royal families originated from Langkasuka, which is known as the royal family of Banjar. His father, Nik Mat Bin Raja Banjar was also known as “*tok guru*”.²¹ His father raises him with good discipline and exposes him to Islamic characters and scripture as early as four years old. The upbringing of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* confined under the strict supervision of his father especially in regards his knowledge in Islam.

During his childhood, he got his religious education from his own father and his formal education started shortly after at *Sekolah Kebangsaan Kedai Lalat*.²² However, his experience with Malaysian primary education system is temporary when he decided that the system is not suitable with his desire. Later on, he was enrolled to the *Madrasah* (also known as “*Pondok*”) owned by a prominent Islamic scholar in the Nusantara, *Tok Kenali* and also *Tok Khurasan* where he got the knowledge on Islamic scripture firsthand from

¹⁹ The book listed numbers of Muslims who are active in various fields that their contributions did bring changes to the Muslim world at large. *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* is positioned at number 42 where his contribution is focused on politics and the development of the state of Kelantan.

²⁰ Abdullah Muhammad Izdihar, “Konsep Dakwah Tuan Guru Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat Dalam Pembinaan Keislaman Rakyat Negeri Kelantan,” *Al-Idarah: Jurnal Manajemen dan Administrasi Islam* 2, no. 1 (2018): 119–136, <http://library1.nida.ac.th/termpaper6/sd/2554/19755.pdf>.

²¹ *Tok guru* is a title given to those people who are expert in religious knowledge and are having good characters. *Tok guru* also a well-respected individual in the society where his religious knowledge is higher compared to the commoners. Most of the time, the *tok guru* will live in a *madrasah* or *pondok* to teaches ancient book of Islam (*Buku Kuning*) which was taken from the previous ulama from middle east. *Ibid.*, 121

²² Mohamad Shukeri et al., “Sumbangan Tuan Guru Nik Abdul Aziz Kepada Pembangunan Pentadbiran Islam Di Negeri Kelantan: Satu Tinjauan,” *Al-Basirah* 10, no. 2 (2020): 57–76.

the famous religious scholars.²³ After graduating from the *pondok*, around his adolescent age, he was selected to join *Madrasah Ittifaqiyah* own by *Tok Guru Haji Abbas* in Terengganu. *Tok Guru Haji Abbas* is another prominent Islamic scholar during that period of time, and he was educated in India infamous *Darul Ulum* in Deoband.²⁴ The institution is the place where number of prominent South Asia scholars graduated from it and this shows the significant of the institution in giving birth to the Islamic movements across Asia, including Malaysia. Over his journey in Deoband, he met several prominent religious scholars for instance *Maulana Husanin Ahmad Madani*, *Maulana Mahmud Hassan* and *Maulana Syeikh Ali*.²⁵ After a while in India, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* continue his study in Lahore, Pakistan and further his bachelor's degree in Arabic language in *Al-Azhar* University, Cairo Egypt. Upon finishing his bachelor's degree in the university, he continued to pursue his study in the same university but in different field, which is on Islamic Law (*Shariah* Law).

During his long journey of seeking for knowledge, he was exposed to the rise of political Islam in India, Pakistan, and Egypt. He saw the rise of prominent political Islamist movements leaders such as *Syed Abul Ala' Mawdudi* in India, *Sayyid Qutb* and *Hassan Al-Banna* in Egypt.²⁶ In addition, the current situation of Egypt which was in the process of modernization championed by *Anwar Saddat* fascinated him. His political perspective was said to be influenced by these scholars contributing to his approaches in politics significantly different from other PAS leaderships. His soft and pragmatic approaches managed to win the heart of

²³ *Kitab Kuning* is the book used by those who learn Islam from prominent scholars in Islam where the same kitab is used in other part of the world. Mahyudin Ritonga, "The Existence of Yellow Books (*Kitab Kuning*) as the Sources of Islamic Studies at Islamic Boarding Schools Within the Industrial Revolution Dialectics." *SSRN Electronic Journal*, no. July (2021)", 1-4; A Farish Noor, "The Passing of Nik Aziz Nik Mat: Legacy of PAS' Spiritual Leader, *RSIS Commentary* 031, no. 031 (2015): 1-2.

²⁴ It was established on 31 May 1866 and it embrace *Hanafi Mazhab* school of jurisprudence with an emphasis on the teaching of Islamic Sciences.

²⁵ These ulama were the experts in religious knowledge for instance tafsir Quran, Hadith and Fiqh.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Malaysians, Muslims and Non-Muslims which shows a significant support towards PAS after they form a grand coalition of opposition in 2008.

Upon finishing his 12 years of study overseas, he went back to Kelantan in 1962 and got married at the age of 31. He serves as teacher at *Sekolah Menengah Agama Tarbiyah Mardiah* (*Tarbiyah Mardiah* Religious Secondary School) located in *Panchor* and later he moved to *Sekolah Agama Darul Anwar*²⁷ and a short stint at *Maahad Muhammadi*, Kota Bharu.²⁸ *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* in his early days felt that he would become a teacher until the end of his life. His passion towards teaching and *Dakwah* makes him believes that, only becoming a teacher could bring satisfaction to him specially to perform *Dakwah*. His character impressed others, during his teaching period as well as during his involvement in politics. He was respected by friends and foe, even non-Muslims really respected him. A Democratic Action Party's *Liew Chin Tong* stated that *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* is a really respected individual and the way he entertained him during his visit to Kelantan shows the character of a true leader.²⁹ His diversified educational backgrounds influence his worldview and his character which is really significant to strive in Malaysian multi-racial political landscape.

The Character of a Leader

First and foremost, the beginning of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* political career started in the 1967. He was chosen by the then president of PAS, *Muhammad Asri Muda* to contest at *Kelantan Hilir* (now *Pengkalan Chepa*) parliament by-election due to the death of its incumbent, *Ahmad Abdullah*. Since then, he managed to retain the seat especially after the coalition of PAS and BN and at the end of the tenure of *Asri Muda* presidency, he lost the *Pengkalan Chepa*

²⁷ *Sekolah Agama Darul Anwar* is a school established by *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz's* father, *TG Nik Mat Bin Raja Banjar* and it was located at *Pulau Melaka* just beside *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* family home.

²⁸ *Shukeri et al.*, "Sumbangan *Tuan Guru Nik Abdul Aziz* Kepada Pembangunan Pentadbiran Islam Di Negeri Kelantan: Satu Tinjauan."

²⁹ *Aliran Media*, "Tok *Guru Nik Aziz* – Pembimbing Generasi Progresif," *Aliran.Com*, April 29, 2017.

seat to BN but managed to retain his *Semut Api* state assembly seat in 1990.³⁰ By winning the state assembly seat, he was appointed to lead the state of Kelantan, and it is the beginning of his 15 years tenure as chief minister of Kelantan. He uses the 15 years to reform Kelantan to follow the mold of Islamic administration. Kelantan is known as '*Serambi Mekah*' or the Verandah of Mecca.³¹

During these 15 years he shows the real meaning of a leader. He managed to establish a leadership style which follows the guideline of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. The idea of '*Pimpinan Melalui Teladan*' or leadership through example is taken directly from the history of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W which known as "*Qudwah Al-Hasanah*".³² For *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz*, the best example of leader is Prophet Muhammad S.A.W and an effective leadership started within oneself. He believes that the success of Islamic administration or state started from the individual. Among The practices of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* during his tenure as Chief Minister (CM) of Kelantan that should be followed by others are he continues to live in his old humble house located at *Pulau Melaka* nearby his father *Sekolah Agama Darul Anwar*. The official CM residence at Jalan JKR 10 was left vacant and only used for the official purposes such as the residence for the state government guests. Besides, he also calls for the reduction of state government officials' wages to at least 40% where the money will be used for the development of state infrastructures and what not. In addition, in order for him to curb the practice of corruption, which is common among civil servants in Malaysia, he abolished the prize-giving ceremony/ custom. To conclude, the aforementioned stories are the example of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* humbleness or in Islamic term; *Tawaduk* possess by *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* in showing the best example to the people of Kelantan. His character reflects his political worldview which will be discussed accordingly.

³⁰ Shukeri et al. "Sumbangan Tuan Guru Nik Aziz", 59-60.

³¹ *Serambi Mekah* or the porch of Mecca shows the characteristics of Kelantan where Islamic values are flourishing within the administration and the society.

³² Nurhafilah Musa, Asmak Husin, and Nurul Akma Sheikh Muhd Amin, "Semakan Dasar Wanita Kelantan: Penambahbaikan Pelaksanaan Ke Arah Mencapai Matlamat Pembangunan Mampan," *Akademika* 88, no. 3 (2018): 137-150.

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz views on Politics and Islam.

As discussed before, his education journey throughout his youth in India and Egypt plays a crucial role in his perception on Islam and Politics. He interprets Islam as *Ad-Din* (the religion) which gives a specific meaning of “the way of life”. In other word, Islam as *Ad-Din* is understood as the teaching of Islam in *Al-Quran* and the *As-Sunnah* of Prophet *Muhammad S.AW* is a set of comprehensive guidelines on how Muslims should practice their everyday activities, such as in politicking, business, and family interactions, just to name a few.³³ Thus, he believes that the secular politics brought by the west is not suitable to be implemented in Muslim majority country mainly because the principles of the system is totally different from the system propagated by Islam.³⁴ He suggested that the secular system which totally separate religion and politics is distorted. To quote his words:

“By accepting Islam through its specific focus on the worshipping aspects only (five times prayers, fasting in the month of Ramadhan, giving alms and perform Hajj in Mecca) while the day-to-day transaction (muamalat) still under the influence of un-Islamic practices such as accepting interest (riba’) is not the way to practice the real Islam”.³⁵

This view is particularly similar to the aforementioned scholars from the Middle East the like of *Sayyid Qutb*, *Hassan Al-Banna* and *Hassan Turabi*. In addition, the scholars in Nusantara specifically Indonesia that establishing Islamic movements for instance, *Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdatul Ulama* are all believe that Islam and Politics is inseparable. Islam is the state, and the state is not independent from Islam. Therefore, it is easy to understand how he got the idea of Islam and politics is inseparable. His journey to India and Egypt opens up his horizon on the belief system that shared the worldview with the prominent scholars of modernist movements.

However, his views on ideal political system had a stark difference with some Middle East modernist movement scholars. For instance, he differed with *Sayyid Qutb* in the issue of accepting

³³ Liow, *Islamism in Contemporary Malaysia*, 84.

³⁴ Ismail Yusoff, *Tuan Guru Nik Abdul Aziz: Pemikiran Islam Dan Politik*, 1st ed. (Sintok: UUM Press, 2015).

³⁵ Ibid.

democracy as the system practices by a government. *Sayyid Qutb* in his life is against the idea of democracy. For *Qutb*, system practices by the Egyptian government are *Jahillyah* introduced system which was brought by the west to replace the ideal system of Islam which according to him the best system is caliphate system.³⁶ The total rejection of western political system was deeply rooted in the struggle of the first generation of modernist scholars such as *Jamaluddin Al-Afghani*.³⁷

In contrast to the total rejection of democracy, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* believes that the idea of democracy did bring advantages to Islam itself.³⁸ The principles of democracy that granted the citizens to involve in politics, complete freedom of speech, active participation in decision making through representation and political equality have its similarity to the system practices by Prophet *Muhammad S.A.W.* For *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz*, the freedom of speech granted by democracy is the sign of a healthy politics which according to him can be properly utilized by Islamic movements. Movements are allowed to express their thought and views if the government upholds the principle of democracy which is not happening in the country that practices absolute monarchy or even dictatorial system. Thus, the stance taken by *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* shows his moderate views that might be beneficial to the struggle and cause of Islam which is new in the world of modern politics.

The Philosophy Behind “Membangun Bersama Islam”: Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Style of Administration and Leadership.

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz has its own style of leadership in politics. He approaches politics the same way he approaches his students during his teaching time in schools. To him, politics and teaching is the same and he inculcate the concept of *Dakwah* to attract people to Islam through politics. His worldview one politics is influenced by the betterment of an individual which later creating

³⁶ Mark A. Menaldo, “Sayyid Qutb’s Political and Religious Thought: The Transformation of Jahiliyyah and the Implications for Egyptian Democracy,” *Leadership and the Humanities* 2, no. 1 (2014): 64–80.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Yusoff, *Tuan Guru Nik Abdul Aziz*.

a better society who understand his/ her responsibility to the state. The principle of creating Islamic State started with the purification of an individual by integrating the correct practices and interpretation of Islamic teaching and the ultimate objective of Islam, followed by family, the community and finally, the institution of state. This worldview on Islamic state is actually being advocated first by the leader of *Ikhwanul Muslimin*, *Imam Hassan Al-Banna*.³⁹ *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz*'s exposure to the movement during his studies in Egypt had influenced him in perceiving how an Islamic state should be formed. By following this method/principle of Islamic State, the bottom-up Islamic State could be built where the people understand the objectives and directions of the administration. It is in n contrast with the concept of Islamic State where most of the radical groups like *Taliban* and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) proposed, a top-down Islamic state imposed to the people by force.

The philosophy of "*Membangun Bersama Islam*" (Develop with Islam) shows the agenda set by *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* in preparing the people of Kelantan to understand Islam as the guiding principle of the administration. According to *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz*, an ideal Islamic state is the state where the administration focuses on the upholding of Islamic principles originated from *Al-Quran*, *As Sunnah*, *Al-Ijmak* and *Qiyas*.⁴⁰ The constitution of an Islamic state must be derived from *Al-Quran* and *As-Sunnah* in accordance with the model of constitution developed by Prophet *Muhammad S.A.W* himself. The Charter of Madinah (*Piagam Madinah*) by the Prophet *Muhammad S.A.W* was developed to cater the rights and responsibilities of the citizen of Madinah which comprises of Muslims, Christians and Jews. With it, the process of administration of the newly founded state is running smoothly. Therefore, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* believes that in order for a state to be considered a functioning and successful Islamic state, the constitution must be based on *Al-Quran* and *As-Sunnah*.

³⁹ Ahmad Izahan Ibrahim and Engku Ahmad Zaki Engku Alwi, "Pemikiran Politik Hassan Al-Banna, Syed Qutb Dan Tuan Guru Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat : Satu Analisis," *Asian People Journal (APJ)* 1, no. 1 (2018): 214–223, www.uniszajournals.com/apj.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

In addition, to ensure the administration of an Islamic state to be based on the principles stated by the revelations, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* proposes an administration leads by *Ulama'*. His motto during his first stint of CM in Kelantan was “*Kepimpinan Ulama'*” (*Ulama Leadership*).⁴¹ *Ulama* leadership is needed to make sure the process of governing the state is not deviated from the true meaning of *Shariah*. Before he even came out with the *ulama* leadership, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* and PAS had already preparing the society to embrace the idea by creating the philosophy of developing with Islam. With the society is increasingly believes in *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* ability to govern, his beautiful character that awe his friends and foes, thus, the process to Islamize the state of Kelantan is halfway done until the *Ulama'* leadership is introduced. With the introduction of *Ulama'* leadership, the state of Kelantan is in progress to be developed as an the one and only Islamic-based-administration existed in Malaysia, even until today.

The society has already understood the concept of state brought by *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz*. To ensure the government servants understand the principles of his ideal state, he introduced the concept of *Ubudiyyah*, *Mas'uliyah* and *Itqan*. In brief *Ubudiyyah* means the devotion to the one and only god; Allah SWT.⁴² The civil servants must perceive their job as *Ibadah* to Allah SWT. Everything they do is considered as *Ibadah*, they will be granted with rewards from Allah SWT and only that reward is actually matters. Meanwhile, *Mas'uliyah* refers to the belief that becoming a civil servant or even chief minister is a responsibility that cannot be misused for his/ her own interest. This concept prevents the civil servants of the state of Kelantan from involving in any act of corruption or misused of power. Lastly, *Itqan* defined as seriousness in carrying out duty which the civil servants must be serious in doing their job to fulfill the needs of the people, not their own interests. The three principles of Islamic administration introduced by *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* shows his efforts to counter the

⁴¹ Noor, *The Malaysian Islamic Party*; Yusoff, *Tuan Guru Nik Abdul Aziz*.

⁴² Shukeri et al., “Sumbangan Tuan Guru Nik Abdul Aziz Kepada Pembangunan Pentadbiran Islam Di Negeri Kelantan: Satu Tinjauan.”

negative images of those who working with the government either at state or federal level. Incompetence, untrustworthy, and breach of trust just to name a few are among the perception of civil servants and *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* and PAS are earnestly trying to wipe out this notion especially in his Islamic administration in Kelantan.

Both section of his subjects was addressed by his style of leadership which later shown by success of PAS to retains Kelantan since 1990s to present day. The people of Kelantan believe that the style and principle of administration brought by his leadership and his successor is the most suitable with the people of Kelantan. Besides that, there are several contributions by his administration that managed to woo the supports of Kelantanese from choosing other parties to lead the state. Even though Kelantan is considered poor compared to other states in the Peninsula of Malaysia, the Kelantanese is still reluctant to choose other parties to be the state government. The next section will be on the contributions of PAS and *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* specifically in addressing the socio-economic issue and women discourse in Kelantan that managed to satisfy the needs of the Kelantanese.

The Contributions of Tuan Guru Nik Aziz in Developing the State of Kelantan

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz with his Islamic thought did bring number of changes to socio-economic sectors of the state especially after the state was under BN government for a short period of time. For instance, his reorientation of primary sector of the state to agriculture is one of the most important contributions of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* while leading the government. Besides, his contribution to elevate Islamic teachings in the daily life of his subjects also needed to be taken into considerations. In addition, his openness to deals with demands of United Nations on women roles in the government through Sustainable Development Goals also was taken seriously by his government in Kelantan. Another contribution he brought to the state of Kelantan is the contagious issue of Hudud Law. *Hudud* law has been the issue focused by PAS whether at the national level or the state level. The

overemphasis of the implementation of Hudud law by PAS leaderships have stigmatized PAS as the party that only think about chopping people hands.⁴³ However, the effort made by *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* to uphold the *Shariah* Law to be specific on *Hudud* law during his tenure as a chief minister in Kelantan should be applauded by Malaysians.

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Contribution in Upholding Islamic Law

In 1993, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* through his power as the chief minister of Kelantan has approved the *Enakmen Kanun Jenayah Shariah II* (Shariah Criminal Code Enactment II) which is the first step from PAS government to uphold *Hudud* law in the state of Kelantan. Even though the law was passed at the state level, it fails to gain enough support at federal level. The issue of amendment of shariah law which is falls under the jurisdiction of the state government, but it needs to be passed by the federal government in order for the law to be effective. As a result, the amendment of shariah law in Kelantan did not go through but the spirit of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* to uphold the *hudud* law should be respected because he was brave enough to go against the tide to advocate his belief for the betterment of Islam.

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Contribution in Socio-Economic Scope of Kelantanese

Socially, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* has inculcated the spirit of Islam throughout the daily activities of the Kelantanese. He believes that the government has a very important role in shaping the daily activities of the people whether to be Islamic or full of hedonistic nature. As mentioned before, the Islamic administration of Kelantan is bottom-up in nature where the people are aware of the changes brought by the new leadership. Through this method, the people are readier to accept the changes which according to them are beneficial to them in this life and afterlife. In contrast to the top-down type of governance where the people are reluctant to change if suddenly the government implement new laws and regulations that affect their daily life. The change brought by *Tuan*

⁴³ Noor, *Islam Embedded*, vol. 2.

Guru Nik Aziz is by creating an Islamic atmosphere throughout the state, for instance the introduction of *Jawi* as one of the formal writings used by the state government.⁴⁴ In addition, he also introduced a communal recitation of *Quran (Tadarus)* in the month of *Ramadhan* throughout the entire state, this ceremony later followed by number of other states in Malaysia especially its neighbor, *Terengganu*.⁴⁵ Furthermore, he also obliged every civil servants of the state government to perform *ceramah* (sermon) every Friday at every departments of the state government offices. Besides, he also urges at every department of the state government to perform *Zohor* prayer in *Jamaah* (congregational prayer) to ensure the unity among the coworkers and what not. These changes he brought to the state are widely acceptable by the Kelantanese without any feeling of forced by the law or what not. This social reformation is needed to ensure his ideal state of Islamic administration achieved and at the same time help the people to be rewarded by *Allah SWT*.

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz has a very optimistic view on economy which is different from other leaders. Generally, western views on economic are dominated by the two most influential theories which are Capitalism and Socialism. In short, capitalism also known as 'market economy' in which the allocation of resources is decided by the producers and consumers.⁴⁶ Whilst, the Socialism advocates for the rejection of market regulated economy and excessive ownership of wealth.⁴⁷ The market economy put the power of managing scarce resources at the hand of the producers and consumers (companies and customers) thus it might not capture the real essence of economy prosperity for each and every section of the society. Meanwhile, the latter believes that the regulation of economy should be vested on the government and

⁴⁴ Norfadzilah Ahmad and Surthman Kastin Hasan, "Pemikiran Tuan Guru Dato' Hj Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat Dalam Ekonomi," *Pemikiran Tuan Guru Dato' Hj Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat Dalam Ekonomi* 20 (2004): 69–88.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Nicolò Bellanca, "Capitalism," *Handbook on the Economics of Reciprocity and Social Enterprise*, no. May (2013): 59.

⁴⁷ Richard Westra, "Marxian Economic Theory and an Ontology of Socialism: A Japanese Intervention," *Capital & Class* 26, no. 3 (2002): 61–85.

rejecting the market regulated by producers and consumers. Socialism argues that the over-reliance on the market to regulate the economy could cause market manipulation by either the producers or consumers. Therefore, from the two most influential theory on economy, it can be concluded that western economists define economy as the management of scarce resources and who are responsible in managing it and who gets what and how. *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* takes a different stance on economy which he defines it as the resources available in this world are provided by *Allah SWT* and it is adequate for each and everyone in the society.⁴⁸ The function of human being as vicegerent is to properly manage the resources to ensure everyone is getting based on his or her needs. The problem with current situation is there are groups of people who are selfish that mismanaged the resources. Therefore, everybody is entitled to have their own wealth and own it accordingly and it is achievable if the management is *Amanah* in managing the resources.

In addition, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz's* contribution also looks into the concept of poverty. He explained it tentatively to ensure his subjects understand his views on it. For him, poverty is a disease affected human being where *Allah SWT* has already granted resources to everyone, but the problem is maybe originated within oneself, especially if the authority has given the work opportunity for the people, he believes that with the opportunity is lay upon an individual and he/she did not use it accordingly, then this is the reason of poverty.⁴⁹ Poverty is divided into two categories, wealth poverty which is inadequate possession of wealth. Another one is spiritual poverty which *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* suggested it covers those who did not perform his/her ibadah properly. The latter will give a bigger impact to the society compared to the first according to *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz*.

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz through his management at the state of Kelantan suggests few steps to eradicate the state of poverty in the society. First and foremost, he emphasizes on the acquiring the

⁴⁸ Ahmad and Hasan, "Pemikir. Tuan Guru Dato' Hj Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat Dalam Ekon."

⁴⁹ Ibid.

knowledge. *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* believes that, with knowledge someone can lift his/her family out from the state of poverty. In addition, he encourages his subjects to find a job and he is totally against the practice of giving subsidies or money one off which according to him is not totally helping those in need. Besides that, he also strives for an institution of *zakat* to ensure the state can manage the finance of the society in general. The institution of *zakat* is important in Islamic finance to ensure the money is flowing to those in need. Lastly, his view on agricultural industry is important to be discussed. *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* believes that only by agricultural industry a society can be independent from any foreign influences. Be independent in providing foods for the households or for our own country ensure the food security is at the optimum level. With the current situation of COVID-19 and what not, the theory of food security emerges which saw those countries who rely heavily on food imports are really affected with the lockdown imposed by the governments around the world. So, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* views that emphasis on the food security has its own basis and needed to be considered by the government of Malaysia. Another one major contribution of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* in Kelantan administration is his rejection of any financial institutions that practices *Riba'*. He transfers all the state money into an Islamic banking institution to prevent from agreeing with the concept of *Riba'*. Furthermore, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* also introduced the alternative to conventional mortgage which known as *Al-Rahnu*, it is far better and not oppressing those who in need for money.

These are among the contributions of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* in the field of economy especially in materializing his style of leadership in the state of Kelantan.

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz's contribution on women roles in public sphere

The discourse of women roles in public sphere and politics is a western concept in nature but *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* and his state administration take it into full consideration to ensure the government of Kelantan is not criticized by the liberals on the issue of women rights. Kelantan and Sustainable Development Goals: Women Empowerment was introduced by the state

administration on the year 2000.⁵⁰ The plan is the answer to the United Nations (UN) worldwide Sustainable Development Goals on the issue of women empowerment. *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* Through his administration established a Kelantan Woman's Policy Steering Committee in 2000 to ensure the issues on women can be addressed properly by state. A women development unit also being established under the office of the Chief Minister of the state to formulate the policies pertaining women rights.

Among the issues that were answered by the state administration, for instance, the extension of maternity leaves from 42 days to 60 days. The issue of maternity leave is a contagious because improper address to this problem might cause a backlash in the society. In addition, hotel industry which is well known for the un-Islamic dress code such as the prohibition of wearing *hijabs* or *tudung* is addressed in the state of Kelantan. The government enforced the hotel owners to allow their women employees to wear *hijab* which is the opposite of what being practices elsewhere. Furthermore, the introduction of Woman Village Chief is also one of the issues addressed by *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* administration. One interesting fact when you visit Kelantan, at every advertisement board in the state which involve women will appear them with *hijab* and their *aurah* is properly covered. This is another example of how *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* imposed the development of Islamic policy in his administration in the state of Kelantan.⁵¹

Roles on racial integration: An opinion

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz is a respected leader of Islamic party in Malaysia and beloved by his followers and praised by his foe. This subsection is an opinion on *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* role in racial integration. It is based on the authors' personal observation throughout the period of 2010-2013 which the period where author is observing the rise of opposition grand coalition of *Pakatan Rakyat*. According to *Ahmad Farish Noor*⁵², the Ulama faction is the

⁵⁰ Musa, Husin, and Amin, "Semakan Dasar Wanita,"

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Farish Noor, *Islamism in Mottled Nation*, 118.

beginning of the progressive modernist reformist movement in PAS which also the starting of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* role in reforming the party. Throughout the history of PAS, the party has a very consistent view on the issue of Malay and Islam. In certain period, they refuse to accept the existence of another ethnicities in Malaysia especially in the early days of the party.

According to *Ahmad Farish Noor*⁵³, the period of 2000-2013 was the era of PAS experimenting with democracy. It means that the party are accepting the democratic values such as rule of law, good governance, freedom of speech and what not. This was the moment where PAS under the leadership of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* as its *Mursyidul Am*, experimenting its suitability with democracy and its values. The racial integration during this period is very substantial to PAS because to challenge the domination of BN at the federal level, they need a strong multiracial support, especially from Chinese and Indian voters. In addition, there is also an urge to dethrone the current PM of Malaysia due to plenty issues of mismanagement of public funds and scandals.

Therefore, for PAS to remain relevant and create disruptive force, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* allowed it to form a grand coalition with other liberal-democratic and non-Muslims majority political parties like *Parti Keadilan Rakyat* (PKR) and *Democratic Action Party* (DAP). Whilst, in the civic movement to demands free and fair election, PAS joined the *BERSIH* movement which was started by a group of people consists of professionals, lawyers and what not from a multiracial background. This reformation inside the party also fueled by the efforts made by the modernist-reformist faction in PAS which known as *Erdogan Faction* who are from professional background such as university students, medical doctor, practicing lawyers and many more. It should be noted also that, during *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* leadership, the party is more welcoming to different people from different backgrounds either ethnicity or socially. The establishment of *Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS* (DHPP) or PAS supporter wing is another effort made by him to make PAS more appealing to others except Muslims. His softness and willingness to open PAS to another

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 200-201.

ethnicities should be praised as it shows the pragmatism of his political thought in pathing the direction of the party. During this period also, the DAP leaderships such as its secretary general, *Lim Guan Eng* is showing his interest in Islam by stating he try to emulate an infamous Muslim caliph from *Umayyad* dynasty: *Umar Ibn Aziz*. These are among the example how *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* transforming PAS into a more lenient political party compared to his predecessors. The pragmatism of his political thought as well as inclusive religious views did give many advantages to the party and Islam specially.

In relation to inter-religious relationship in Kelantan, The demographic of Kelantan is not too diversified. Majority of the population in Kelantan is Malay-Muslims and this signifies the acceptance of the population in *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz's* Islamization efforts. Nevertheless, there are some minority non-Muslims population which consists of Chinese, Indian and Siamese. The interesting fact of Kelantan is it is the home to at least twenty of Buddhist temples and some statues include the infamous reclining statue of *Buddha*.⁵⁴ The effort of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* in Islamizing the state did not affect the Buddhist in Kelantan as it can be seen by his approaches in introducing Islam to the society as mentioned through his "*Membangun Dengan Islam*" philosophy. He imposed his Islamic vision of the state of Kelantan without ever touching the sensitive issue of other religions in the state. As it shows that Islam and other religions such as Buddhism can coexist peacefully. His occasionally visits to Buddhist temple shows his tolerance towards other religions which as the highest authority in the state of Kelantan, he needs to be available to each religion under his authority. His approaches do bring harmony than harm, in contrast with the alternative assumption to the notion of Islam as terrorist and cannot tolerate other religions. As a leader of Kelantan, he manages to show the true essence of a leader that shows no discrimination on minority's faith as in Islam "there is no compulsion in religion". These are some examples of his

⁵⁴ Mohamed Yusoff Ismail, "Buddhism in a Muslim State: Theravada Practices and Religious Life in Kelantan," *Muslim World* 100, no. 2-3 (2010): 321-336.

softness and fondness to the inter-racial relationship that manage to put him into a position which are favorable to the Muslims and non-Muslims under his administration in Kelantan and at national level.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* plays important roles in establishing an ideal Islamic model state in Kelantan. The process to transform Kelantan into a model of an Islamic state started way before *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* fill in the seat of the Chief Minister. The emergence of religious institutions either conservative or modernist in nature had started earlier. However, it is through the wisdom of *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* to involve in politics help him to realize the establishment of an Islamic state. If the conservative *ulama'* did not involve in politics due to the nature of it (synonymous with corruption, mismanagement and secular), *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* sees politics as the platform for him to make enormous changes to the society. Without the political power to impose rules and regulations so that the society will abide it, it is impossible to create a state desirable by oneself.

The idea of Islamic state remains rhetorical if there is no effort in realizing it via involvement in politics. *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* managed it accordingly and successfully formed not a rhetorical but a functioning Islamic state which until today, his legacy remains, and people of Kelantan will always remember him as the reformist who reform the Kelantanese. At the national level, his efforts in creating a new discourse of moderate Islam manage to attract people to Islam. PAS manages to educate the masses on the real essence of Islam during his tenure as its *Mursyidul AM*. The rigid views on the implementation of *Shariah Law* especially *Hudud* was put on hold by *Tuan Guru Nik Aziz* because he knows what is more important to be put into the limelight. To ensure there is no misunderstanding of Islam, he puts aside the rhetorical aspect of Islamic state and does what is possible to be done first, *Membangun Bersama Islam* (Develop with Islam) a bottom-up approach of introducing Islam to the masses. He will always be remembered as a scholar as well as a pragmatic leader of Muslims in Malaysia.

May Allah bless his soul and put him with the righteous people in the *Jannah*.

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