Existence and Dynamics of The Islamic-Malay Sultanate Across The Malacca Strait: A Multifaceted Exploration Of Non-Western Ir Theories

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ABSTRAK

Interaksi historis antara kerajaan-kerajaan Melayu di Selat Malaka menawarkan gambaran menarik mengenai dunia hubungan internasional di luar kacamata Barat. Dengan berpijak pada keinginan untuk membangun teori HI non-Barat, penelitian ini menyoroti kekayaan keragaman budaya, perjuangan pascakolonial, agensi lokal, ide-ide alternatif, dan hibriditas yang menjadi ciri lanskap diplomatik kerajaan-kerajaan tersebut. Perebutan kekuasaan, kerja sama strategis, dan regionalisme di antara kerajaan-kerajaan Melayu berakar kuat pada warisan budaya mereka, menantang narasi konvensional, dan menunjukkan ketahanan dan kemampuan beradaptasi masyarakat non-Barat dalam membentuk interaksi lintas-batasnya. Ketika kita merenungkan dinamika sejarah ini, menjadi jelas bahwa pembelajaran dari masa lalu terus bergema dalam lanskap global kontemporer, menekankan pentingnya merangkul beragam perspektif dan mengakui peran semua negara dalam membentuk arah hubungan internasional. Kajian ini menggali interaksi sejarah yang cukup kompleks antara kerajaan-kerajaan Islam-Melayu di kawasan Selat Malaka. Tulisan ini menyoroti beragam dimensi lanskap diplomatik di Asia Tenggara pra-modern. Melalui pendekatan penelitian kepustakaan, yang melibatkan analisis naskah-naskah klasik dan teks-teks yang relevan dengan topik tersebut, penelitian ini mengungkap nuansa perebutan kekuasaan, aliansi strategis, dan mekanisme kerja sama regional yang membentuk hubungan internasional kerajaan-kerajaan Melayu. Dengan menggali catatan-catatan sejarah ini, tulisan ini memberikan pemahaman komprehensif tentang bagaimana konteks budaya, perspektif pascakolonial, agensi lokal, ide-ide alternatif, dan hibriditas mempengaruhi manuver diplomatik kerajaan-kerajaan Melayu, menantang narasi-narasi konvensional yang berpusat pada Barat dan menampilkan kekayaan negara-negara non-Barat -Teori IR Barat.

***Kata kunci**: Kerajaan-kerajaan Melayu; Selat Malaka; Teori HI Non-Barat; Hubungan Diplomatik.*

ABSTRACT

The historical interactions among the Malay sultanates/kingdoms across the Malacca Strait offer a fascinating glimpse into the world of international relations beyond the Western lens. Based on the desire to build a non-Western IR theory, this study has highlighted the rich tapestry of cultural diversity, postcolonial struggles, local agency, alternative ideas, and hybridity that characterized the diplomatic landscape of these kingdoms. The struggle for power, strategic cooperation, and regionalism among the Malay kingdoms were deeply rooted in their cultural heritage, challenging the conventional narratives, and showcasing the resilience and adaptability of non-Western societies in shaping their international relations. As we reflect on these historical dynamics, it becomes evident that the lessons from the past continue to resonate in the contemporary global landscape, emphasizing the importance of embracing diverse perspectives and recognizing the agency of all nations in shaping the course of international relations. This study delves into the intricate historical interactions among the Islamic-Malay kingdoms in the Malacca Strait region. Employing a diverse array of non-Western International Relations (IR) theories, the research sheds light on the multifaceted dimensions of the diplomatic landscape in pre-modern Southeast Asia. Through an extensive library research approach, which involved the analysis of classic manuscripts and texts relevant to the topic, this study unveils the nuanced power struggles, strategic alliances, and regional cooperation mechanisms that shaped the Malay kingdoms' international relations. By delving into these historical records, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of how cultural context, postcolonial perspectives, local agency, alternative ideas, and hybridity influenced the diplomatic maneuvers of the Malay kingdoms, challenging conventional Western-centric narratives and showcasing the richness of non-Western IR theories.

***Keywords**: Malay Kingdoms; Malacca Strait; Non-Western IR Theories; Diplomatic Relations*

INTRODUCTION

Why is there no non-Western International Relations theory? Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan's book (2009), titled "Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and Beyond Asia," provides a comprehensive exploration of non-Western perspectives in international relations. In this book, the authors examine diverse viewpoints from regions such as Asia and beyond, challenging the Western-centric nature of traditional international relations theories. They emphasize the importance of understanding global politics through the lens of multiple cultural and historical contexts. The book critiques the dominance of Western theories, advocating for a more inclusive approach that incorporates insights from non-Western traditions. It explores themes such as postcolonialism, global south solidarity, and the active agency of non-Western states and actors in shaping international affairs. Acharya and Buzan's work contribute significantly to the evolving discourse of non-Western international relations theory by providing a balanced and insightful analysis of the subject.

Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan along with group of notable authors tried to inquire, deconstruct, and construct the framework and perspectives of non-Western IR theories in terms of Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Indonesian, Southeast Asians, Islamic – Muslim Worlds' point of view and stance on international relations using historical investigations and contemporary analysis.

Non-Western International Relations (IR) theory is a growing field of study that challenges the dominance of Western perspectives in the analysis of global politics. It seeks to incorporate diverse cultural, historical, and philosophical viewpoints from non-Western societies into the study of international relations. Here are some keypoints related to the non-Western IR theories:

1. Diverse Perspectives. Non-Western IR theory encompasses a wide array of perspectives from different regions and cultures, including Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Each region has its unique historical and cultural contexts, leading to varied approaches in understanding international relations.
2. Critique of Western Centrism. Non-Western IR scholars critique the Western-centric nature of traditional IR theories, arguing that these theories often do not adequately address the experiences and perspectives of non-Western societies. They challenge the assumption that Western theories are universally applicable.

3. Cultural and Historical Context. Non-Western IR theory emphasizes the importance of cultural and historical contexts in shaping international relations. It explores how cultural norms, traditions, and historical events influence the behavior of states and non-state actors on the global stage.
4. Postcolonial Perspectives. Many non-Western scholars draw on postcolonial theory to analyze the impact of colonialism and imperialism on international relations. They examine how colonial histories continue to shape global power structures, economic inequalities, and political dynamics.
5. Global South Solidarity. Non-Western IR theorists often advocate for solidarity among Global South countries. They emphasize the importance of cooperation and collaboration among non-Western nations to counterbalance the influence of Western powers in international affairs.
6. Local Agency. Non-Western IR scholars highlight the agency of non-Western states and actors in shaping global events. They challenge the portrayal of non-Western societies as passive recipients of Western influence and emphasize the active role these societies play in international relations.
7. Alternative Concepts and Ideas. Non-Western IR theory introduces alternative concepts and ideas that are rooted in indigenous knowledge systems. These concepts challenge traditional Western notions of sovereignty, democracy, and development, offering diverse perspectives on these topics.
8. Hybridity and Synthesis. Some scholars in this field explore the possibility of synthesizing Western and non-Western ideas to create a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of international relations. They argue for a pluralistic approach that incorporates insights from multiple cultural traditions.

The historical interactions among the Malay kingdoms across the Malacca Strait unveil a captivating saga of international relations that transcends the Western-centric narrative. This study embarks on a profound exploration, delving into the intricate dynamics of these kingdoms through the lens of various non-Western International Relations (IR) theories. As we peel back the layers of time, we find ourselves immersed in a vibrant tapestry woven with threads of cultural diversity, postcolonial resilience, local agency, alternative ideologies, and the adaptive spirit of hybridity. The Malay kingdoms, situated at the

crossroads of Southeast Asia, were not passive spectators in the theatre of global politics but active participants, shaping their diplomatic landscape with ingenuity and tenacity.

Employing an array of non-Western IR theories, this research unearths the depth of the Malay kingdoms' historical interactions. By meticulously delving into classic manuscripts and relevant texts, this study employs a rigorous library research approach. Through this meticulous analysis, the study uncovers the subtle power struggles, strategic alliances, and regional cooperation mechanisms that intricately defined the Malay kingdoms' international relations. The diplomatic stage upon which these kingdoms played was heavily influenced by their rich cultural heritage. Cultural diversity was not a mere backdrop but a driving force shaping their strategies and decisions. Postcolonial struggles, etched into the very fabric of their existence, bonded these kingdoms in solidarity against external pressures. Local agency, exemplified by indigenous concepts of governance and sovereignty, showcased the kingdoms' ability to assert their independence and navigate the complexities of the global arena.

Alternative ideas and hybridity emerged as pivotal aspects of the Malay kingdoms' diplomatic maneuvers. These societies were not confined by Western paradigms but drew from their own intellectual reservoirs, blending indigenous wisdom with external influences. This synthesis of ideas allowed the kingdoms to innovate, adapt, and thrive, challenging the dominant narratives and exemplifying the resilience of non-Western societies. As we traverse the historical terrain of the Malay kingdoms in the Malacca Strait, this study serves as a beacon illuminating the path toward a more nuanced understanding of international relations. It echoes the voices of the past, reminding us of the importance of embracing diverse perspectives and recognizing the agency of nations in shaping the course of global diplomacy. In the pages that follow, we embark on a journey through time, unraveling the complexities of the Malay kingdoms' international relations and discovering the enduring lessons that continue to resonate in the contemporary global landscape.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The analytical framework employed in this study draws on a diverse array of non-Western International Relations (IR) theories to unravel the intricacies of historical interactions among the Islamic-Malay kingdoms in the Malacca Strait region. The theoretical underpinning of this research extends beyond the conventional Western lens, seeking to

construct a non-Western IR framework that captures the unique dynamics of diplomacy in pre-modern Southeast Asia.

The study places a significant emphasis on understanding the rich tapestry of cultural diversity inherent in the Malay sultanates/kingdoms. By employing non-Western IR theories that prioritize cultural context, the research aims to dissect the impact of cultural elements on diplomatic maneuvers. Through a nuanced examination of classic manuscripts and relevant texts, the framework explores how cultural heritage influenced power dynamics, strategic alliances, and regional cooperation among the Malay kingdoms. An integral component of the analytical framework involves a focus on postcolonial perspectives and the agency of local actors within the diplomatic landscape. By adopting theories that recognize the aftermath of colonial rule, the study aims to unveil the struggles for power and the role of local agency in shaping international relations among the Malay kingdoms. This lens provides insights into how the legacies of colonialism influenced diplomatic decisions and responses.

The research delves into non-Western IR theories that accommodate alternative ideas and hybridity in diplomatic discourse. It explores instances where the Malay kingdoms engaged in innovative approaches, challenging conventional norms. The analytical framework scrutinizes how these alternative ideas and hybrid strategies contributed to the resilience and adaptability of the Malay kingdoms in the face of power struggles and regional dynamics. The core elements of power struggles, strategic alliances, and regional cooperation are examined through the lens of non-Western IR theories. The research seeks to identify patterns of power dynamics among the Malay kingdoms, uncover the motivations behind strategic alliances, and elucidate the mechanisms of regional cooperation. By doing so, the framework sheds light on the historical precedents that shaped the international relations of the Malay kingdoms.

The analytical framework extends its scope beyond historical analysis to underscore the contemporary relevance of the lessons drawn from the past. By applying non-Western IR theories, the study highlights how historical dynamics continue to resonate in the contemporary global landscape. It emphasizes the importance of diverse perspectives and recognizes the agency of all nations in shaping international relations, challenging prevailing Western-centric narratives. In employing this analytical framework, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the diplomatic landscape of the Malay kingdoms,

contributing to the ongoing discourse on non-Western IR theories and their applicability in interpreting historical international relations. Through an extensive library research approach, the research unfolds the multifaceted dimensions of the Malay kingdoms' diplomatic maneuvers, offering valuable insights into the broader evolution of international relations in Southeast Asia.

METHODS

This study employed a comprehensive research approach rooted in extensive library research. The methodological framework involved a systematic analysis of classic manuscripts and relevant texts that provided insights into the diplomatic landscape of pre-modern Southeast Asia. The selection of source materials was guided by their relevance to the study's focus on cultural diversity, postcolonial struggles, local agency, alternative ideas, and hybridity within the Malay sultanates/kingdoms. The research team meticulously examined primary documents to unveil the nuanced power struggles, strategic alliances, and regional cooperation mechanisms that shaped the international relations of the Malay kingdoms. The use of diverse non-Western International Relations (IR) theories informed the research process, facilitating a more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of diplomacy in this historical context. The methodology, centered on a thorough review of historical records, aimed to provide a comprehensive and rich account of how cultural context and non-Western perspectives influenced the diplomatic maneuvers of the Malay kingdoms, challenging prevailing Western-centric narratives.

DISCUSSION

Malay Kingdoms Across Malacca Street

The Malacca Strait is a narrow stretch of water between the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian island of Sumatra. It is a significant waterway for international shipping and trade, and historically, it has been a hub for various kingdoms and civilizations. Here is a table summarizing some of the key kingdoms and empires that were located around the Malacca Strait, along with brief details about each.

Table 1. Historical Kingdoms and Sultanates in Southeast Asia

Sultanate	Location	Period	Notable Rulers	Achievements/Notes
Srivijaya	Sumatra, Indonesia	7th - 14th century	Dapunta Hyang Sri Jayanasa	Maritime empire, influential Buddhist center.

Majapahit	Java, Indonesia	Late 13th - early 16th century	Hayam Wuruk	Largest and most powerful empire in Indonesian history.
Malacca Sultanate	Malacca, Malaysia	1400 - 1511	Parameswara	Strategic trading port, multicultural society.
Ayutthaya	Ayutthaya, Thailand	1351 - 1767	Ramathibodi I	Flourishing trade, cultural and artistic advancements.
Johor Sultanate	Johor, Malaysia	1528 - present	Sultan Iskandar	Continuation of Malacca Sultanate, modern-day Malaysia.
Aceh Sultanate	Aceh, Indonesia	1496 - 1903	Sultan Iskandar Muda	Islamic power, significant trade with Europeans.
Pattani Sultanate	Pattani, Thailand	1516 - 1902	Sultan Mansur Shah	Flourishing trade, cultural exchange with neighboring states.
Demak Sultanate	Java, Indonesia	1475 - 1554	Raden Patah	First Muslim state in Java, significant maritime power.
Banten Sultanate	Banten, Indonesia	1526 - 1813	Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa	Major trading port, cultural and religious center.
Gowa Sultanate	Sulawesi, Indonesia	1300s - 1669	Sultan Hasanuddin	Maritime power, trade with European and Asian nations.
Ternate Sultanate	Ternate, Indonesia	1257 - present	Sultan Baabullah	Spice trade hub, historical rival of Tidore Sultanate.
Tidore Sultanate	Tidore, Indonesia	1109 - 1945	Sultan Saifuddin	Spice trade center, historical rival of Ternate Sultanate.
Pattani Kingdom	Pattani, Thailand	1516 - 1785	Raja Kuning	Rich trading culture, diverse cultural influences.
Samudera Pasai	Aceh, Indonesia	1267 - 1521	Sultan Malik al-Salih	Early Islamic Sultanate, significant trade with India.
Pahang Sultanate	Pahang, Malaysia	1470 - present	Sultan Ahmad Al-Muadzam Shah	Traditional Malay Sultanate, rich cultural heritage.
Pontianak Sultanate	West Kalimantan, Indonesia	1771 - 1950	Sultan Syarif Abdul Rahman Alkadrie	Trading post, diverse cultural influences.
Lingga Sultanate	Lingga Island, Indonesia	1818 - 1911	Sultan Mahmud	Important trading center, cultural and economic hub.
Perak Sultanate	Perak, Malaysia	1528 - present	Sultan Nazrin Shah	Rich in tin resources, traditional Malay Sultanate.
Kedah Sultanate	Kedah, Malaysia	630 - present	Sultan Sallehuddin	One of the oldest Sultanates in the Malay Peninsula.,

Brunei Sultanate	Brunei, Brunei Darussalam	1368 - present	Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah	Wealthy oil-producing nation, historical maritime power.
Pattani Sultanate (Mindanao)	Mindanao, Philippines	1405 - 1465	Raja Baguinda	Early Islamic Sultanate in the Philippines.
Pereulak Sultanate	Pereulak, Aceh, Indonesia	840-1292	Sultan Alauddin Syah	Early Islamic Sultanate in Aceh region.

Source: Compiled data from historical records and academic sources

In the ancient maritime realm of Southeast Asia, the Srivijaya Empire thrived from the 7th to the 14th Century, establishing its dominance of the island of Sumatra. Renowned as a maritime powerhouse, Srivijaya orchestrated vast trade networks, connecting regions as distant as China, India, and other parts of Southeast Asia. Its strategic location within the Malacca Strait transformed it into a cultural and economic nucleus of the era. Across the Java Island, the Majapahit Empire reached its zenith in the 14th Century, reigning over territories that now encompass Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Famed for its sophisticated culture, art, and literature, the Majapahit Empire represented the epitome of Indonesian history. However, its decline in the 16th Century marked the ascendancy of regional sultanates.

Picture 1. The extent of the Sultanate in the 15th Century, during the reign of Mansur Shah. Pre-modern Southeast Asian political borders are subject to speculation

Source: Photo by Gunawan Kartapranata/CC BY-SA 4.0; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Gunkarta#/media/File:Malacca_Sultanate_en.svg

Meanwhile, the Malacca Sultanate, established on the Malay Peninsula in the 15th Century, became a pivotal trading center within the Malacca Strait. Its strategic allure captivated merchants from China, India, the Middle East, and Europe. However, in 1511, Portuguese forces captured Malacca, heralding the dawn of European colonialism in the region. In northern Sumatra, the Aceh Sultanate, a formidable Islamic state, asserted its dominance from the 16th to the 19th Century. Its potent naval fleet and control over trade routes made it a notable player in regional trade, leading to conflicts with both Portuguese and Dutch forces as it resisted European colonial expansion.

Simultaneously, the Johor Sultanate emerged as the successor to the Malacca Sultanate, carving its legacy on the southern Malay Peninsula. This period saw Johor forging strategic alliances with European powers such as the Dutch and the British, ensuring its influence persisted well into the colonial era. The influence of the Portuguese Malacca, from 1511 to 1641, cannot be overlooked. This period marked the initiation of European colonial presence in the region. Portuguese Malacca served as a critical trading post, linking Europe, Asia, and the Spice Islands, until it fell to Dutch control in 1641.

Further north, the Perlak Sultanate, existing from the 11th to the 17th Century, played a significant role in medieval Indonesian trade and politics. However, its prominence waned with the ascent of the Aceh Sultanate and the encroachment of European colonial powers. By the 17th Century, the Dutch East Indies under the Dutch East India Company (VOC) secured dominance over parts of the Indonesian archipelago, including areas surrounding the Malacca Strait. Their control over lucrative spice trade routes reshaped the political and economic landscape of the region. Finally, the British Malaya emerged in the 18th Century as the British Empire's foothold on the Malay Peninsula. Over time, the peninsula's fragmented states were unified into the Federated Malay States, culminating in the establishment of the independent Federation of Malaya in 1957. Collectively, these kingdoms and empires have woven the intricate tapestry of Southeast Asian heritage, contributing diverse cultures and histories to the region's rich legacy.

Besides conducting a diplomatic relations with other Islamic Kingdom/Caliphate outside the region of Southeast Asia - especially the middle-east, Islamic kingdoms in Nusantara and Malay peninsula were also had established diplomatic relations with the

European states such as Portuguese, Britain Kingdom, and Dutch as Gertrudes Johannes Resink wrote on his book, “Indonesia's History between the Myths: Essays in Legal History and Historical Theory” (1968). Diplomacy and interaction are interrelated in the context of permission to cross the waters of the relevant sultanate, followed by permission to trade.

Apart from that, disputes arose regarding territorial boundaries, especially when the archipelago began to be dominated by European colonial powers. G. J. Resink put forward a proof of his stance that Indonesia was not colonized for 350 years by examining legal papers and diplomatic communication mails of VOC regarding the occurrence of sovereign kingdoms and/or political entities over numbers of regions in Nusantara. This is based on the political constellation between the Kingdoms in Nusantara and European colonial in terms of ‘international civil code/law’ related to legal disputes on boundaries of territories not only that had been colonized but also those that had not been colonized (Resink, 1987). From this it can be concluded that until the 18th century, there were still many areas in the Malay Archipelago which were considered independent countries. In fact, the Dutch even asked for permission when passing through waters that were under the jurisdiction of the relevant sultanate.

The Islamic Empires were Founded Through The Process of Islamization

The establishment of Islamic kingdoms in the archipelago, especially in the Malacca Strait area, resulted from the spread of Islam from the Middle East to the archipelago. Establishing an Islamic kingdom indicates that the arrival of Islam in the archipelago is not a small matter. There is an agenda of "Islamization" *in the form of 'burden sharing*' and '*distribution of power/influences'* carried out by the Islamic Caliphate in the Middle East to the archipelago. With this, establishing an Islamic kingdom in the archipelago resulted from diplomacy carried out by the Middle East Islamic Caliphate.

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, in his book entitled *Historical Fact and Fiction,* stated that the order to spread Islam to the archipelago was a direct order from the Prophet Muhammad that the Prophet Muhammad had told people to go to preach to the archipelago (Al–Attas, 2011, pp. 2–3). Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas said, "In my estimation, the correct timeframe for the initial Islamization of Sumatra should have been between the 9th and 10th centuries or even earlier" (Al–Attas, 2011, p. xi). In "*Hikayat Raja Pasai and Sejarah Melayu—and corroborated by historian al-Mas'udi in "Muruj al-Dzahab", there are about ten thousand Quraish Arab Muslims from the descendants of the Prophet's*

companions who lived in the regions of al-Manshurah, Multan, and Mangir in northeastern India (Arif, 2012).

Picture 2. Shams Al-Din Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn Abi Thalib Al-Anshari Al-Dimashqi's Nukhbat Al-Dahr fi 'Ajaib Al-Barr wa Al-Bahr

Source: Syamsussin Arif. 2012. Islam di Nusantara: Historiografi dan Metodologi. ISLAMIA, vol. vii, no. 2; https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Syamsuddin-Arif/publication/316213331_Islam_di_Nusantara_Historiografi_dan_Metodologi/links/58f62615458515d388dbfe9e/Islam-di-Nusantara-Historiografi-dan-Metodologi.pdf.

This is in line with the record of Shaykh Shamsuddin Abu 'Abdillah Muhammad ibn Talib ad-Dimasyqi alias Shaykh ar-Rabwah in the book Nukhbat ad-Dahr fi 'Aja'ib al-Barr wa 'I-Bahr, suggesting that Islam had entered the archipelago through Champa (currently known as Cambodia and Vietnam) since the time of the caliph Uthman, around 30 Hijri (1st Century), or 651 AD (7th Century)(Al-Dimashqi in K. R. Hall, 1981, p. 63). Syed Muhammad Naquib al Attas categorized the opinion reviewed and introduced by Syamsuddin Arif as a "Revisionist View" in his writing entitled, "Islam in Nusantara: Historiography and Methodology". Al Attas's view of Islamic historiography in the

archipelago that Islam had entered the archipelago since the 9th Century or earlier[1], dismissed mainstream opinions that stated that Islam entered the archipelago since the 13th century AD after the collapse of the Abbasid Dynasty after the invasion of the Mongol army in 1258 AD (Hurgronje, 1925, p. 361).[2]

Islam entered Southeast Asia around the beginning of the 9th Century, and subsequently, Islam dominated the culture and value of life of the Malays in the region from the 9th Century to the early 16th century AD. Residents in the inland region and around the coast facing the Strait of Malacca developed strong links with Muslims from the Middle East. In its development, this religion was so readily accepted because of its polite spread that it became very dominant and defeated the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism in the Malacca Strait area. In a relatively short time, many forms of Islamic kingdoms, such as the Malacca sultanate (centered on peninsular Malaysia), Perlak sultanate, Samudera Pasai kingdom (centered on Sumatra), Demak sultanate and several other Islamic kingdoms centered and Javanese. The decline and subsequent collapse of the Srivijaya kingdom was also a factor that accelerated the progress of the Islamic kingdom, which began with the progress of the Malacca kingdom in the 14th Century. The name of the Melaka Strait is taken from the old city of Melaka. The city of Melaka directly faces the Strait of Melaka, which is also the center of the kingdom of Melaka. The Kingdom of Melaka has successfully for 150 years dominating the economic, political, and cultural sectors around the Malacca Strait area.

Perlake Sultanate (840-1292 AD)

The archipelago's first and oldest Islamic kingdom, traced by the author, is the Ferlec (*Perlak; Peureulak*) sultanate, established in 840 AD. The manuscript "Hikayat Aceh" reveals that the spread of Islam in the northern part of Sumatra was carried out by an Arab cleric named Shaykh Abdullah Arif in 506 H or 1112 AD. Then, the Peureulak sultanate was established with its first sultan, Alauddin Shah, who ruled in 520-544 H or 1161-1186 AD.

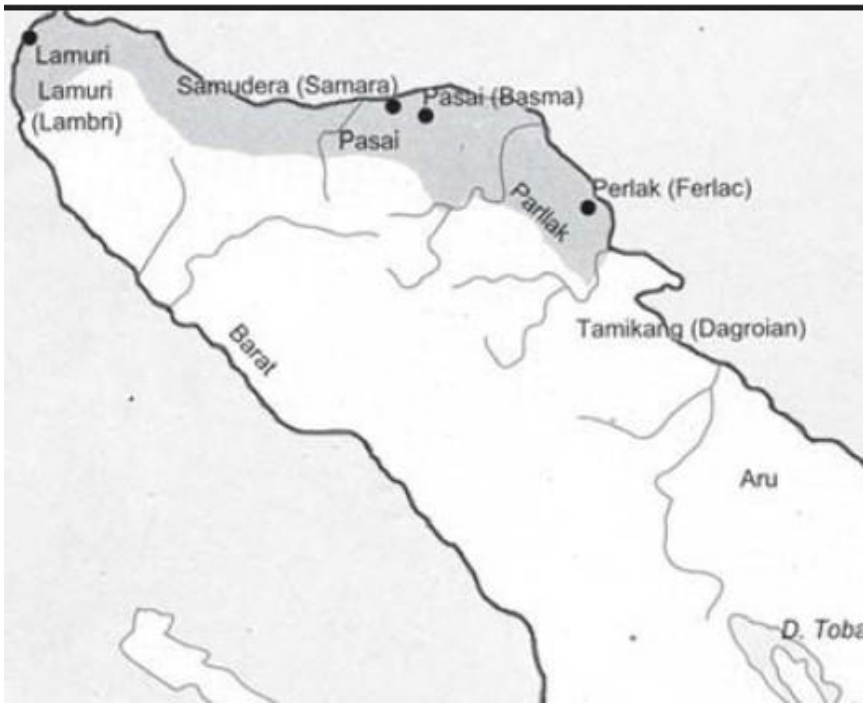
[1] Based on the book *Hikayat Raja Pasai and* Sejarah Melayu *which is reinforced by the historian al-Mas'udi's account* in Muruj al-Dzahab that there are about 10000 Arab Muslim Quraysh from the descendants of the companions of the prophet living in the region of al-Mansurah, Multan, and Mangir in Northeastern India. This opinion was later reviewed by Syamsuddin Arif in "Islam in Nusantara: Hitoriography and Methodology". Islamia, Vol VII, No. 2, p. 15.

[2] For further details see C.S. Hurgronje. 1923. *Islam in the Dutch East Indies,* dalam *Vespreide Geschriften.* Bonn: Kurt Schroeder. Hlm. 361.

The sultan whose tomb has been found is Sulaiman bin Abdullah, who died in 608 H or 1211 AD (Montana, 1997, pp. 85–95). A century later, the famous Venetian traveler Marco Polo strengthened the existence of Peureulak. When Marco Polo returned from China by sea in 1291, he stopped in the land of Ferlec, who had converted to Islam (Yule & Cordier, 1903, p. 284).

A valid historical record of the Perlak sultanate is found in Hikayat Aceh. The first Sultan of Perlak was Sultan Alaiddin Syed Maulana Abdul Aziz Shah, who was Shia and of Arab descent with local women, who founded the Perlak Sultanate on 1 Muharram 225 AH (840 AD) (Iskandar, Bakar, & Ahmad, 1978; Montana, 1997, p. 53). He changed the name of the royal capital from Bandar Perlak to Bandar Khalifah. This sultan and his wife, Putri Meurah Mahdum Khudawi, were buried in Paya Meuligo, Peureulak, East Aceh.

Picture 3. Ferlac Sultanate Location Map[3]



Source: https://islamtoday.id/ulas-nusa/20190624190026-1861/kesultanan-perlak-negara-islam-pertama-di-tanah-melayu-840-1292-m/

[3] Notes: In the 1st century Hijriah, Islam had entered Sumatra. Peureulak (Perlak) was the first Islamic kingdom in Malay land. The Perlak Kingdom was founded in 225 H/840 AD with its king named Syed Maulana Abdul Azis Syah who had the title Sultan Alaidin Syed Maulana. After the Peureulak Sultanate, other Islamic sultanates were founded, such as Samudera Pasai, Lamuri, and Aceh Darussalam.

The diplomatic practice of the Perlak sultanate recorded in "Hikayat Aceh" and "Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai" is the merger of the Perlak sultanate with the Samudera Pasai sultanate. The Kingdom of Samudera Pasai began to stand starting in the early 13th Century, and during the reign of Sultan Makhdum Alaidin Malik Muhammad Amin Shah II Johan Sovereign, the kingdom of Samudera Pasai began to grow into a potential power in the Strait of Melaka region so that the approach of cultural diplomacy through marriage further ensured the security of these two friendly kingdoms. Perlak Sultanate formed an alliance with Samudera Pasai Sultanate by the 'political marriage' method. The 17th Sultan of Perlak, Sultan Makhdum Alaiddin Malik Muhammad Amin Shah II Johan Berdaulat (r. 1230 – 1267), carried out a politics of friendship by marrying his two daughters to the ruler of neighboring Peureulak: 1) Princess Ratna Kamala, married to the King of Malacca Kingdom, Sultan Muhammad Shah (Parameswara); 2) Princess Ganggang, married to the King of the Ocean Pasai Kingdom, Al-Malik Al-Saleh.

Perlak was a kingdom with a relatively long reign, approximately 452 years from 840, and ended in 1292 or more than four centuries (from the 9th Century to the 13th Century). Based on its growth and development, the Perlak Sultanate was the first Islamic Kingdom on the island of Sumatra. This government grew large and powerful, culminating not only in the military and economic arrangements of the government at a good pace but also supported by the cultural values of the community that had been firmly based on Islam. This proves that Islam strongly influenced the people at that time. Another factor that is also very important as evidence of Perlak's progress is the kingdom's ability to maritime control, including the Strait of Malacca, so this strait area contributed significantly to the success of the Perlak Sultanate. The disappearance of Srivijaya Buddhist power in the Malacca Strait area made it easier for Perlak to play an essential role as a new power in the Malacca Strait.

The Perlak Sultanate had been ruled by Muslim kings who deeply understood the importance of maritime areas for political, economic, and strategic purposes. Therefore, the 19 kings who once ruled this Sultanate strengthened the role of the Perlak Sultanate as a sea power, especially in the Melaka Strait and Indian Ocean areas. The prominent role of the Perlak Sultanate in the Strait of Malacca at that time was as a new power that filled the power vacuum in the region after the collapse of Srivijaya. The role of the main power force in the Strait of Melaka was then balanced by the presence of Hindu Majapahit power, who began to expand power to the Strait of Melaka to Thailand. The first king who ruled in Perlak Sultanate was Saiyid Abdul Aziz after being crowned King on 1 Muhharam 225 H entitled

Sultan Alaidin Saiyid Maulana Abdul Aziz Shah, who ruled in 225 - 249 H / 840 - 964 AD (Iskandar et al., 1978; Montana, 1997). Bandar Perlak remained the center of government and was renamed Bandar Khalifah.

The development of Islamic civilization became the main characteristic of this Sultanate and became one of the fundamental forces in conducting diplomatic relations with other countries. The Strait of Melaka and the Indian Ocean became a crucial Diplomacy Strategy area for the Perlak Sultanate. This means that the security of Perlak and the sustainability of the Islamic civilization built in it are greatly influenced by the security of the waters of the Strait of Melaka and the Indian Ocean. This Strategic Value was used as a basis by the kings of the Perlak Sultanate to determine the basis for the country, and two crucial bases were taken, namely the development of Islamic education as a principle for civilization development and strengthening diplomatic relations with parties and countries that have cultural similarities or geographical similarities such as the Gujarat region in India and countries in the Malacca Strait region. These two policies are expected to have brought the Perlak Sultanate to experience a heyday, and the peak of success was during the reign of Sultan Makhdum Alaidin Malik Muhammad Amin Shah II Johan Bersovereign, who ruled in 622-662 H/1225-1263 AD (Hill, 1963, pp. 6–21).

Perlak Sultanate has implemented the practice of track 1, track 2, and track 3 diplomacy. This can be seen in the diplomatic contact between Perlak and the outside world that occurs not only on the government side (government to government*)* but also between fellow people, both ulama as epistemic communities and civil society *(*people to people), especially between Perlak people and immigrant populations from Arabia and Persia, even the contact of people-to-people diplomacy This happened much earlier and more widely than formal diplomacy by the royal government. The immigrant population is generally traders who enter Perlak through the Indian Ocean and Melaka Strait, so these two sea routes play an important role in the development of diplomacy by the Perlak Sultanate. The relationship with foreign traders has brought two significant economic and cultural influences. Economic influence has made Perlak a developed port city with its currency. Perlak currency was made of gold (dirham), silver (kupang), and copper or brass. Perlak is also known for its wealth of natural resources supported by its strategic location. Perlak is very well known as a producer of perlak wood, which is very good for making ships. This kind of thing attracted traders from Gujarat, Arabia, and Persia to come to this area.

The cultural influence caused by the entry of foreign traders, mainly traders from Gujarati, Arabia, and Persia, is the absorption of Islam brought by these traders by the local community so that this religion spread outside throughout the Perlak community and became the basis for the formation of culture in the Perlak Sultanate and surrounding areas. The formation of Muslim-based culture in the Perlak Sultanate contributed to Islamic civilization in the Malacca Strait area. After good development in Perlak, Islam developed rapidly in Aceh, Sumatra, and Peninsular Malaysia. Islamic civilization in the Melaka Strait area then manifested in the form of the splendor of the Sultanates of Melaka, Johor, and Tumasik.

One of the ways Islam spread in Perlak was through marriages between Muslim traders from Persia, Arabia, and Gujarat with women from the local population. This method has made it easier for these Muslim traders to conduct business and, along with it, carry out the mission of Islamization to the local population. This process occurs not only in Perlak but almost in all centers of civilization growth over the region of Malacca Strait. The last sultan of Perlak was the 18th sultan, Sultan Makhdum Alaiddin Malik Abdul Aziz Johan Berdaulat (r. 1267 – 1292). After he died, Perlak was united with the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai under the rule of the sultan of Samudera Pasai, Sultan Muhammad Malik Al Zahir, son of Al-Malik Al-Saleh (Hill, 1960, pp. 1–215).

Samudera Pasai Sultanate (1267-1521 AD)

The diplomacy of the Samudera Pasai sultanate in the Malacca Strait area is recorded in a classic work entitled *"Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*". Kiai Suvadimanggala owned this manuscript and handed over the Javanese script to Sir Stamford Raffles in 1814 (Hill, 1960, p. Preface). "*Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*" was written during the collapse of the Srivijaya kingdom, the rise of the Singosari and Majapahit kingdoms, and the expansion southward by T'ai through the Malay peninsula beginning in 1280. In terms of diplomacy and strategy, this text tells how Majapahit confronted the kingdom of Samudera Pasai in control of the Strait of Malacca. It is told in this manuscript that Majapahit grew into an extreme maritime power. This maritime power can control two sides of the Strait of Malacca (Hill, 1960, p. 7). This text also tells about the diplomatic relations of the Samudera Pasai sultanate with China, primarily through migrants who sailed from China through the Strait of Malacca (Hill, 1960, p. 8).

Another text that records the history of the development of diplomacy of the Sultanate of Samudera Pasai is *"Negarakertagama*". This text says that Samudera Pasai grew into a

great power in Southeast Asia. Its influence on the security of the Malacca Strait and surrounding areas and Islamization by the Sultanate of Samudera Pasai has "changed the face of Southeast Asia" from very oriental to Islamic (Hill, 1960, p. 9). Samudera Pasai was able to develop and spread its influence in terms of politics, socio-culture, and trade. All of these use the Strait of Malacca as the main route and entrance. The key lies in securing this territory.

The diplomacy strategy carried out by the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai by strengthening the army, especially in the ocean, is based on the correct geostrategic perspective. The location of the government on the coastline of the Strait of Malacca is very open to face various questions related to economy, politics, and peace. Economically, the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai can become a significant growth center in the Malacca Strait area and a trade destination from Siam, China, Kingdoms in Java, India, and the Middle East. In the political aspect, the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai also realizes the importance of a solid and stable government and controls the elements of power, including *the* economy and military. Regarding Diplomacy Strategy, the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai must ensure the security of its surrounding areas, especially the Strait of Melaka.

The basis of the Diplomacy Strategy carried out by the Government of the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai is clear for several long-term diplomatic objectives.

1. To become the center of economic growth in the Malacca Strait region
2. To deal with possible threats or attacks than other powers such as the Kingdom of Siam, and Majapahit.
3. To become a military force in the Melaka Strait Area that is taken into account by other major kingdoms and ensure the security of the Strait of Melaka as a trade route in and out of the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai.

The Kingdom of Samudera Pasai increased its Diplomacy Strategy efforts by conducting diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of China to secure itself from the threat of the Kingdom of Siam whose territory reached the Malacca Peninsula. Cultural elements are also used as diplomatic forces to support the efforts of the Diplomacy Strategy. Integrating the environment into a common culture will make achieving broad economic, political, and peaceful goals easier. For this purpose, the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai established Islamic centers of study that became the focus of education for residents and Islamic students who came from outside the kingdom and educated them to become reliable

scholars and sent them to various regions in the archipelago. The Royal Government then sent these scholars to broadcast Islam to Minangkabau, Jambi, Malacca, Java, even to Siam (Thailand). The Perlak Sultanate has carried out this cultural diplomacy, but the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai took a step forward by integrating it into the kingdom's foundation, which has a clearer exit target, namely the Islamization of areas adjacent to the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai. One of the successes of this strategy was the dispatch of one of the earth scholars sons of Pasai named Fatahillah who became the Commander in the Kingdom of Demak, and then became the King in the Kingdom of Banten.

The success of the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai as the center of economic growth is significant. This kingdom became an important trading center in the Malacca Strait area. The government-built port cities that became the destination and stopover of every world trader who crossed the Strait of Malacca. Port cities in the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai serve to increase supplies for the next voyage, manage ship repairs and permits in and out of the city, collect merchandise to be sent abroad, and store merchandise before being delivered to several regions in Indonesia. Kenneth R. Hall in "*Upstream and Downstream Unification in Southeast Asia's First Islamic Politiy: The Changing Sense of Community in the Fiftheenth Century" Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai" Court Chronicle states* that the Islamization of the Samudera Pasai sultanate has encouraged the increasing hegemony of Samudera Pasai in the Malacca Strait region (K. Hall, 2001, p. 199). The inclusion of Samudera Pasai in the 'international Islamic community' coupled with Samudera Pasai's strategic position in the field of textile trade has made Samudera Pasai the center of international trade of Islamic kingdoms in the Southeast Asian region, especially those that use the Strait of Malacca as a trade route. Textiles and fabrics became even more valuable than gold and silver at this time (K. Hall, 2001, p. 201). Why did cloth become so vitally important in the region's maritime political constellation then? In 'Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai' it is said that there were six essential and valuable reasons for cloth at that time in the constellation of international trade, namely: 1) as payment for services; 2) as spoils of war; 3) royal ceremonial displays; 4) diplomatic exchanges; 5) local mythology; and 6) initiation of changes in the history of the Pasai Ocean (K. Hall, 2001, p. 216).

Although Perlak was the first Islamic kingdom in the archipelago, Samudera Pasai was the first Islamic kingdom or sultanate that was able to establish a port government (*Port-Polity)* as a manifestation of the hegemony of the Malacca Strait region as an international trade route. The success of this Kingdom as the first *Port-Polity* in Southeast Asia, is also

recorded by Ibn Battuta (Battuta, 2004; Dunn, 2012) who came from Morocco. According to Battuta, in 1345, Samudera Pasai was a prosperous trading kingdom. Many traders from Java, China, and India came there. This is considering the strategic location of the Pasai Ocean in the Strait of Malacca. The currency is gold money called deureuham or dirham. The year 1350 AD was the peak of the glory of the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai. The Kingdom of Samudera Pasai then suffered a decline after being controlled by the Kingdom of Melaka and the center of economic growth and trade was moved to Bandar Melaka.

Malaka Sultanate (1405-1511 AD)

The Malay Archipelago between the Indian Ocean and East Asia has become the most rich, diverse, and politically important strategic region. This makes the control of this region always an ambition for the kingdoms around this region. One medium that facilitates interactions in the region is Islam. Islam makes interaction in the region more intense with peaceful Islamic nuances. In addition to international trade, this region has also given birth to many great scholars of the archipelago who contributed a lot to the life of the state and society (Alkhateeb, 2017).

One of the kingdoms that became the center of trade in the Malacca Strait region after Samudera Pasai was the Sultanate of Malacca, which became a *Port-Polity* in part of—what is now referred to as – Malaysia. The similarity between the Sultanate of Malacca and Samudera Pasai is that these two sultanates both use the security of the Malacca Strait trade route as a base for regional hegemony. The second similarity is that these two sultanates both use Islam as a base for political interaction in the region (Alkhateeb, 2017, p. 2). Related to Islam, the Malacca sultanate also experienced a revival after going through Islamization. King Parameswara founded the Kingdom of Melaka in the 14th century AD. Parameswara was originally king in Tumasik (Singapore) in the 1390s. Java and Siam then attacked this country, this situation forced Parameswara to flee to the north, namely to the Peninsular Malaysia region and establish a new kingdom there, the Kingdom of Melaka in 1403. Parameswara asked for help from the Chinese Kingdom which was then under the rule of the Ming Dynasty to protect the kingdom he had just founded, and for that help Parameswara paid tribute to the Chinese Kingdom.

Parameswara then converted to Islam and married the daughter of Ratna Kumala of Perlak Sultanate. After embracing Islam, King Parameswara entitled King Iskandar Shah. The Islamic situation of King Parameswara is narrated in the writings of Admiral Cheng Ho

who had visited Melaka in 1409. The writing explains that at that time Parameswara was still in power, and he as king and the people of Melaka were already Muslims. In 1414 Parameswara was succeeded by his son, Megat Iskandar Shah.

The process of Islamization in the Malacca Sultanate then developed into a process of unification of Islamic authority in the region as happened in Samudera Pasai. The treasures of Malay culture colored the unification of Islam that occurred. The spread and unification of Islam in the region was also greatly influenced by the presence of Admiral Cheng Ho who undertook an expedition from China. Geoff Wade *in Melaka in Ming Dynasty Texts*, states that diplomatic relations between the Sultanate of Melaka and the Ming Dynasty strengthened Islamic authority in the Southeast Asian region, especially around the Strait of Malacca and this is recorded in the classic text of the Ming Dynasty entitled Ming Shi-Lu (Wade, 1997, p. 41). This shows that diplomacy between Islamic kingdoms in the Strait of Malacca has made the Kingdom of China (Ming Dynasty) one of the partners of diplomacy and cooperation. Recorded, almost 30 there was an exchange of diplomatic envoys from both sides of the kingdom in economic and security diplomatic missions from 1409 to 1521 AD (Wade, 1997, p. 68).

Three strategic values make the Sultanate of Melaka become one of the great centers of civilization in the Malacca Strait region and develop into one of the *largest Port-Polity* in the Malacca Strait region, namely: 1) Its strategic position became a destination for immigrants from Sumatra, Bugis, Arabs, India, Chams, Javanese, Persians, etc.; 2) Malacca is an area of cultural and spiritual diversity (Islam) which at that time was indeed a *trend topic* among the community; and 3) Malacca is an area that has many *international links*, and continues to develop as an independent region (Wade, 1997, p. 55).

P.E. De Josselin De Jong and H. L. A. Van Wijk explained that changes in the distribution and power structure *of* the Malacca sultanate can be seen from two sides of economy and security defense. In terms of economy, the Sultanate of Melaka became the largest Islamic kingdom in the Strait of Malacca through international trade. Its position around the Strait of Malacca makes this region economically the area with the largest economic turnover. Then in terms of defense and security, the distribution and change of power *of the sultanate can be seen from the War with the Kingdom of Siam and the arrival of the Portuguese who brought the Colonization agenda to Southeast Asia after becoming a new sea / maritime power in the archipelago* (De Josselin De Jong & Van Wijk, 1960, pp. 20–29).

During the reign of Sultan Mahmud Shah of the Kingdom of Malacca, Europeans entered Southeast Asia, by carrying out political diplomacy of fighting and dividing they usurped the power of kingdoms in this region. The Strait of Melaka is one of the important areas that cannot be separated from the attention of these immigrant nations. They realized that by controlling the Strait of Malacca they had taken control of one of the world's most important shipping and trade lanes. These European settlers competed for influence and power in the Southeast Asian region and control of the Strait of Malacca was one of their goals. Thus, in 1511 Portuguese troops under the leadership of Alfonso de Albuquerque invaded Malacca. The offensive began on 10 days in August 1511 and succeeded in capturing Melaka on 24 days in August 1511, thus ending the rule of Sultan Mahmud Shah and the glory of the Kingdom of Melaka.

Sultan Mahmud Shah fled to Bintan and established a new capital there. In 1526 the Portuguese burned Bintan, and the Sultan fled to Kampar, where he died two years later, in 1558. His son Muzaffar Shah later became sultan of Perak, while his other son Alauddin Riayat Shah II founded the new kingdom of Johor.

The weakness of the Malacca Kingdom is that after successfully conquering the areas around the Strait of Malacca, this government no longer pays serious attention to strategic security issues related to the state of the government. Melaka City as the capital of the Kingdom is a port city located on the coast of the Strait of Melaka and has developed into an important center of economic growth in the Southeast Asian region. Meanwhile, the Strait of Melaka is a very important world shipping lane and strategic defense area. All these circumstances greatly attracted European settlers to increase their power in the region to achieve great economic gain and embed their cultural influence for long-term purposes.

The Kingdom of Melaka is a continuation of the splendor of Islamic civilization in the Southeast Asian region, and specifically in the Malacca Strait area. The kings of Malacca had succeeded in building an Islam-based government thus making Melaka one of the world trade centers owned by Muslims at that time. Melaka City is a symbol of the economic growth of the Melaka Strait region which has succeeded in replacing other collapsed growth centers such as Perlak and Pasai.

The principle of Islam has also animated cultural life and has come into conflict with Malay. This is evidenced by the making of Malay (in the sense of tribe or nation and culture) as a symbol of Islam. The manifestation of this symbol in people's lives is the acceptance of

the same understanding both among the Malays themselves and the non-Malay community that Malay means Islam so that when non-Muslims embrace Islam it is said to "convert to Malay". Malay language also at that time became one of the symbols of cultural glory of the Kingdom of Melaka, present in the midst of association between nations in several strong forms including as the official language of instruction used by the government. Another form is in writing combined with Arabic culture so that the writing that today is known as "jawi" writing was born which in Indonesia is known as "Malay Arabic" writing. Literary culture is also very well developed and is presented in Malay speech in the form of hikayat-hikayat, and one of the most famous is hikayat Hangtuah. However, the success of this Islamic-based Malay culture was not accompanied by the building of the most important supporting force for the purpose of cultural development and civilization, namely Islamic education. The Malacca kings did not seriously build centers of Islamic education and focused more on the question of trade.

Efforts to control the Straits of Malacca were absolutely necessary to secure the sovereignty of the government, and for this purpose it was necessary to build a large army, especially the navy. However, this was not done by the Kingdom of Malacca, so this kingdom was not ready and unable to face attacks from Portuguese troops. The Kingdom of Melaka as a large and very powerful kingdom in the Melaka Strait area at that time fell into the hands of the Portuguese colonizers in just a short period of 14 days (Wilkinson, 1935, pp. 68–69).

Aceh Darussalam Sultanate (1496-1903 AD)

The Aceh Sultanate was the last and longest established and powerful sultanate in the northern region of Sumatra. The Aceh Sultanate also controlled the Malacca Strait area through the security of trade routes and the unification of Islamic authorities. The collapse of the Melaka Kingdom as a symbol of Islamic power did not necessarily dissolve Islamic civilization in the Malacca Strait area, because before the collapse of Melaka, in 1496 a new Islamic Kingdom emerged in Sumatra, namely the Kingdom of Aceh. The founder of this kingdom was Sultan Ibrahim entitled Ali Mughayat Shah, and ruled for more than 32 years, from 1496 to 1528 (Hadi, 2004, p. 11). The center of government of the Kingdom of Aceh was in Kutaraja (present-day Banda Agah). The decline of Samudera Pasai and the collapse of Melaka caused a change in the center of economic growth. The Portuguese-controlled city of Melaka was no longer attractive to traders because of the greed of the Europeans who ran

a monopoly system in trade (Hadi, 2004, pp. 12–13). Traders who had long known port cities in the Aceh region came to Aceh more often so that this kingdom developed into a new center of economic growth in the Malacca Strait area.

Aceh's development as a regional power can be seen from four regions, including: 1) military; 2) politics; 3) economic; and 4) the intellectual tradition (Islam) (Hadi, 2004, p. 21). Aceh, which became a new regional power in the Strait of Malacca, was motivated by two *driving forces.* First, the author refers to direct *drives,* namely Aceh's victory over the conquest of Daya (1520); Pidie (1521); and Pasai (1524). Then the second, the author calls *contextual drives,* namely the presence of Portuguese military-economic power in the Strait of Malacca. Aceh differed from Pidie and Pasai in establishing diplomatic relations with the Portuguese. While Pidie and Pasai established good relations and helped the Portuguese develop, Aceh saw the Portuguese as competitors, even the main enemy threatening security in the region (Hadi, 2004, p. 22). Aceh's strength was also widely supported by diasporas from Middle Eastern Muslims after the Mongols conquered Baghdad who continued to live around Aceh. Then coupled with the conquest of Melaka by the Portuguese made many Malay Muslim diaspora Melaka migrate to Aceh (Gibson, 2007, p. 41). Material and non-material forces were gathered and concentrated in Aceh which indirectly built Aceh into an unpredictable power that could become the new main maritime axis in the Nusantara region and the Strait of Malacca.

The military power of the Aceh sultanate focused on the strength of its naval fleet. Amirul Hadi explained that the power of this naval fleet uses a combination of artillery power and traditional weapons used with the medium of powerful warships (Hadi, 2004, p. 25). Historians say that these weapons were obtained from China which also had diplomatic relations with Aceh (Hadi, 2004, p. 25).

But the important question is, "why can't Aceh defeat the Portuguese?". Despite its rise to become a regional maritime power, Aceh remained unable to conquer the Portuguese. Here are the reasons why Aceh could not defeat the Portuguese. First, the 15th-16th centuries AD was the century of the rise of European technology, including weapons technology, and Portuguese was one of the countries that took advantage and opportunity in its colonial mission in the archipelago. As K. M. Panikkar put it, the *armament of the Portuguese ships was something totally unexpected and new in the Indian seas and gave an immediate and decisive advantage to the Portuguese over their Indian opponents* (Panikkar, 2017, p. 29).

Second, Aceh's naval fleet is indeed strong, but in terms of material technology it is far behind the Portuguese who are fully supported by the impact of the industrial revolution (steel and shipping) in Europe. Aceh was quite reckless in fighting in the naval fleet, as John Davis said, "*have no defensive arms, but fight naked*" (Davis, 1880, p. 150). The dependence of Aceh on the Ottomans who in Europe were pressed by European wars made Aceh unable to do much in terms of weapons technology.

The greatness of Aceh's diplomacy cannot only be seen from a military and economic point of view. Aceh is one of the largest Islamic sovereignty capable of building Islamic institutions in the region. Aceh was able to institutionalize Islam as the basis of the state. There are three foundations strengthened by Aceh so as to be able to build Islamic institutions in the northern region of the archipelago, namely: 1) The role of Ulama; 2) Harmony between Islamic law and custom that can be appropriately managed; and 3) the concept of Jihad as the main doctrine of defense of the Aceh Sultanate in every war faced by Aceh (Hadi, 2004, p. 147).

As a kingdom, Aceh experienced a period of advance and retreat. Aceh experienced rapid progress during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607-1636). During his reign, Aceh reached a golden age. Aceh could even control Johor, Pahang, Kedah, Perak in the Malay Peninsula and Indragiri, Bintan Island, and Nias. In addition, Iskandar Muda also drafted a governance law called *Adat Mahkota Alam* (Hadi, 2004, p. 37). After Sultan Iskandar Muda, there was no longer a sultan who was able to control Aceh. Aceh suffered a setback under the leadership of Sultan Iskandar Thani (1636-1641). Her consort later succeeded her, Putri Sri Alam Permaisuri (1641-1675). History records that Aceh is getting weaker day by day due to conflicts between the teuku and teungku groups, as well as between the Shia sect and the Sunnah wal Jama'ah. Finally, Colonialism succeeded in controlling Aceh in 1904.

Malay Non-Western IR Theories? Unraveling the Tapestry of Malay Kingdoms in the Malacca Strait

In the annals of Southeast Asian history, the early interactions between kingdoms were a tapestry of vibrant cultural exchange, trade networks, and occasional conflicts that shaped the region's destiny. During this nascent period, the Srivijaya Empire, reigning supreme between the 7th and 14th centuries, epitomized the essence of maritime power. With Sumatra as its stronghold, Srivijaya orchestrated vast trade routes, connecting the realms of China and India to the vibrant tapestry of Southeast Asian lands. This intricate web

of trade and cultural exchange bolstered the empire's economic prowess and fostered a mosaic of diverse traditions and languages.

The Malacca Sultanate, strategically nestled along the Malacca Strait, emerged as a lighthouse guiding ships laden with precious goods. Its central location turned it into a bustling trading hub, attracting merchants from the earth's far corners. Malacca's diplomatic finesse was equally notable; it skillfully cultivated ties with China, Siam, India, and Arab merchants, creating a vibrant atmosphere of cross-cultural dialogue and economic prosperity. This cosmopolitan environment, characterized by a blend of languages, religions, and customs, laid the foundation for Malacca's pivotal role in regional diplomacy.

The dawn of the European colonial period ushered in a new era of diplomacy, transforming the dynamics of Southeast Asia. In their quest for supremacy, the Portuguese set their sights on Malacca in 1511. Their capture of this strategic trading post marked the beginning of a profound shift in regional politics. Establishing a fortified presence, the Portuguese engaged in intensive trade, forever altering the commercial landscape of the Malacca Strait. Nevertheless, their dominance was not unchallenged. The Dutch, capitalizing on the decline of Portuguese influence, maneuvered their way into the region, ultimately wresting control from their European counterparts. This Dutch ascendance reshaped trade routes and diplomatic alliances, laying the groundwork for their formidable influence over parts of the Indonesian archipelago.

Simultaneously, in their colonial expansionist fervor, the British solidified their presence in Southeast Asia. Establishing diplomatic ties and trade agreements with local rulers, including the Sultanate of Johor and other Malay states, the British Empire further sculpted the region's political landscape. These interactions were not without their complexities; shifting alliances and treaties emerged as essential tools in maintaining stability amid the tumultuous colonial backdrop. For instance, the Aceh Sultanate and the Johor Sultanate, both pivotal players in regional trade, were entangled in alliances and conflicts, their fortunes swaying with the tide of politics and economics.

Amid these diplomatic intricacies, the indigenous powers of the region faced an unprecedented challenge. As colonial powers entrenched their footholds, the influence of kingdoms and sultanates began to wane. Treaties and agreements, often imposed upon indigenous rulers, reshaped the political topography, leading to a gradual erosion of autonomy. The ebb of indigenous powers paved the way for the emergence of colonial-

driven political structures, fundamentally altering these regions' governance and societal fabric.

The legacy of these historical interactions resonates through the ages, leaving an indelible mark on the cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity of the region. The tapestry of Southeast Asian heritage today is woven from threads of these intricate exchanges and diplomatic endeavors. The Malacca Strait, once a theater of dynamic diplomacy, continues to be a symbol of the shared history and intertwined destinies of nations. The echoes of these historical events serve as a reminder of the resilience of cultures, the adaptability of societies, and the enduring spirit of diplomacy in the face of profound change. Through these narratives, the rich heritage of Southeast Asia stands as a testament to the enduring human spirit, forever shaped by the interplay of diplomacy, trade, and cultural exchange.

By applying these non-Western IR theories and frameworks to the analysis of the Malay kingdoms across the Malacca Strait, we gain a nuanced understanding of their historical interactions. These kingdoms, guided by their cultural and historical contexts, engaged in power struggles, strategic cooperation, and regionalism, demonstrating their agency and ability to shape their international relations in a complex, interconnected manner. The synthesis of indigenous and external ideas likely played a pivotal role, leading to the region's unique political and diplomatic approaches. This analysis highlights the importance of recognizing diverse cultural perspectives and agencies in studying historical international relations.

The diplomatic relations and dynamics among the kingdoms in the Malacca Strait region provide valuable insights for developing non-Western international relations theories.

1. **Cultural Considerations.** Cultural factors, including religion, language, and traditions deeply influenced the interactions among these kingdoms. Non-Western international relations theories can emphasize the importance of culture in shaping diplomatic relations, contrasting with traditional Western theories that often focus more on state-centric or material factors.
2. **Non-Western Perspectives on Power.** The power dynamics among these kingdoms were not solely based on military might or economic strength but also cultural influence and diplomacy. Non-Western theories can provide alternative perspectives on power, considering soft power, cultural appeal, and historical legitimacy as crucial influence components in international relations.

3. **Complex Alliances and Networks.** Intricate alliances, trade networks, and religious affiliations characterized the diplomatic relations in this region. Non-Western international relations theories can explore the complexity of these networks, highlighting the importance of diverse actors, such as religious leaders, merchants, and local chieftains, in shaping international relations beyond the conventional state-centric approach.
4. **Indigenous Governance Systems.** The kingdoms in the Malacca Strait region often had unique governance systems rooted in indigenous traditions. Non-Western theories can study these systems, considering how indigenous forms of governance, decision-making processes, and conflict resolution mechanisms contribute to shaping international relations in non-Western contexts.
5. **Decentering Western Perspectives.** Scholars can challenge the dominance of Western-centric perspectives in international relations theory by focusing on non-Western diplomatic relations. This decentering allows for a more inclusive and diverse understanding of global politics, considering the rich histories and varied experiences of different regions and cultures.
6. **Colonialism and Postcolonial Perspectives.** The impact of European colonial powers on these kingdoms offers insights into the dynamics of colonialism and its enduring effects on international relations. Non-Western theories can delve into the postcolonial narratives, addressing issues of identity, sovereignty, and resistance, which are crucial in understanding the global South's experiences in international relations.
7. **Global South Solidarity.** The historical interactions among non-Western kingdoms can inform theories of solidarity and cooperation among Global South nations in contemporary international relations. Lessons from the past can inspire and guide strategies for collaboration, mutual support, and collective bargaining in the face of global challenges.

Incorporating these insights into international relations theories can lead to more nuanced, culturally sensitive, and inclusive frameworks that better reflect the diversity of experiences and perspectives in the global arena, thereby enriching the field of international relations with a more comprehensive understanding of world politics. The comprehensive exploration of the Malay kingdoms in the Malacca Strait, as illuminated through the lens of

non-Western International Relations (IR) theories, opens a compelling discourse on the intricate dynamics of pre-modern Southeast Asia. Our multifaceted analysis, informed by cultural context, postcolonial perspectives, local agency, alternative ideas, and hybridity, paints a vivid picture of the region's historical interactions.

In delving into the historical interactions of the Malay kingdoms across the Malacca Strait, our exploration has been illuminated by the nuanced insights of non-Western International Relations theories. Rooted in a rich cultural and historical context, these kingdoms were not passive entities but dynamic actors shaping their international relations through intricate strategies and collaborations. One of the fundamental aspects to understand is the deep cultural and historical roots underpinning the Malay kingdoms. Their unique customs, governance structures, and economic practices formed the foundation for their diplomatic relations. It is within this context that postcolonial perspectives gain significance. The Malay kingdoms, much like numerous other societies in the Global South, were shaped by the enduring legacies of colonialism. The shared experience of resisting colonial powers created a bond of solidarity among these kingdoms, leading to collaborative efforts aimed at securing autonomy and self-determination. This shared history of resistance galvanized them against external pressures and fostered a sense of identity and purpose, crucial elements in their diplomatic engagements.

Amidst the colonial backdrop, the Malay kingdoms exhibited remarkable local agency, challenging the Western-centric narratives. Concepts like "Adat Perpatih" in Negeri Sembilan and the intricate web of kinship ties within the kingdoms showcased unique indigenous systems of governance, challenging conventional Western models of sovereignty. These alternative concepts, deeply rooted in their cultural fabric, provided the Malay kingdoms with distinctive lenses through which they viewed their international relations. The struggle for power within and beyond the kingdoms' borders was not a simplistic contest but a nuanced interplay of traditional hierarchies and adaptive strategies. Strategic cooperation emerged as a response to external threats, forming alliances and networks that transcended individual kingdoms. Power dynamics were influenced by military might and intricate networks of trade relations, familial alliances, and political maneuvers.

Regionalism played a pivotal role in shaping the diplomatic landscape of the Malay kingdoms. Cultural pluralism facilitated cooperation among diverse entities, fostering mutual respect and understanding. Cultural diplomacy emerged as a powerful tool, enabling

the kingdoms to project their influence and establish alliances with neighboring states. The concept of "Nusantara," emphasizing the interconnectedness of maritime Southeast Asia, exemplified a shared regional identity that facilitated collaboration. This regional identity, rooted in centuries-old cultural exchanges, laid the groundwork for inter-kingdom collaborations, transcending individual interests for the collective good.

At the heart of the Malay kingdoms' diplomatic strategies lay the principle of hybridity, a synthesis of indigenous wisdom and external ideas. This intellectual adaptability allowed the kingdoms to blend traditional practices with innovations, creating unique hybrid systems responsive to their geopolitical environments. Incorporating foreign technologies, such as European weaponry, into traditional military strategies exemplified this adaptive approach. The hybridity of ideas showcased the kingdoms' ingenuity and their ability to navigate the complexities of an ever-changing world.

In conclusion, the intricate tapestry of the Malay kingdoms' international relations in the Malacca Strait provides invaluable insights into the complexities of pre-modern diplomacy. Through the lens of non-Western IR theories, we unveil the historical intricacies and the enduring lessons for contemporary global politics. The diplomatic strategies employed by these kingdoms reflected not only their cultural heritage but also a testament to their resilience and adaptability. Embracing diverse perspectives, recognizing the agency of local actors, and appreciating the richness of cultural interactions emerge as pivotal lessons from this historical discourse. As we navigate the complexities of the present-day global landscape, the legacy of the Malay kingdoms serves as a beacon, illuminating the path towards a more inclusive, culturally sensitive, and harmonious future in international relations.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated the intricate tapestry of Southeast Asian history, as woven through the interactions between kingdoms and empires, stands testament to the region's vibrant cultural diversity, economic vitality, and political resilience. From the maritime might of the Srivijaya Empire to the cosmopolitan hub of the Malacca Sultanate, the early interactions between these entities created a mosaic of traditions, languages, and religions, shaping the unique identity of Southeast Asia. The arrival of European powers, marked by the Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonial periods, brought a new chapter of diplomatic

maneuvering and geopolitical transformation. These colonial powers, while significantly altering regional dynamics, were met with complex webs of alliances, conflicts, and treaties among indigenous sultanates and kingdoms.

Amidst the political upheaval and shifting power structures, indigenous rulers displayed adaptability, resilience, and strategic acumen, navigating the complexities of colonial rule while safeguarding their cultural heritage. The decline of indigenous powers in the face of colonial imposition redefined political landscapes and governance structures, leaving a lasting impact on the region's socio-economic fabric. Nevertheless, the legacy of these historical interactions endures in contemporary Southeast Asian societies. The region's multiculturalism, multilingualism, and religious plurality can be traced back to these formative moments, where diplomacy, trade, and cultural exchanges were at the forefront of regional affairs. As the echoes of the past reverberate into the present, Southeast Asia stands as a living testament to the interplay of diverse civilizations, reminding the world of the resilience and dynamism that characterize the human spirit in the face of historical change.

In our extensive exploration of the Malay kingdoms in the Malacca Strait, we have unearthed a treasure trove of historical and diplomatic intricacies. Through the multifaceted lens of non-Western International Relations theories, these kingdoms come to life as active, adaptive, and culturally rich players on the international stage. As we draw our conclusions from this deep dive, several key themes emerge. **Cultural and Historical Context.** The Malay kingdoms were not homogenous entities but a tapestry of diverse cultures, traditions, and governance systems. These cultural nuances were not superficial; they formed the bedrock of the kingdoms' diplomatic engagements. From the intricate customs of governance to trade practices deeply rooted in cultural norms, the uniqueness of each kingdom's cultural fabric greatly influenced their interactions. These cultural contexts are not to be seen as mere backdrops but active elements shaping the kingdoms' strategies and decisions. **Postcolonial Resilience and Local Agency.** The legacy of colonialism loomed large over the Malay kingdoms, and this shared experience forged a bond of postcolonial solidarity. The resistance against colonial powers was not merely a historical event but a defining element of the kingdom’s identity. This shared history was a catalyst for collaborative efforts, both political and economic, fostering a spirit of autonomy and mutual support. Moreover, local agency was a testament to the kingdoms' capacity to chart their own path. The notion of "Adat" or customary law played a vital role in governance, challenging conventional Western ideas of

sovereignty. Through the prism of local agency, the Malay kingdoms cease to be passive actors in a Western-centric narrative but active participants in their own right.

Dynamic Power Struggles and Strategic Cooperation. The power struggle was not a simplistic contest of might but an intricate dance of traditional hierarchies and adaptive strategies. The power dynamics were not restricted to military might alone but included the complexities of trade relations, familial alliances, and political maneuvering. Amid this struggle, strategic cooperation emerged as a pivotal tool in the kingdoms' diplomatic toolbox. Forming alliances and networks was not a sign of weakness but a pragmatic response to external threats. These alliances transcended individual kingdoms, illustrating the ability of the Malay kingdoms to collaborate for mutual benefit. **Cultural Diplomacy, Regionalism, and Hybridity.** The concept of "Nusantara" epitomized the interconnectedness of maritime Southeast Asia, showcasing a shared regional identity. This sense of regionalism, nurtured through cultural pluralism, laid the foundation for diplomatic initiatives and economic collaborations, echoing the contemporary ideals of regional integration. The embrace of cultural diplomacy allowed the kingdoms to project their influence, establish alliances, and enhance trade relations through the promotion of their cultural heritage. The synthesis of indigenous wisdom and external ideas, the essence of hybridity, was not a passive assimilation but an active process that allowed the Malay kingdoms to adapt, innovate, and thrive in a changing world.

In concluding this exploration of the Malay kingdoms in the Malacca Strait, we recognize that their history is not a mere relic of the past but a living testament to non-Western societies' resilience, adaptability, and cultural richness. As we navigate the complex global landscape of the present and future, the lessons from these kingdoms reverberate. Embracing diverse perspectives, recognizing the agency of local actors, and appreciating the depth of cultural interactions are not mere historical footnotes but pivotal insights for a more inclusive, culturally sensitive, and harmonious approach to international relations. The Malay kingdoms offer a glimpse into the past and a guiding light towards a more enriched global future.

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