

# PERSPECTIVE

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## “Selangor Islam”: Towards a Religious Approach Suitable for a Cosmopolitan State

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*Muslims in Malaysia gather at Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Mosque to perform the Eid Al-Fitr prayer to mark the first day of Syawal 1445 Hijrah in Selangor, Malaysia, on 10 April 2024. Eid Al-Fitr, also known as ‘Hari Raya Aidilfitri’ in Malaysia, is an Islamic celebration that signifies the conclusion of the holy month of Ramadan. Syaiful Redzuan / Anadolu (Photo by Syaiful Redzuan/ANADOLU/Anadolu via AFP).*

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- Selangor is a prized state for any political party contesting in Malaysia, given its strategic location on the peninsula in close proximity to the federal territories of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya. It boasts a record of impressive economic performance and has higher than average income levels relative to other states in the country.
- Funding for the Islamic administration in Selangor has increased year by year since the era of Pakatan Rakyat (PR) through to the Pakatan Harapan (PH) period, and now under the Unity Government. As in other states in Malaysia, Islamic affairs in Selangor fall under the purview of the Malay Ruler, who is advised by religious authorities, particularly the mufti. However, Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS)'s narrative that Islamic practices and institutions in Selangor are threatened under the PH government seems to have resonated, judging from the results of the 2023 state elections.
- The state government's initiative to develop Islam in Selangor is largely limited to organising festivals or specific events for Muslims, focusing on mosques and *suraus*. At the same time, Selangor attempts to regulate private *tahfiz* centres by requiring them to register under the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (JAIS), though this has been portrayed by PAS as oppressive. A less controversial initiative is the effort to harness information technology for better efficient administration of religious affairs in the state.
- The attitude of Selangor's religious authorities towards Christian minorities, or even minorities within Islam itself, demonstrates the urgent need for a more sophisticated religious outlook. Although Selangor's urban and economically vibrant setting might appear conducive towards promoting a more modern and inclusive orientation, this is constrained by the strongly rooted influence of traditional Islam and the political imperative for PH to contain PAS's momentum.

## INTRODUCTION

At the Selangor State Legislative Assembly's Third Meeting of the Fourth Session in 2016, Saari Sungib, then Member of the Selangor State Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Hulu Kelang (March 2008 to August 2023), asked if the state government had any plans to build Islamic Complexes in all districts across the state. Ahmad Yunus Hairi from Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) responded that the Selangor State Executive Council did have such plans, allocating RM30 million to each district.<sup>1</sup> The total amount set aside for the project would be more than RM270 million. This large sum is an indication of the state's commitment to Islamic affairs and its plans for a stronger promotion of religion to take root in society.

It should be noted that PAS was part of the Selangor government from 2008 to 2018 and held the religious affairs portfolio in 2016. This was also the year in which Parti Amanah Negara (Amanah)—a breakaway party from PAS—was formed. While PAS was adamant that they did not want to work with the Democratic Action Party (DAP) which was also in the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) coalition, the formation of Amanah presented a challenge to them. At that time, they still had not decided whether to remain in the coalition or to go solo in the following General Election (GE).<sup>2</sup>

In 2023, the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (JAIS) received RM56.4 million from the Federal Government, which was meant to be channelled through the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM).<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the Selangor state government itself allocated RM582.63 million to JAIS, an amount that was 39 per cent higher than the amount allocated when Azmin Ali was chief minister in 2016 and 2017.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the amount allocated to Islamic affairs when PAS was in the Selangor government never surpassed the amount given by Pakatan Harapan under current Chief Minister Amirudin Shari (People's Justice Party, PKR).<sup>5</sup>

Following their strong performance during GE15 in November 2022, PAS sought to wrestle Selangor from Pakatan Harapan (PH) during the state election in 2023. In collaboration with Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu), they hoped to win 33 out of 56 seats to form a simple majority in the state government.<sup>6</sup> Given Selangor's consistent economic and development record, PAS only had one political card to play; that Islam in Selangor was under threat.<sup>7</sup> They went as far as to claim that the state government had plans to close more than 80 private religious schools, and that Shariah law would no longer be applied in Selangor.<sup>8</sup> These baseless claims angered the Selangor Ruler, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris who directly warned PAS against making such slanderous claims.<sup>9</sup>

With this context in mind, two issues are at stake. First, what are the state government's initiatives to curb and delay PAS' march towards Shah Alam? Secondly, and more broadly, what is Selangor's face of Islam, especially in view of PAS' conservative orientation?

## SELANGOR: THE GOLDEN STATE

Situated on the west coast in central Peninsular Malaysia, Selangor is one of Malaysia's 13 states. It surrounds the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya and is bordered by Perak to the north, Pahang to the east, Negeri Sembilan to the south, and the Straits of Malacca to the west. Selangor is currently under the reign of Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah Al-Haj. Since 10 March 2008, PR has ruled the state, after taking power from Barisan Nasional (BN).

Selangor comprises of four major cities: Klang, Petaling Jaya, Subang Jaya, and Shah Alam.<sup>10</sup> It is divided into nine districts: Gombak, Hulu Langat, Hulu Selangor, Klang, Kuala Langat, Kuala Selangor, Petaling, Sabak Bernam, and Sepang, and is the richest state in Malaysia based on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita.<sup>11</sup> It is certainly the most developed state in Malaysia, with top-notch highways and public transportation infrastructure. The state's population is the largest at 6,994,423, with Muslims comprising 61.1 percent, and a considerable number of young people in their 30s and 40s.<sup>12</sup> It also boasts a high quality of life and the lowest poverty rate in the country.<sup>13</sup>

Due to it being a developed and urbanised state, one might expect that Selangor's approach towards Islam might be different from other states. The influence of geographical location on one's religious outlook is far from a foreign concept in Islamic history.<sup>14</sup> As a modern metropolitan state, Selangor has the potential to craft its own outlook of Islam and jurisprudence; one that celebrates the constitution, democracy, the benefits of political opposition, pluralism, civil society, and human rights. Such an approach could still be balanced with that espoused by religious institutions in the country. However, this does not seem to be the case.<sup>15</sup>

## INSTITUTIONALISED ISLAM IN SELANGOR

Islam in Malaysia is administered by religious institutions, and any trends in Islamic practices are thus shaped significantly by these. Similar to other states in the Federation of Malaysia, Islamic affairs in Selangor are managed by their own religious council, or the Selangor Islamic Religious Council (MAIS). The mufti, who heads the council, has the authority to issue fatwas which are then gazetted to become part of the state's shariah law. The mufti also plays the role of advising the sultan—regarded as the head of religion in each state—on religious affairs.

Selangor is not without controversy in the gazetting of contentious fatwas, such as the fatwa declaring the influential non-governmental organisation “Sisters in Islam” as deviant on the grounds that the organisation promotes Liberal Islam;<sup>16</sup> taking a hard stance against followers of Shi'a Islam which led to international protests against religious institutions in Malaysia;<sup>17</sup> and upholding the mainstream fatwa against the Qadiani or Ahmadiyya sect.<sup>18</sup>

The above-mentioned religious groups can all be found in Selangor. In many cases, the Sultan of Selangor will issue edicts to ensure that the teachings and activities of these groups are contained. For example, in 2018, the sultan expressed a desire for Selangor not to become a centre for the spread of misguided ideologies and beliefs, referring to—“Liberal Islam”—and instructed the Selangor Islamic Religious Department to “strengthen enforcement actions against all parties found attempting to spread any forms of beliefs that are contrary to Islamic teachings or have been declared deviant and heretical”.<sup>19</sup>

This attitude towards religious minorities and affairs does not reflect the expected attitude of a modern and developed state such as Selangor, and indicates that the state does not intend to adopt an approach beyond the mainstream one exemplified by the traditional Islam found in Kelantan, or by the Wahhabism (disguised as Sunni Islam) in Perlis. Such a modern approach could adopt *fiqh al-aqalliyat* or “minority jurisprudence”, which espouses a tolerant attitude towards religious minorities. This latter branch of jurisprudence emphasises the use of *maqasid al-syariah* (the ultimate aims and intents of shariah)<sup>20</sup> in determining religious affairs.<sup>21</sup>



In other words, Selangor chooses not to celebrate diversity within Islam. This is arguably a missed opportunity to explore a different and unique path of “Selangor Islam”. In fact, Selangor needs to urgently use *maqasid al-syariah* and “minority jurisprudence”, since religious minorities in Selangor are more exposed to violence and discrimination in comparison to other states. Often, it is Muslims who perpetrate such violence and discrimination. This can be argued, for example, when considering the attacks on several churches in 2010 following the dispute over the use of the term “Allah”<sup>22</sup> and the enforced disappearance of Pastor Raymond Koh in 2017.<sup>23</sup>

The only notable and relatively unique effort that institutional Islam in Selangor has introduced comes in the form of efforts to improve services and efficiency through smart technology, specifically by implementing digitisation and better access to online religious information. For example, in order to reduce electricity wastage, some mosques use automatic lighting. Some also use big data and cloud computing in religious administration and governance.<sup>24</sup> This sophistication in technology use is a demand of the times and is not related to differences in discourse, developments, and the emergence of specific trends, or to abstract religious practices that may need to be monitored.

## TRENDS OF ISLAM IN SELANGOR

A common misperception about Islam in Selangor is that the state is lax in religious practice and suffers from a dearth of qualified religious teachers.<sup>25</sup> However, if one thoroughly examines the background and history of traditional Islam in Selangor, one would find this perception to be incorrect. For instance, in 2016 alone, there were 2,071 religious scholars and teachers providing instructions in traditional Islamic texts known as *kitab kuning*.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, it is easy to list renowned scholars active in the state. such as Tengku Mahmud Zuhdi al-Fathani, Kiyai Muhammad Ali Qaribun, Kiyai Khalil Ibn Abu ‘Ammar, and Kiyai Haji Hussain Bin Haji Abbas.

Before independence, there were many *pondok* (traditional religious boarding schools) in Selangor.<sup>27</sup> For example, there were Pondok Syeikh Suhaimi Sungai Udang Klang (1920), Pondok Kiyai Muhammad Ali Sijangkang (1927), Pondok Kiyai Darda’ Sungai Pinang Klang (1937), and Pondok Kiyai Khalil bin Abi Ammar al-Jawi in Bukit Naga (1940). In addition to these private *pondok*, there were also religious schools established by the Selangor state government such as Madrasah Awamiah in Kampung Sepintas, Sabak Bernam (1930), Sekolah Agama Parit Baru (1933), Madrasah Marta il Ulum al-Diniah Klang (now Sekolah Hishamuddin Sungai Bertih Klang), Madrasah Parit Lima Sungai Besar (1937), and the most well-known, Kolej Islam Klang (1955) renamed Kolej Islam Sultan Alam Shah in 1989). The school has produced many prominent scholars including the current Mufti of Selangor, Dr Anhar Opir and the chairperson of the Selangor Islamic Religious and Cultural Innovation Committee, Dr Mohammad Fahmi Ngah, Overall, these *pondok* and religious schools are generally supported by the Selangor royal family.

Selangor also has stringent regulations for granting licenses to religious teachers, as well as revoking them. Most recently, the state revoked the teaching license of celebrity preacher Don Daniyal Don Biyajid for frequently spreading misinformation about Islam.<sup>28</sup> This demonstrates that Selangor is committed to curbing the spread of teachings which deviate from orthodox teachings. Similar cases have happened with preachers such as Dusuki Abdul Rani and

Abdullah Khairi,<sup>29</sup> Wan Ji Wan Hussin,<sup>30</sup> and Perlis Mufti Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin.<sup>31</sup> Religious authorities also occasionally conduct unscheduled inspections at surau and mosques, sometimes arresting unlicensed religious preachers on the spot.<sup>32</sup>

Additionally, Selangor has witnessed a trend of West-based scholars conducting paid lectures, such as Omar Suleiman. Omar, who graduated from the International Islamic University Malaysia, later founded an Islamic think tank based in Texas.<sup>33</sup> Other notable speakers in the past include Nouman Ali Khan,<sup>34</sup> Ismail Menk, Muhammad Salah, Sheikh Saeed Rageah and Aburraheem Green.<sup>35</sup>

Since 2023, the Selangor government has been organising the Turath Islami festival to enhance Islamic scholarship while strengthening the faith of the Muslim community and fostering a better and more balanced society. According to Selangor Menteri Besar (Chief Minister) Amirudin Shari, “this initiative aims, among other things, to prevent the controversy that efforts to uphold and develop Islam need to be carried out by inflaming public sentiment and emotions: The (Selangor) state government leadership believes that to elevate Islam, it should be filled with knowledge and spiritual activities prescribed by the religion, rather than merely using sentiment and emotion. Therefore, the organisation of this festival is intended to impart useful knowledge, accompanied by *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *salawat* (prayers for the Prophet), and cultural and artistic activities that will ultimately shape our meaningful inner selves”.<sup>36</sup> The events of this festival include the Daurah Hadis 40 programme, the Al Wahyu: Islamic Scholarship Traditions of the Malay World Exhibition, lectures, academic discussions, and *salawat* programmes, involving 23 Islamic scholars and intellectuals from both within and outside the country.

While these events might appear to be carefully curated by the religious authorities, they are not sufficient as examples of a unique form of Islam being practised in Selangor. Other states such as Terengganu and Kedah also organise similar Islamic festivals. While they may not be held as regularly or on as large a scale as they are in Selangor, the concept is similar.

However, while the government appears to pay attention to activities for the Muslim community, they do not give the same attention to religious minorities despite the attacks against the latter, as mentioned earlier. In fact, they did the reverse. For example, while claiming to curb the extremism of groups such as the Islamic State, they clamp down on liberal Muslims and Shi’a Muslims whom they claim to practise deviant teachings.<sup>37</sup> It is not unlikely that the government took such action as pre-emptive moves since they are aware that PAS is often looking for weaknesses or reasons to criticise the PH government for not doing enough to protect the Muslim community.

## OBSTRUCTING PAS

As mentioned earlier, PAS’ clichéd yet effective political narrative is that Islam is under threat under PH. Although this claim is merely an allegation, it appears to be an easy bait for voters in Selangor. PAS Youth have also made claims that the Syariah Criminal Enactment in the state is under threat. In response, Dr Mohammad Fahmi Ngah said that such claims were mistruths.<sup>38</sup> Yet, GE15 saw PAS-dominated PN’s share of seats in Selangor increase from 5 to 22, while PH’s seats decreased from 45 to 34, thus missing out on a two-thirds majority in the state assembly.<sup>39</sup> However, despite PAS’ dramatic rise in influence, no clear steps have been taken by the PH government to slow this trend.

While several Islamic programmes have been introduced, their impact on curbing the spread of PAS' ideology is uncertain. An example is the Selangor Bertadabbur 2024 programme, aimed at revitalising certain *surau* (small prayer areas) in the state. This event has been held for six years, with unsatisfactory results if PAS' rise is used as an indicator.<sup>40</sup> A similar programme is Kembara Masjid Selangor, where Dr Fahmi, sometimes accompanied by Amirudin Shari, meets congregants in selected mosques across Selangor.<sup>41</sup> One of Dr Fahmi's efforts to possibly control PAS' influence in *tahfiz* (schools for memorising Qur'an) schools is by urging these centres to register themselves with the religious authorities. Despite these efforts, there are 724 Private Tahfiz Institutions (ITP) operating in the state that are still unregistered with JAIS.<sup>42</sup> It should be noted that the move to register *tahfiz* schools—which was a directive issued by the sultan—was manipulated by PH's opponents during the state elections to stand as a threat to Islam. This contributed to PH's loss of seats, something acknowledged by Mohd Sabu himself, the president of Amanah.<sup>43</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The discussion above illustrates how the Selangor state government has not seized the opportunity to craft its own approach to Islam based on *maqasid al-shariah*. Instead, it has reinforced a traditional Islamic approach which has resulted in the oppression of religious minorities in the state. It is arguable that the government adopted this approach to limit criticism by PAS. Furthermore, since Selangor is urbanised, cosmopolitan and sophisticated, Islamic institutions might feel the need to respond to PAS' assertions and grievances with a more conservative approach as a show of force.

Yet, despite their awareness of growing extremism in the state—partially attributed to PAS—the government has not introduced any clear initiatives to restrain PAS' influence. The government's actions have only served to further suppress religious minorities instead of protecting them. As a result, the situation in Selangor is worse than it is in some other states.

If PH fails to address the political narrative that Islam is under threat in Selangor, alongside taking meaningful steps to curb PAS' rise, it is not unlikely that Selangor could fall to PN in the upcoming election in 2027.

A potential model of inspiration for Selangor in pioneering their own unique approach towards Islam could be that of the contemporary Syrian thinker Muhammad Syahrur whose approach attempts to balance Sunni Islamic epistemologies with modern day challenges, taking into account historical contexts, political structures, and institutions.<sup>44</sup> To be sure, Syahrur's ideas are based on lessons learned from crises in the Middle East, a region ridden with challenges such as corruption, economic inequality, poverty, neo-colonialism, radicalism, marginalisation, and an intellectual crisis. But to be sure, Southeast Asians face similar challenges. In the Malaysian context, the application of Syahrur's approach is in fact in line with *maqasid al-shariah* as highlighted in Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's Madani framework.<sup>45</sup>

The Selangor government should not just be preoccupied with digital advancements. It should also focus on becoming a pioneer of "Selangor Islam". Already equipped with the necessary capital and resources, and being centrally situated, Selangor has the potential of being a role model for all other states.

**ENDNOTES**

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- <sup>1</sup> Dewan Negeri Selangor. 2016a. “Mesyuarat Ketiga Penggal Keempat Dewan Negeri Selangor Tahun 2016” [Third meeting of the fourth session of Selangor state legislative assembly 2016]. <https://dewan.selangor.gov.my/question/kompleks-islam-daerah/> (accessed 7 April 2024).
- <sup>2</sup> Manzaidi Mohd Amin. 2016. “PAS Selangor Kekal Hubungan Poliitik dengan PKR, PPBM, Bukan DAP, PAN [PAS Selangor maintains political relations with PKR, PPBM, not DAP, PAN]. *Malaysia Gazette*, 23 December 2016. [https://malaysiagazette.com/2016/12/23/pas-selangor-kekal-hubungan-politik-dengan-pkr-ppbm-bukan-dap-pan/#google\\_vignette](https://malaysiagazette.com/2016/12/23/pas-selangor-kekal-hubungan-politik-dengan-pkr-ppbm-bukan-dap-pan/#google_vignette) (accessed 7 April 2024).
- <sup>3</sup> Hakimah Mohd Yusoff. 2023. “Kenyataan Media Ketua Pengarah Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia Berkenaan Peruntukan Kewangan Jakim Untuk Negeri Selangor” [Media statement from chief director of department of islamic development concerning Jakim’s financial allocation for the state of Selangor]. *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia*, 2 May 2023. <https://www.islam.gov.my/en/media-statement/3680-kenyataan-media-ketua-pengarah-jabatan-kemajuan-islam-malaysia-berkenaan-peruntukan-kewangan-jakim-untuk-negeri-selangor> (accessed 6 January 2024).
- <sup>4</sup> Aidila Razak. 2023. “Semak Fakta: Peruntukan JAIS Bawah Amir Lebih Tinggi dari Era Azmin [Check the facts: allocation for JAIS under Amir much higher than Azmin’s era]. *Malaysiakini*, 9 August 2023. [https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/675088#google\\_vignette](https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/675088#google_vignette) (accessed 13 February 2024).
- <sup>5</sup> Dewan Negeri Selangor. 2017. “Mesyuarat Kedua Penggal Kelima Dewan Negeri Selangor Tahun 2017” [Second meeting of the fifth session of Selangor state legislative assembly 2017] <https://dewan.selangor.gov.my/question/peruntukan-jabatan-agama-islam-selangor-jais/> (accessed 6 January 2024); Yaya Amir. 2022. “MB Selangor Beri Perhatian Besar Usaha Martabatkan Islam [Selangor chief minister giving great attention to efforts to raise status of Islam]. *Sumberkini*, 18 October 2022. <https://sumberkini.my/mb-selangor-beri-perhatian-besar-usaha-martabatkan-islam/> (accessed 5 March 2024).
- <sup>6</sup> Mohd Izzatul Izuan Tahir. 2023. “PN Sasar Menang 33 Kerusi Bentuk Kerajaan di Selangor” [PN aims to win 33 seats to form Selangor government]. *Sinar Harian*, 30 April 2023. <https://www.sinarharian.com.my/article/256307/berita/politik/pn-sasar-menang-33-kerusi-bentuk-kerajaan-di-selangor> (accessed 7 April 2024).
- <sup>7</sup> Mohd Nasaruddin Parzi. 2023. “Dakwaan Islam Terancam, Jejaskan Sokongan Kepada Calon AMANAH, UMNO” [Claims Islam is threatened, affecting support for AMANAH, UMNO]. *Berita Harian*, 24 December 2023. <https://www.bharian.com.my/berita/nasional/2023/12/1192440/dakwaan-islam-terancam-jejaskan-sokongan-kepada-calon-amanah-umno> (accessed 8 April).
- <sup>8</sup> *Harakahdaily*. 2023. “20,000 Pelajar Islam Terancam Hilang Tempat Belajar di Selangor” [20,000 students in Islamic schools risk losing places for learning in Selangor]. 15 June 2023. <https://harakahdaily.net/index.php/2023/06/15/20000-pelajar-islam-terancam-hilang-tempat-belajar-di-selangor/> (accessed 8 April 2024); Suhaila Shahrul Anwar. 2023. “Undang-undang Syariah Utuh di Selangor, Kemuliaan Islam Dipertahan Sultan” [Shariah laws in Selangor intact, glory of Islam defended by sultan]. *Selangorkini*, 13 November 2023 (accessed 8 April 2024).
- <sup>9</sup> *Sinar Harian*. 2023. “Sultan Selangor Titah Siasat Pemfitnah Sekolah Tahfiz” [Selangor sultan orders investigation on slanders concerning tahfiz schools]. 29 August 2023. <https://www.astroawani.com/berita-malaysia/sultan-selangor-titah-siasat-pemfitnah-sekolah-tahfiz-435046> (accessed 10 April 2024); Justin Ong. 2024. “Selangor Sultan Rebukes PAS President Hadi over ‘Cynical, Misleading’ Remarks on Country’s Shariah Law”. *Malay Mail*, 29 February 2024. <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2024/02/29/selangor-sultan-rebukes-pas-president-hadi-over-cynical-misleading-remarks-on-countrys-shariah-law/120650> (accessed 8 April 2024).



- <sup>10</sup> *The Star*. 2023. “Klang to Become Fourth City in Selangor this Year”. 27 July 2023. <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2023/07/27/klang-to-become-fourth-city-in-selangor-this-year> (accessed 17 February 2024).
- <sup>11</sup> *Malay Mail*. 2024. “DoSM: Selangor Top Contributor to Malaysia’s 2023 GDP”. 2 July 2024. <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2024/07/02/dosm-selangor-top-contributor-to-malaysias-2023-gdp/142535> (accessed 12 August 2024).
- <sup>12</sup> Department of Statistics Malaysia. 2023. “Kawasanku”. <https://open.dosm.gov.my/dashboard/kawasanku/Selangor> (accessed 7 August 21024).
- <sup>13</sup> Hasan Azhari Idris. 2022. “Selangor, the Golden State of Malaysia”. Invest Selangor. <https://www.mdbc.com.my/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/MDBC-Outlook-2022-Invest-Selangor.pdf> (accessed 6 August 2024).
- <sup>14</sup> For example, the founder of the Syafi’i school of jurisprudence, Muhammed ibn Idris ash-Syafi’i (born in 767 AD in Gaza) changed the vast majority of his fatwas when he migrated to Egypt in 815 AD after residing in Baghdad and Mecca. While he had issued 80 fatwas in Baghdad, he kept only 16 of them for Egypt. This act alone illustrates the significance of geographical location in influencing one’s reasoning. In Egypt, Shafie encountered new communities and several different schools of thought which thus made him revisit his opinions. Scholars thus distinguish between Imam Syafi’i’s old opinions and new opinions. For more, see Lahaji Lahaji Nova and Effenty Muhammad. 2015. “Qaul Qadim dan Qaul Jadid Imam Syafi’i: Telaah Faktor Sosiologisnya” [Imam Syafi’i’s old opinions and new opinions: A study of sociological factors]. *Al Mizan Journal* 11, no. 1: 119–35.
- <sup>15</sup> In fact, there were missed opportunities for the state to reformulate their approach to Islam. The Bon Odori controversy was one such case. See Faris Ridzuan and Afra Alatas. 2022. “Bon Odori in Malaysia: Dance-off between Multiculturalism and Revivalism”. *Fulcrum*, 24 June 2022. <https://fulcrum.sg/bon-odori-in-malaysia-dance-off-between-revivalism-and-multiculturalism/> (accessed 29 August 2024).
- <sup>16</sup> *Malay Mail*. 2023. “Apex Court to Hear Sisters in Islam’s Appeal over Selangor Fatwa Declaring it as Deviant on February 27 Next Year”. 2 November 2023. <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2023/11/02/apex-court-to-hear-sisters-in-islams-appeal-over-selangor-fatwa-declaring-it-as-deviant-on-february-27-next-year/99843> (accessed 5 March 2024).
- <sup>17</sup> Islamic Human Rights Commission. 2010. “Action Alert: Malaysia—Raid on Ashura Gathering”. 17 December 2010. <https://www.ihr.org.uk/action-alert-malaysia-raid-on-ashura-gathering/> (accessed 22 February 2024).
- <sup>18</sup> Joseph Sipalan. 2015. “After Years of Persecution, Ahmadiyya Followers Seek Redress at Civil Court”. *Malay Mail*, 3 January 2015. <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2015/01/03/after-years-of-persecution-ahmadiyya-followers-seek-redress-at-civil-court/812979> (accessed 8 July 2024).
- <sup>19</sup> Ruwaida Md Zain. 2018. “Sultan Selangor Dukacita Fahaman Liberal Berleluasa” [Selangor sultan laments the spread of liberal ideas]. *Harian Metro*, 13 November 2018. <https://www.hmetro.com.my/utama/2018/11/394813/sultan-selangor-dukacita-fahaman-liberal-berleluasa> (accessed 17 June 2024).
- <sup>20</sup> As mentioned earlier, the formation of Amanah presented a challenge to PAS. One of the ways in which Amanah has sought to counteract PAS’ conservative approach towards Islam is by championing *maqasid al-shariah*. However, for various reasons, it has not gained much traction. For further discussion on these reasons, see Mohd Faizal Musa. 2023. *The Evolution of Madani: How is 1.0 Different from 2.0?* Trends in Southeast Asia, no. 18/2023. Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.
- <sup>21</sup> For further understanding of *fiqh al-aqalliyat*, see Taha Jabir al-Alwani. 2003. *Towards a Fiqh for Minorities: Some Basic Reflections*. London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- <sup>22</sup> Niluksi Kowasnage. 2010. “Fourth Church Attacked in Malaysia as Allah Row Deepens”. *Reuters*, 9 January 2010. <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/fourth-church-attacked-in-malaysia-as-allah-row-deepens-idUSTRE6080MV/> (accessed 10 August 2024).

- <sup>23</sup> Ho Kit Yen. 2023. “Islamic and Radical Groups Targeted Pastor Koh, Friend Tells Court”. *Free Malaysia Today*. 6 November 2023.  
<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2023/11/06/islamic-and-radical-groups-targeted-pastor-koh-friend-tells-court/> (accessed 17 January 2024).
- <sup>24</sup> Abdul Rahman Ahmad Dahlan, Amirah Amin, Nurul Farhana Suleiman, and Ibrahim Mahamat Ali Moustapha. 2017. “Digital Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor (JAIS): Transformation towards More Efficient Services for the Citizens with Greater Productivity and Performance”. *International Journal of Computer Science and Information Technology Research* 5, no. 2: 128–38.
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- <sup>26</sup> Dewan Negeri Selangor. 2016b. “Mesyuarat Ketiga Penggal Keempat Dewan Negeri Selangor Tahun 2016” [Third meeting of the fourth session of Selangor state legislative assembly 2016]. <https://dewan.selangor.gov.my/question/pendokumentasian-riwayat-hidup-ulama-rakyat-yang-berkhidmat-dengan-sultan-di-selangor/> (accessed 7 April 2024). Kitab kuning is a collection of Islamic texts used in the curriculum in traditional Islamic schools such as *pondok*, *surau*, and *madrasah*.
- <sup>27</sup> Aisyah Ab Rahim and Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor. 2014. “Tokoh Ulama Termasyhur dalam Perkembangan Islam di Selangor Sebelum Merdeka (1900–1957): Satu Tinjauan Biografi [Prominent religious scholars in the development of Islam in Selangor before independence (1900–1957): A biographical overview]. *Jurnal al-Muqaddimah* 2, no. 2: 90–101.
- <sup>28</sup> Ruwaida Md Zain. 2024. “Ustaz Don Banned from Teaching in Selangor—Jais”. *New Straits Times*, 13 August 2024. [https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2024/08/1091143/ustaz-don-banned-teaching-selangor-jais#google\\_vignette](https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2024/08/1091143/ustaz-don-banned-teaching-selangor-jais#google_vignette) (accessed 13 August 2024).
- <sup>29</sup> Ruwaida Md Zaiin. 2023. “Tauliah Mengajar Dusuki, Abdullah Khairii, Ditarik Balik Selaras Titah Sultan Selangor—MAIS” [Licenses of Dusuki, Abdullah Khairi revoked in accordance with Selangor Sultan’s decree—MAIS]. *Berita Harian*, 7 October 2023.  
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<https://www.hmetro.com.my/mutakhir/2017/05/229872/lagi-penceramah-tanpa-tauliah-ditahan> (accessed 28 August 2024).
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- <sup>34</sup> Kousalya Selvam. 2023. “Prominent Preacher Nouman Ali Khan Joins World Quran Convention as Director”. *Sinar Daily*, 29 October 2023.  
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- <sup>35</sup> Naqiukamil Abdullah. 2015. “Kemanisan Dunia, Akhirat” [The sweetness of the world and hereafter]. *Harian Metro*, 27 March 2015.

<https://www.hmetro.com.my/mutakhir/2015/03/39626/kemanisan-dunia-akhirat?m=1> (accessed 28 August 2024).

<sup>36</sup> *The Sun*. “Turath Islami Festival Strengthens Islamic Scholarship, Muslims’ Faith”. 26 May 2024. <https://thesun.my/local-news/turath-islami-festival-strengthens-islamic-scholarship-muslims-faith-EO12492666> (accessed 28 May 2024).

<sup>37</sup> Ali Akbar and Benjamin Isakhan. 2023. “The Islamic State, Shia Religious Clerics and the Mobilisation of Shia Militias in Iraq and Syria. *Contemporary Politics* 29, no. 5: 535–52. The Islamic State’s usual targets are Shi’as, as seen in the attacks against them in Iraq, Oman, Kuwait, and others countries. It should also be noted that Selangor faced a serious threat from the Islamic State in 2017 when a nightclub in Puchong was attacked.

<sup>38</sup> Malaysiakini. 2023. “PAS Youth Called to Prove Syariah Criminal Laws ‘Seen its Last Days’”. 14 November 2023. <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/686579> (accessed 5 March 2024).

<sup>39</sup> Lee Hwok Aun. 2023. “Selangor’s 2023 State Election: Pakatan-BN’s Defense, Perikatan’s Breakthrough”. *ISEAS Perspective*, no. 2023/79, 3 October 2023.

<sup>40</sup> Amirudin Shari. 2024. “Program Selangor Bertadabbur 2024” [Selangor reflects programme 2024]. *Inisiatif*, 4 March 2024. <https://www.amirudinshari.com/posts/program-selangor-bertadabbur-2024> (accessed 13 May 2024).

<sup>41</sup> Dr. Fahmi Ngah. 2024. “Siri Kembara Masjid Selangor” [Selangor mosque adventure series]. *Instagram*, 4 January 2024.

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<sup>42</sup> Mohd Izzatul Izuan Tahir. 2024. “Pemutihan Tahfiz: 724 Tahfiz Persendirian Belum Daftar di Bawah JAIS” [Purge of tahfiz: 724 private tahfiz have not been registered under JAIS]. *Sinar Harian*, 12 June 2024. <https://www.sinarharian.com.my/article/669734/edisi/selangor-kl/pemutihan-tahfiz-724-tahfiz-persendirian-belum-daftar-di-bawah-jais> (accessed 19 July 2024).

<sup>43</sup> Mohamed Farid Noh. 2023. ““Saya Akan Dedah Pembohongan Abdul Hadi Esok”—Mat Sabu” [I will expose Abdul Hadi’s lies tomorrow—Mat Sabu]. *Harian Metro*, 28 August 2023. <https://www.hmetro.com.my/mutakhir/2023/08/1003970/saya-akan-dedah-pembohongan-abdul-hadi-esok-mat-sabu> (accessed 20 May 2024).

<sup>44</sup> “As an effort to ground Islamic law, Syahrur’s thinking in the field of law is clearly influenced by the principles of the new world order, such as nation-state, civil state, democracy, power sharing, and the principle of acceptability and public accountability. On the one hand, Syahrur wants to be realistic about the political order of the law of the modern world, but on the other hand he wants to remain faithful to the guidance of revelation. His solution is to make Islamic law a law that is legally produced by modern political structures and institutions. This solution is based on contemporary socio-historical reality in which almost all modern states view parliament as a legitimate representative body of the people”. See Sakirman. 2017. “Contemporary Fiqh Methodology in the Theory of the Limitation of Dialectics: Space and Time According to Muhammad Syahrur”. *Hunafa* 14, no. 2: 301–26.

<sup>45</sup> There is a crucial need for the fatwa institution to reflect the contemporary period and incorporate moderation (*wasatiyyah*) and reasoning (*ijtihad*) while delivering fatwa. This would reflect a more balanced understanding of the shariah. Islamic authorities in Malaysia, and Selangor in particular, should acknowledge that the bureaucratization of fatwa in Malaysia is a negative example of the restriction of “the free flow of thought and expression on topical issues of concern to Muslim individuals and societies”. See Juma Shaban Chibololo. 2023. “Fatwa and Its Role in the Islamic Contemporary Society”. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews* 4, no. 3: 2109–18.

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