Samuri MAA, Hopkins P. Voices of Islamic Authorities: Friday Khutba in Malaysian Mosques. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 2017, 28(1), 47-67.

Copyright:

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* on 09/02/2017, available online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2017.1280916>

DOI link to article:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2017.1280916>

Date deposited:

01/03/2017

Embargo release date:

09 August 2018

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/)

Voices of Islamic Authorities: Friday Khutba in Malaysian Mosques

Mohd Al Adib Samuri^a and Peter Hopkins^b

^aFaculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia; ^b School of Geography Politics and Sociology, Newcastle University, United Kingdom

Abstract

Malaysia has been introducing Islamization policies since the 1980s and has used Friday khutbas (sermons) to convey government and religious authorities' ideas and interpretations of Islam. We used content analysis of the texts of khutbas delivered in 2013 and 2014 in six states in Malaysia, all of which were obtained from the respective states' Islamic authorities' websites. This research found that weekly Friday khutbas have been used to announce the Islamic authorities' commitment to safeguard the sanctity of Sunni Islam, to monopolize the interpretation of Islam, to establish the collective mistreatment of minority Muslim groups, and to promote the implementation of *hudud* law. Our analysis demonstrates that the control exercised and exerted by the government and religious authorities over mosques, covering aspects ranging from the mosque's administration and appointment of the imam to the preparation of the khutba text has created an ideal opportunity for the government to influence the Muslim society's understanding and stance on a variety of social, religious and political issues in a multi-ethnic community. Despite the diversity of responses to khutbas, Muslims in Malaysia do not possess a forum in which to debate or criticize the contents of khutbas that are politicized, contain errors or inaccurate facts, are non-inclusive, and provide narrow and limited religious interpretations. Beyond Malaysia, this article may be used as a reference point or source of information for other Muslim communities to prevent governments and religious authorities from controlling khutba sermons, which may lead to the risk that they might be manipulated to benefit certain interested parties.

Keywords: Islamization; Malaysia; Islamic authorities; Friday khutba; Islamic law in Malaysia

Introduction

Malaysia is generally recognized as a moderate Muslim state; however, it is currently undergoing a gradual Islamization process within the government's legal and administrative systems, which is impacting the lives of all Malaysians. The first wave of Islamization occurred in the early 1980s, where the central and state governments and religious authorities joined forces in creating a specific 'mould' to unify the interpretation and practice of Islam in Malaysia. Various initiatives were introduced to produce a version of Islam that was in line with the government's requirements, such as registering all public religious schools, standardizing the curriculum for religious schools and Islamic subjects, broadcasting religious campaigns via national media, and legally preventing any party or person from attempting to propagate and practise Islam

in ways that were opposed to mainstream Sunni Islam. Despite the numerous studies relating to Islamization in Malaysia, none have considered the extent to which the Friday khutba is utilized by these two authorities – the government and the religious establishment – to convey their approved Islamic interpretations. This will be the focus of this article.

During 2015, the Friday khutbas issued by the religious authorities received considerable criticism, including from people of other faiths. On 9 January 2015, a human rights lawyer, Eric Paulsen, publicly stated via his personal Twitter account that the Friday khutbas prepared by the Department of Islamic Development of Malaysia (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia; Jakim) had led to a rise in extremism in the country. His Twitter post reads: ‘Jakim is promoting extremism every Friday. The Government must do something about it if it is serious about eradicating extremism in Malaysia’ (quoted by Utusan Online 2015a). Needless to say, Paulsen’s status update on social media went viral in no time, enraging and offending a large number of Muslims in Malaysia. Responses to his statement came from a broad spectrum of Muslims; ministers, politicians from both government and opposition parties, muftis, ulamas (Islamic scholars), academics, Muslim bureaucrats and ordinary citizens who deemed the Twitter post to be insulting to Islam and seditious in nature. The minister in the prime ministerial department responsible for Islamic affairs condemned Paulsen’s social media post, claiming that it was ‘...a severely irresponsible act and a threat to the religious harmony this nation has enjoyed to date’. Jakim subsequently filed a police report on Paulsen’s online status update (Utusan Online 2015b). Paulsen was arrested by the police for investigation under the Sedition Act 1948; he was later released on bail and is currently awaiting trial. Also in 2015, Chong Eng, a non-Muslim Chinese woman and a leader in Malaysia’s democratic political party DAP, criticized the content of a Friday khutba that concerned the concept of women’s dress-code requirements in Islam, and the tendency of religious authorities to punish Muslim women who do not wear the hijab. The police subsequently requested Chong Eng to record her statement on the matter (Ali 2015).

Earlier, in 2013, another criticism of khutbas was made by the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM). At the time, the issue arising from the use of the word ‘Allah’ by Christians in Malaysia was at its height. The object of CFM’s censure was the content of a khutba prepared by Jakim on 6 September 2013, which CFM claimed falsely, and without any real evidence, accused Christian missionaries of actively

advocating apostasy (Malaysian Insider 2013). At about the same time, during a debate in the Malaysian Parliament, a non-Muslim MP questioned the khutba issued by Jakim on 30 August 2013, which called Christians enemies of Muslims. However, this was subsequently denied by the religious minister (Utusan Online 2013).

The criticisms voiced by people of other faiths illustrates their concern regarding the content of khutbas, which can be easily accessed and heard openly by members of the public, including people of other faiths, since the khutba is broadcast via television, radio, mosque loudspeakers and online. Remarkably, a large part of the Muslim community in Malaysia is averse to openly criticizing khutba contents as they believe that the khutba is authoritative and should therefore to be heard and obeyed. To date, research on the manipulation of khutbas by government and religious authorities for specific motives in various countries has been carried out by several researchers, including Borthwick (1967), Wiktorowicz (1999), Kamp (2008), Faier and Torstrick (2009), and Errihani (2011). This article will further explore the extent to which religious authorities in Malaysia use the khutba to deliver government policies, cement Sunni Islam's position as the religion of the Federation, propagate government-sanctioned Islamic interpretation and promote the full-fledged implementation of *hudud* law. We discuss briefly the concept of the khutba, and then undertake a more detailed examination of khutbas within the context of mosques in Malaysia. This is followed by a content analysis of the khutba texts from four perspectives: safeguarding the sanctity of Islam; monopolizing the interpretation of Islam; treatment of minority Muslim groups; and the implementation of *hudud* law.

Understanding khutba

The khutba is a form of public preaching about the teachings of Islam that takes place weekly on Friday afternoons, just before the Friday congregational prayers. Muslims believe that the khutba is a way for the ulama to communicate to the Muslim community, and is rooted in the practices of the Prophet Muhammad within the pioneering Muslim community in Medina (Martin 2004). The khutba may also be considered as a forum for exchanging and gaining knowledge within the Muslim community, in addition to classes for Islamic studies that are held in mosques (Antoun 1993).

Khutbas are delivered by way of reminders, advice and admonishments relating to Islamic morality and values (Wardak 2002) and should directly impact and benefit the practical aspects of Islamic life (Muzakki 2008). A khutba has two sections, which may each last from 15 minutes to an hour, separated by a few minutes to allow the *khatib* (preacher) to sit for a while and the listeners to say prayers. Every khutba consists of a basic framework; at its most rudimentary, it should at least contain praises to Allah, the reading of one passage from the Qur'an, recitation of the *salawat* (blessings on the Prophet Muhammad) and intercessions for all Muslims in general. During the khutba, the congregation should listen in silence, and any kind of talking or conversation is prohibited, thus reflecting the level of authority the khutba possesses. Azodanloo (1992) critically notes that the image of authority is clearly presented by the elevated location of the pulpit above the congregation, who are usually seated on the mosque floor. Moreover, if the *khatib* happens to hold a political office, the khutba he delivers will often appear to carry more authority. In addition, the communication is one-way, and members of the congregation are unable to interject or pose questions about the content of the khutba they are listening to.

The 'audience' during the khutba is composed entirely of men who live close to or happen at the time to be in the neighbourhood of any the mosque in question. It is not compulsory for women to attend Friday congregational prayers, so the content of khutbas does not usually touch upon women's issues. Women have never been, and never will be, prohibited from attending mosques to listen to the khutba, but they may be prevented by the fact that the space allocated to them is small and limited (Kamp 2008). The congregation does not come from a specific class or denomination and Fathi (1981,169) commented that 'thus anonymity and heterogeneity marked the audience' of the khutba. Despite Muslim communities having diverse interpretations of Islam, they are generally willing to set aside their factional allegiances to listen to the universal Islamic values expounded in the khutba (Calder 1986). Through the khutba, those listening can 'reinvigorate collective ties through their mutual participation' (Wiktorowicz 2001).

Typically, the topics covered by a khutba range from Islamic doctrine, *ibadah* (worship), the life of the Prophet and Islamic ethics. Although the imam selects verses from the Qur'an and Hadith that are from a time and context that has clearly passed, the focus and purpose of the selection is made with the present in mind. Jones (2012, 89) writes that the khutba 'persuades the congregation to act out, project, and apply the

khutba's message to its own particular social, cultural, and political reality'. In addition, the khutba functions as a platform from which to influence the Muslim community's perception of a certain issue, mobilize activism, strengthen ties and relations amongst the congregation (Wiktorowicz 2001) and formulate responses to the challenges faced by locals, such as social and religious discrimination (Fink 2007; Hashem 2010).

There have undeniably been instances of khutbas broaching topics related to social issues and politics, but this does not happen on a weekly basis. Fathi (1981) considered that khutbas play an active role in the development of public issues, and that they have, in certain situations, been used to criticize established authorities. Scholars have different views about when exactly social and political issues started to be discussed in Friday prayer khutbas. Errihani (2011) and Wiktorowicz (2001) have argued that socio-political topics had long been a theme in khutbas and can be found in khutbas from the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Those who hold to this idea are more likely to incorporate socio-political aspects in their khutbas and not limit themselves to more general topics. However, Borthwick (1967) found that socio-political themes were particularly introduced at the beginning of the twentieth century, when khutbas in the Muslim world began to make use of the pulpit as a platform for political legitimization and the discussion of current socio-political issues. Today, in most Muslim countries, khutbas have become an effective medium of communication between the government, or current political powers, and the Muslim community.

What influence do khutbas have on their audience? Considering that the khutba is part of worship in Islam, it undoubtedly makes some sort of an impact on the worldview of its hearers, who may have been attending khutbas from their childhood. Furthermore, with a large turnout almost guaranteed, imams can potentially deliver a khutba that has a considerable degree of influence within their communities (Albayrak 2012). The khutba is an effective medium for conveying and propagating interpretations and ideas for the Muslim masses to digest (Muzakki 2008). Moreover, those attending must sit in silence for the duration of the khutba, and there is no forum in Islam for critical discussion or debate post-khutba. Errihani (2011) argues that, through the khutba, Muslims are introduced to a vital aspect of religious discourse: there is to be no debate in a public space such as the mosque, especially since the content of the khutba is based on the Qur'an and Hadith, which most Muslims believe cannot be questioned. Hence the importance of researching the content of khutbas delivered around the world.

Realistically, the perceived effect of a khutba's content cannot be the same for the whole congregation, given that each individual present has a different level of understanding and religiosity. Not every person who prays in a mosque on Friday will immediately acquiesce to the ideas the khutba conveys. Despite the compulsory nature of the khutba, a small number of people in any congregation will, as Tayob (1999) has argued, have somewhat nonchalant 'responses' to the khutba, such as falling asleep, coming late, and not really focusing on the preaching. In fact, in our own experience, it is not unusual to come across a few members of the congregation sleeping or not paying attention, which suggests that the khutba may not be as effective for some as it is for others.

There are currently two approaches to or styles of composing khutbas in most mosques. The first is for khutbas to be composed solely and freely by the *khatib*, and the second is for them to be prepared, written, edited and/or approved of by religious authorities. Traditionally, the *khatib* is responsible for the khutba's content, and must take the initiative in selecting the topic to be addressed. He must ensure that the khutba's content is based on Islamic authority and Islamic teachings, and at the same time have a sound reason for its selection (Reeber 1991), and he is free to touch upon a variety of topics relevant to the congregation. Such khutbas are usually heard in mosques in European countries and secular Muslim states such as Indonesia. Khutbas are generally structured and composed by the imam or *khatib* of the mosque in such a way as to relate the contents to the Islamic calendar (for example Ramadan), or current issues concerning Muslims, or general topics (Kamp 2008). If the khutba is not composed by the imam or *khatib* himself, he may purchase books that contain examples of khutbas to be delivered before Friday prayers, as is the practice in Indonesia (Hooker 2008). This approach to preparing a khutba does not lean towards propagating government political ideas.

In the second approach, which is quite different, the khutba is written, edited and approved by religious authorities in order to achieve certain objectives such as religious and political legitimacy (Borthwick 1967), to control the threat of terrorism and radical ideologies (Kamp 2008; Errihani 2011), or to filter out Islamic interpretations that are not in line with mainstream Muslim beliefs and practices. The rationale behind this is that religious authorities have realized the potential for khutbas to be 'vehicle(s) for political announcements and even calls for revolt' (Faier and Torstrick 2009, 29). The application of state bureaucracy to wield control over the voice

from the pulpit has occurred in many Muslim countries. Countries such as Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, Brunei and Malaysia have taken steps to oversee and censor the contents of khutbas. Authoritative governments worry about a khutba's potential effect when delivered by a *khatib* with considerable oratorical skill and powerful religious references, which may inspire Muslims to rise up en masse against the state or its functions (Wiktorowicz 1999). It is therefore of supreme importance for governments to control the contents of khutbas. The khutba is an authoritative form of communication by which Islamic authorities address the Muslim community, and can have a substantial effect on how Islam is practised and understood. We now consider how khutbas are controlled and prepared by religious authorities within the context of mosques in Malaysia.

Friday Khutba in the Context of Mosques in Malaysia

Malaysia is a secular state that has clear constitutional provisions relating to Islam. Article 3 of the Constitution states that Islam is the religion of the Federation, that the sultan is the religious head of every state that is a monarchy, and that the Yang di-Pertuan Agong is the religious head in the Federal Territories and states without monarchies. This means that all matters pertaining to Islam fall under the purview of the sultan of each respective state. This is further detailed in Schedule 9 List II State List of the Federal Constitution, which lists matters relating to Islam under the jurisdiction of the state government and not the federal government. On the basis of this distribution of power, the state assembly enacts legislation relating to Islamic administration, the Sharia courts, personal status laws concerned with matters such as marriage and inheritance, and laws on matters regarded as minor criminal acts under Islamic law. Intervention by the Malaysian federal government on Islamic matters has continuously increased since the early 1980s as a result of the Islamization policy (Funston 2014). However, the federal government does not have jurisdiction to administer matters regarding mosques and Friday khutbas, which are clearly under the jurisdiction of the state Islamic authorities.

In Malaysia, it is compulsory for all mosques to be registered and governed by each state's Islamic religious council. Given the power bestowed upon the Islamic authorities of each state, they are responsible for preparing, publishing and distributing khutbas to every certified imam. The khutbas are delivered to mosques by post for imams to take further action within a week before the date when the khutba is to be

delivered. In this way, the issues to be mentioned in the khutba can be updated to reflect the latest news. In Malaysia, khutbas are delivered in Malay, except for the parts that are recited in the original Arabic and then translated into Malay. This means that the whole khutba is comprehensible to almost everyone in attendance since it is delivered in the country's official national language. This situation differs from mosques with more diverse communities such as those in Europe, where some khutbas are delivered in Arabic and not in the local vernacular, thus limiting how many understand the content and significance of the khutba (Wardak 2002).

The sultans are the religious heads of their respective states, so all khutbas must include recitation of an intercession for the sultan's well-being, a prominent feature unique to khutbas in Malaysia. In fact, the inclusion of an intercession for the sultan at the end of the khutba is a practice that has been in place since the medieval period in Islam (Jones 2012;). Scholars have traced sources that show that the recitation of intercessions for leaders during the khutba is a form of legitimizing and acknowledging the authority of the current government (Jones 2012; El Shamsy 2008). In the Malaysian context, praying for the sultan signifies that he is the head of Islamic religion in his state, and confirms that he has prerogative powers in all matters pertaining to Islam there. The failure of a *khatib* to recite intercessions for the sultan may result in his career being brought to an end because refusal to pray for the sultan may be interpreted as an act of disavowing the power of the sultan as the head of religion in the state concerned. Thus, khutbas in Malaysia are overseen by two authoritative powers: the sultan and the more political state or federal governments. Both of these authorities may direct or influence officials acting for the religious authorities to write khutbas to promote specific agendas and perspectives.

State legal provisions and rules provide that only khutbas prepared and published by religious authorities are permitted to be read or delivered by an authorized and appointed *khatib* or imam. This means that the *khatib* cannot read a khutba that he himself has written, even if he possesses great credibility in his knowledge and a strong background in Islamic studies. It follows that khutbas are not improvised because the *khatib* or imam is bound to use the pre-approved text. State Sharia law calls for stringent action against imams who deliver khutbas that are not prepared by the religious authorities. For example, Section 97 of the Sharia Criminal Offences Enactment, State of Sabah 1995, states:

Whomsoever reads a khutba on a Friday that was not prepared or approved by the Council has committed an offence, and, if convicted, is punishable by a fine not exceeding MYR 2000 or imprisonment for no longer than one year or both.

The same provision can be found in section 113A, Sharia Criminal Offences Enactment, State of Negeri Sembilan 2004, which also provides that any individual who delivers a khutba without permission has committed an offence. In addition, some states apply legal provisions that control khutbas implicitly, by allowing only specified mosques to hold Friday prayers, so the delivery of the khutbas may be monitored. This provision can be found in the states of Terengganu, Perak, Malacca and Pahang, although different terminology is used and the sentences imposed upon conviction vary.

It is important to know the background of the religious officials responsible for writing the khutbas. The khutba composers are public officials and civil servants in the governmental religious departments and they have some degree of influence over society because of their status (Shiozaki and Kushimoto 2014). These religious bureaucrats received their early education from state or national religious schools (Camilleri 2013) and later furthered their studies in local and foreign universities, so they are decidedly different from the pre-Independence, traditionally-trained officials who went to *pondok* (traditional religious boarding school) (Shiozaki and Kushimoto 2014). After they are appointed to the Friday khutba unit, they are responsible for writing khutbas every week or employing university lecturers or certified teachers of Islamic studies as external contributors. Each khutba is evaluated and verified by a special committee, whose members are Muslim bureaucrats and local ulama appointed by the relevant department. Given the importance of their role, it cannot be denied that Muslim bureaucrats have contributed significantly to the successful implementation of Islamization policies in Malaysia. Hassan (2007) states that Muslim bureaucrats, including those working under the Islamic authorities, have assisted in the government's efforts to initiate the Islamization process and promote Islamic agendas.

So, why do mosques in Malaysia require the authorities to compose khutbas on their behalf? The religious authorities may suggest that the purpose is to help the imams and *khatibs* and lighten their burden. This is because the khutba's contents must be supported by verses from the Qur'an and the Prophetic Hadith, so they must be quoted in the right context and meticulously prepared (Kamp 2008). If imams were left without

khutba texts, they might find difficulty in preparing them. In Malaysia, not all imams have the level of education that would enable them to interact with religious texts accurately and effectively. The majority have only received a traditional Islamic education, which makes them competent in the very basic duties of an imam, such as leading the daily congregational prayers, reading and teaching the Qur'an, and making funeral arrangements. Albayrak (2012) argues that, before an imam is capable of preparing a khutba properly, he first must undergo an extensive training in Islamic studies, which will develop his knowledge and religious practices to maturity. Thus, the preparation of khutbas by the religious authorities indirectly eases the burden of imams in their mosque duties, and this may have been the original intention behind the religious authorities' takeover of the preparation of khutbas every week. However, a review of several legal provisions reveals that the motive behind controlling the contents of weekly khutbas is based on political legitimacy and the propagation of the government's and religious authorities' Islamic and political agendas. This becomes more apparent in analysis of khutba subtopics.

In Malaysia, khutbas are often seen to be an important forum for political parties to spread their manifestos.

There are therefore laws in place to ensure that no criticism may be levelled at the central and state government by any individual during the khutba's delivery. For example, based on Rule 33, Rules of Mosques Officials and Parish Committee (State of Selangor) 1999, if any mosque official gives a speech, lecture, Friday khutba or Eid al-Fitr or Eid al-Adha khutba that has a tendency to incite hatred, revolt or dislike toward the federal government or any state government, or to encourage enmity between different ethnicities or amongst citizens in Malaysia, the Islamic religious Council may suspend or dismiss that official. This legal provision clearly prevents any imam from criticizing the government or airing opinions that go against government policies and agendas. Such provisions are not only undemocratic, but also limit the capacity of religious communities to interpret Islam in the current and local political context. This is supported by Shiozaki and Kushimoto (2014) who argued that, despite ulamas in Malaysia being granted good positions in the bureaucratic sector, they are no longer free to provide interpretations in Islam. All views and interpretations must be in line with the requirements of the central or state governments.

There are states such as Selangor that provide a website for people to file complaints if a *khatib* has abused his delivery of the khutba by, for example, sending

politically motivated messages (Jais 2010a). The same website gives people who listened to the khutba an opportunity to evaluate it for qualities such as the *khatib*'s vocal intonation and his fluency in reciting the Qur'an and Hadith (Jais 2010b). Unfortunately, these listeners do not have an opportunity to voice their disagreement with any part of the khutba's content in this online form. This complaint mechanism is not only potentially subject to misuse, but regrettably, it has resulted in many *khatibs* steering clear of making any changes to the contents of the khutba, even if they disagree with it. Ultimately, they read the khutba text without any real choice and for fear of legal action if they do not.

Most state religious departments have taken proactive steps by uploading all khutba texts to their official website to increase the public's access to weekly khutbas. This is one of the many initiatives taken to implement and apply information technology in Islamic institutions in Malaysia. States that are slightly ahead technologically, such as Selangor and the Federal Territories upload the khutba texts in Bahasa Melayu, English, a version written in *jawi* (Arabic alphabet), and a PowerPoint presentation to accompany the text that was read. It is therefore quite possible for those who were not present at a particular khutba (especially women) to read and digest its contents for themselves. Another reason for the uploads is to keep an online record, particularly since Islamic institutions in Malaysia are currently undergoing a major administrative transformation, specifically in terms of upgrading their delivery system and digital records (Muhammad 2009; Wan Mohd Saman and Haider 2013). Since only the text is uploaded to the religious authorities website, the manner and method of its actual delivery cannot be replicated and the way it is perceived online is also open to discussion. In addition to being accessible online, the official khutba at the National Mosque is also televised live every Friday afternoon via the nation's official broadcasting system, RTM and the Islamic government-owned radio station, IKIM.fm. Some states also have live radio broadcasts of their Friday khutbas from their state mosques. Almost anyone can thus access the contents of a khutba, including communities of other faiths that may live close to a mosque and can hear the khutba clearly.

To sum up: the khutba is a conducive forum for religious authorities and state and federal governments to instil their ideas and Islamic interpretations amongst devout Muslims. This process is further enabled by Islamic legal provisions and state-level Islamic administrative systems. However, in addition to the khutba being a point from

which knowledge about Islam is communicated to the Muslim masses, there also exists in a few khutbas in Malaysia an underlying agenda on the part of government and religious authorities, which will be discussed in the findings section below.

Method

This research is a content analysis research that was conducted descriptively on the basis of khutba texts in 2013 and 2014 from six states in Malaysia: The Federal Territories, Selangor, Terengganu, Kelantan, Malacca and Sabah. These six states were chosen because their religious authorities were among the most consistent in uploading khutbas to their website during these two years. Each year, as many as 52 khutba texts (104 over two years) were uploaded by the religious authorities for public access and use by the mosques.

The khutbas were selected purposively by reading the titles and texts found on the websites. As previously discussed, khutba topics cover myriad issues in Islam, and do not all discuss the issues at stake in the present study. The researcher chose khutbas that had bearing on the following themes: 1. Safeguarding the sanctity of Islam in Malaysia; 2. Monopoly on the interpretation of Islam; 3. Treatment of minority Muslim groups; 4. Implementation of *hudud* law. All of the chosen khutba texts were written in Bahasa Melayu and partly in *jawi* (Arabic alphabet). For the purpose of this article, all the quoted texts have been translated so as to retain as much of the original meaning of the khutba as possible.

Findings

Safeguarding the sanctity of Islam

Islamic authorities in Malaysia often see themselves as the defenders of Islam and as playing an important role in preserving its sanctity. As they see it, no individual or group may disturb or challenge the sanctity of Islam and its institutions. They therefore use the pulpit as a platform from which they respond and react to issues relating to Islam in Malaysia. Lee (2010) and Mohamad (2010, 2011) discuss the increase in the power and influence of religious bureaucrats and the role of Muslim bureaucrats in religious institutions. The effects are already visible in matters such as the development of Sharia law in some states, the strengthening of Islamic institutions and the right to freedom of religion for people of other faiths. Whenever an issue arises that involves

other religious communities and Muslims, the religious authorities attempt to dominate the situation, including using khutbas as a platform. Khutbas in Malacca stated that the religious authorities were responsible for preserving the sanctity of the teachings of Islam in Malaysia by referencing several religious sources. One khutba in Malacca called for people of other faiths to respect the status of Islam in Malaysia:

The religion of Islam is venerable, and no other religion is more venerable than Islam. We have just recently celebrated our 57th Independence Day. Malaysia is an independent country that revolves around the Constitution, and the Malaysian Constitution has set Islam as the religion of the Federation. Islam is given the highest regard in the country's Constitution. As such, Islam in Malaysia is upheld by all Muslims and respected by people of other faiths. Islam has been placed upon a pedestal although other religions may be practised on this earth. Therefore, it is the responsibility of Malaysian citizens to respect Islam. And I strongly oppose any form of insult to this holy religion by people of other faiths. (Khutba dated 31 October 2014; Jaim 2014a)

In this khutba, the *khatib* criticized the actions of Christians in Malaysia who fought to use the word 'Allah' in their Malay translations of the Bible, which was viewed by many as an insult to Islam. A similar sentiment was present in the Federal Territories and attracted the interest of the Christian community as stated in the introduction:

...let us together protect the integrity and identity of our religion; our open-mindedness has enabled matters involving basic Islamic doctrine and *Tawheed* (oneness of God) to be misused by other religions [Christians]. This is extremely dangerous because their [Christians] ultimate goal to use the word 'Allah' is meant to confuse Muslims by claiming that all religions are the same. The word 'Allah', the daily prayers, *Tawheed*, the prophets, the Kaaba, and hajj are all the rights of Muslims that shall not be trespassed by any party. The *mimbar* (pulpit) also urges the relevant authorities responsible to take necessary action against those who would attempt to ruin the beliefs and doctrine of Muslims. The battle to defend the sacred word 'Allah', to uphold the religion accepted by Allah, and to protect the exclusive rights of Muslims is a holy battle that is guaranteed to receive Allah's help and aid. (Khutba dated 6 September 2013; Jakim 2013a)

Human rights groups in Malaysia also came under the religious authorities' scrutiny after they vocalized their criticism regarding issues of human rights violations in the name of religion. The religious authorities countered their criticism via khutbas. In Kelantan, one *khatib* attempted to criticize human rights groups that were lobbying for certain Islamic legal provisions relating to apostasy and homosexuality in Malaysia to be abolished, as they violated basic human rights. The khutba stressed that:

There are specific parties that have planned in the name of protecting basic human rights to challenge the principles of freedom allowed under Sharia and simultaneously question the status of Islam as the religion of the Federation, which is set in the Malaysian Constitution. These people are uncomfortable with the implementation of Islamic law in this country. They make various demands to be accepted by the government and then furthered to an international level. If the Malaysian Government does indeed concede to their demands, the implication and effect this will have on Sharia law and the lives of Muslims in this country will undoubtedly be a massive one. (Khutba dated 24 January 2014; Maik 2014a)

A khutba in Terengganu, on the other hand, touched upon issues relating to the right to freedom of religion for apostates and transgender and marital rights for LGBTs, which contravene Islamic principles. The khutba saw the criticisms of human rights groups and liberal Muslims as an attack against Islam:

All these phenomena are part of the enemies of Islam's subtle and meticulously planned agenda to cause deviation in the Muslim umma's faith and trivialize Sharia law. These phenomena must be dealt with swiftly by any means possible, in order to prevent them from spreading and inviting Allah's Wrath, as Allah has severely warned us in the Quran. (Khutba dated 28 November 2014; Maidam 2014a)

These khutbas have been used by the religious authorities to place in the minds of the Muslim community the idea that Islam is being challenged and threatened by other religious communities and human rights groups. Researchers found that in the effort to reinforce the status and sanctity of Islam, most khutbas in several states have referred to these two parties as the 'enemies of Islam'. Labelling such as this will undoubtedly further cement the idea that the religious authorities are defending and protecting Islam from the 'enemies of Islam'. It would also appear that the religious

authorities are attempting to sow seeds of fear in the listeners so that they agree with the opinions and actions to be taken in defending Islam.

Monopoly on the interpretation of Islam

The governments of several Muslim countries are facing competition from Islamic movements or Islamists to win the battle for hegemony over religious interpretation and sacred authorities. Wiktorowicz's (1999) work in Jordan shows that the government there introduced a series of measures and strategies to control the interpretation of Islam. A similar situation has occurred in Malaysia, where only Sunni Islam has been accepted as the definition of Islam in the Constitution and Islamic statutory law. The central and state governments use religious authorities to monopolise the power to interpret text in Islam by declaring any other interpretations to be deviant and misleading (Hamid 2003). Furthermore, religious authorities at state level use whatever instruments of power they have to diminish Islamic heterogeneity internally, as observed by Hoffstaedter (2013). Clearly, the khutba is an effective channel for this purpose. It may affect a large number of the more conservative and devout Muslims in Malaysia who depend so strongly on the credibility of religious authorities as interpreters of Islamic text.

Khutbas in several states that were researched would consistently explain that the mainstream practice of Islam in Malaysia is the true and authentic path of Islam. In discussing the nature of interpretations of Islam that are acceptable in the state of Malacca, a khutba stated:

Groups that affiliate themselves with Islam such as Shia, *Rafida*, *Khawarij*, *Murji'a*, *Qadaria*, *Jahmiyya*, and so on have contravened some or all of the basic principles in Islam. Teachings that reject the Qur'an and the Sunna, interpret Islam on a purely intellectual level or based on convenience and desire, and vilify the Companions, are extreme in nature and must be opposed; they do not fall within the teachings of the Sunni Islam. (Khutba dated 17 October 2014; Jaim 2014b)

There were also khutbas that gave justifications for why tolerance towards other Islamic schools was not an option. This excerpt from a khutba in Malacca seems to suggest that if diversity in Islam were allowed in Malaysia, there would be no guarantee of social unity:

The stance taken by the authorities and Islamic institutions in designating the Sunni school of Islam as the official way of Islam is to use it as a guide, way of life and practice for Muslims in this country. It is clear that this stance has left a lasting impact by uniting the *umma* and strengthening the unity and stability enjoyed by the nation. Therefore, any efforts to insert teachings and beliefs other than Sunni Islam or practices that are atypical to the normal practices of the Muslim community may be seen as an effort to divide society and disturb the peace and harmony of the country. (Khutba dated 17 October 2014; Jaim 2014c)

The congregation was also reminded that the power to interpret religious principles was the sole prerogative of the ulama. This means that the general public must follow whatever definition of Islam is voiced by the religious authorities without opposition or criticism. One *khatib* in Selangor advised:

Members of the public who are not religious experts are prohibited from ever providing false information relating to religion, because speaking without knowledge is akin to speaking untruths and can have a dangerous misleading effect on one's faith. There is no need for feigned heroism in a field that you do not command or possess. The fact is everyone has a chance to be a religious expert, but one must first have a firm grasp of the discipline of Islamic knowledge in this field, and not just parrot what and what not to obey; do not become carbon copies or copy and paste the sayings of enemies of Islam or those who do not aspire to religion. (Khutba dated 19 December 2014; Jais 2014a)

Khutbas have also been used by religious authorities to communicate the duty of Muslims in Malaysia to take action against heresy, which includes deviant teachings or beliefs. First, Muslims must steer clear of any interpretations that are not aligned with the opinions of religious authorities such as the National Fatwa Council. For example, one khutba in Terengganu clearly defended the ulamas' authority by countering criticism by anti-Hadith groups in Malaysia that equated ulamas to priests. The khutba quoted Q 20.28, which declares the ulama to be Allah's most pious of slaves (Khutba dated 4 April 2014; Maidam 2014b). In a similar vein, khutbas in Selangor and Terengganu reminded the audience:

Therefore, the hidden reality behind the teachings that oppose the Hadith of Rasulullah is that there is opposition to the implementation of Islam and

upholding the Sharia in their lives. Therefore, Muslims must take a stand and reject any and all heretical beliefs and teachings in order to preserve the sanctity and authenticity of the sources of Islam. We must also prevent these deviant ideas and teachings from spreading amongst our families, friends and acquaintances ... Muslims must never ever be influenced by supporting, helping or spreading the word of anti-Hadith groups as this will lead to apostasy. (Khutba dated 25 April 2014; Jais 2014b)

It must be stressed that heretics will not stop from propagating their deviation. Therefore, Muslims must keep far away from them and their ideologies to protect the purity of Islamic doctrine from being corrupted by these deviants, since everything they deny and question is set in the Quran. (Khutba dated 4 April 2014; Jheat 2014)

Muslims must lodge a complaint to the religious authorities if they come across any activities or teachings that contradict Sunni Islam beliefs and principles. During the year-end khutba of 2014, the *khatib* reminded the Muslim community of Selangor to remove themselves from heresy or any interpretations that deviated from the principles of the religious authorities. The khutba listed all the teachings that were declared to be deviant in Selangor and the nature of those teachings so that the listeners could stay clear of them (Jais 2014a). Similarly, a khutba in Sabah called upon the Muslim community there to be more proactive in assisting the authorities to curb the influence of heretic teachings against Sunni principles:

In case there are groups or individuals who attempt to propagate teachings, practices and beliefs that contradict Sunni Islam and the Sharia, Muslims in this state must lodge complaints with the religious authorities in their area. This action is to ensure that these deviant teachings, practices and beliefs do not expand and spread amongst society. (Khutba dated 17 October 2014; Jheains 2014)

On a similar note, a khutba in Malacca stated:

Any teachings, ideas, principles or beliefs that contradict or deviate from Sunni Islam must be prevented and stayed away from as stated in the fatwa by the Religious Council or Mufti's Department in states across Malaysia.

All new teachings and ideologies that cause confusion must be referred directly to the National Fatwa Council, the State Mufti's Department and certified ulamas as well as Islamic institutions recognized by the authorities. (Khutba dated 17 October 2014; Jaim 2014c)

Khutbas have been used by the religious authorities to urge the government to wield their political power to control the propagation of teachings other than that of Sunni Islam. For example, in criticizing anti-Hadith groups in Malaysia, a khutba in the Federal Territories stated:

The mimbar also recommends that the relevant party takes the necessary steps to ensure that Muslims are not influenced by ideologies that may ruin their faith and worldview. Do not let this matter slide or trivialize it, because even a virus, if left unattended, will spread and cause destruction beyond expectations one's initial expectations. (Khutba dated 21 February 2014; Jakim 2014)

Treatment of minority Muslim groups

Khutbas have also been a platform used by Islamic authorities to reject the concept of religious pluralism and to explain the 'offence' of being a non-Sunni Muslim. The ulama and other religious authorities often claim that religious pluralism and diverse interpretation of Islam are un-Islamic and must be proscribed (Lai 2014; New Straits Times 2014). Malaysia has until now been recognized as a heterogeneous Muslim state where religious and non-religious communities are divided only by doctrine and culture (Aziz and Shamsul 2006). In 2013 and 2014, the main focus of the Islamic authorities has been the minority group of Shi'a Muslims. Khutbas have been employed to explain the difference between Sunnis and Shi'ites in doctrine and Sharia law. At the end of the khutba, the congregation is counselled not to follow or study the teachings of the Shi'a or risk having legal action taken against them.

A khutba in Terengganu attempted to justify why swift and severe action should be taken to stop the spread of Shi'ism there:

This conflict [between Sunnis and Shi'ites] may cause fighting parties to easily shed the blood of their opponents. If this conflict is successfully planted within our nation's Muslim society, the enemies of Islam who have long

awaited the downfall of our people and country will most certainly rejoice. Death and the destruction of property as a result of such conflict is not an assumption, but reality; and the reality is that it will happen again in a nation that has followers from these conflicting schools ... If this were to happen in our country, our mosques may one day be divided into Sunni mosques and Shi'a mosques. And at that time, we will no longer be able to appreciate our opponents. Therefore, stay away from the Shi'a and its dangerous teachings, before we are beset with the woes of battle, murder and civil war. (Khutba dated 27 September 2013; Maidam 2013)

A khutba in Selangor focused in detail on the 'offence' of Shi'a teachings from a Sunni perspective and informed the congregation of the fatwa pronouncing the deviance of the Shi'a. According to the fatwa, any Shi'a followers may face charges in the Sharia court for violation of a fatwa. The khutba reminded the congregation:

Based on part of the deviant Shi'a teachings explained by the *khatib* today, it is clear to see that the beliefs, practices and principles of these Shi'ites are very much in contradiction with Sunnism. The conflict arises not just from a practical point of view, but in fact from the very roots of the creed itself. Therefore, it is obligatory to prevent ourselves from falling within their reach so that we may not follow in their deviance and practice that which is not from the true Sharia. (Khutba dated 20 June 2014; Jais 2014c)

In the Federal Territory, one khutba urged the listeners to assist the authorities in constraining the expansion of the Shi'a by lodging reports:

As Muslims, it is our duty to report to the religious authorities in our respective areas if we suspect, come to know of or actually witness any party attempting to spread the deviant teachings of the Shi'a. Remember, any and all efforts to contain such teachings fall within the meaning of 'jihad' in defending the integrity of the religion that was passed down to us, whereas any attempts to stir up chaos by spreading the teachings of the Shi'a are counted as acts that are deviant and misleading. (Khutba dated 29 November 2013; Jakim 2013b)

In Kelantan, one khutba ordered that Shi'a followers should repent and called their beliefs 'acts of stupidity' that must be rejected. The *khatib* stated:

Whoever amongst the Muslim accepts the teachings of the Shi'a and takes part in insulting and vilifying the Companions must repent swiftly and ask for

Allah's forgiveness, and turn away from those acts of stupidity and return to Sunni Islam. (Khutba dated 29 March 2013; Maik 2013)

The Shi'a community in Malaysia is currently facing social pressure and legal action is being taken against individuals who practise Shi'a teachings, study their doctrines and propagate it to the public (Musa 2013). The contents of khutbas such as this one may potentially increase the mistreatment and religious persecution of these communities.

Implementation of *hudud* law

Khutbas are a useful forum for extending knowledge about the Sharia to the Muslim community (Feener 2012), or as Hooker (2008) puts it, 'the khutba is a public exposition of Sharia each week'. According to the latter's research in Indonesia, khutbas are generally laden with Sharia perspectives on a variety of issues or incidents that occur in that country. However, his research did not find any evidence of issues in Islamic criminal law such as *hudud* being discussed in the khutba books in Indonesia. It is possible that no major issues on the matter of *hudud* implementation arise in Indonesia as they do in Malaysia.

In Malaysia, the polemic on *hudud* was first discussed when the government of the state of Kelantan led at the time by the Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) had prepared legislative framework relating to *hudud* and *qisas*, called the *Enakmen Kanun Jenayah Syariah (II) 1993*. However, the laws could not be implemented because they were believed to contravene the provisions of the Federal Constitution and other relevant acts that had limited the power of the Sharia court in sentencing for criminal offences (Seda-Poulin 1993; Harding 2002). Since the effort to introduce Sharia criminal law in full has yet to succeed, the campaign for it is currently ongoing, and the most effective stage from which to campaign is via khutba.

Most scholars have identified the main players in this campaign as Islamists within certain political parties. However, Hamayotsu (2012, 407) criticizes the stereotypical view, arguing: 'It is important to note that demands to expand the institutions of Sharia come not only from Islamist opposition, but also from Muslim elites within the ruling party and state apparatus.' These include religious authorities in most states, who play a leading role in raising awareness amongst Muslim communities in Malaysia about the necessity of implementing the *hudud* laws. Through the khutbas that they prepare, the religious authorities show a positive attitude towards the

implementation of *hudud*.. The question is, why does *hudud* law need to be implemented in Malaysia? The religious authorities attempt to rationalize the implementation of these controversial laws for the listeners to process:

The methods of caning, amputation of hands and the death sentence carried out in public will make the criminals facing these sentences truly believe that they are being punished by the people. Herein lies the factor of the effectiveness of *hudud*, which leaves such an effect on the public that it automatically promotes prevention, and every person who harbours intentions to commit similar crimes will be forced to think long and hard about the consequences if they are caught. Society needs to be made aware of the fact that the nature of *hudud* is to deter and educate. (Khutba dated 6 June 2014; Maik 2014b)

The implementation of Islamic law, including *hudud* sentencing, *qisas* and *takzir* is a responsibility and obligation; the governing powers must try as hard as possible to ensure that Allah's Divine laws may be implemented. We shall all be questioned and held responsible by Allah in the afterlife according to our respective roles and capacity while on this earth. Will we be categorized as those who went against Sharia or will we be categorized as those who tried and searched for ways to implement Islamic law? All parties must unite to make this noble intention a success. (Khutba dated 30 May 2014; Maik 2014c)

There is no shortcut to resolving this matter [social issues] unless we practise Islam in its entirety and absolutely, be it Islamic creed, Sharia law or Islamic transaction. (Khutba dated 11 April 2014; Maik 2014d)

As for the sentences of stoning, amputation of the hands and death, all seemingly horrific, and they are indeed horrific; but would it not therefore cause future would-be offenders to think a thousand times before committing whatever crimes are out there? This is the deterrence effect that is born from the different stages of punishment. (Khutba dated 5 September 2014; Jais 2014d)

Through the khutba, the religious authorities can provide clarification based on a classical Islamic perspective to shape the Muslim community's understanding of *hudud*, as well as to respond to certain parties' criticisms regarding these laws. The religious authorities have tried to silence many viewpoints on the subject of *hudud* implementation by warning that rejection of *hudud* is akin to apostasy and that one will be punished by Allah for it. Such a warning from the authorities will undoubtedly create a sense of unease amongst Muslims and thus cause them to continue their undivided support of *hudud*.

Hoping or believing that laws more suitable than Allah's divine laws is wrong and can ruin one's faith. The Qur'an and Hadith comprise what is meant by Allah's law. Allah's law encompasses what Allah has determined for us and how to do it, whether it is a question of worship, business, crime or marriage. Debating and doubting the effectiveness and benefit of Allah's law by claiming that there are laws better than His will render that person an apostate and out of Islam. (Khutba dated 31 January 2014; Jaim 2014b)

Muslims must prevent themselves from this habit of questioning Allah's laws without knowing the real situation of things in order to avoid the ruination of their faith and receiving the commensurate punishment in the afterlife. (Khutba dated 5 September 2014; Jais 2014d)

As congregations are only presented with the classical views of the ulama, Muslims may have limited understandings of *hudud*. This is supported by Moustafa (2013, 2014), who found that the Muslim community in Malaysia had an erroneous understanding and perception of Sharia and Islamic law, including *hudud* and the current Islamic legal system in Malaysia.

Discussion

The khutbas quoted in this research demonstrate that the religious authorities in Malaysia have discussed topics that may potentially lead listeners to narrow and undiversified religious interpretation by rejecting interpretations and views that do not match their own, claiming that only their interpretations count as true Islam, promoting religious sanction and persecution of Muslim minority groups such as the Shi'a and snubbing the idea of religious pluralism. Furthermore, they also use a negative tone in discussing the right to freedom of religion and apostasy, LGBT rights and Muslim

transgenders, and other human rights issues. It must be stressed here that problematic khutbas such as these are not delivered every week. However, the religious authorities take advantage of whatever space they can to convey their ideas and interpretations and build their image and reputation as defenders of Islam.

In addition, government policies relating to Islam can also be propagated efficiently via khutbas, causing the Muslim community to cease questioning them because they have been neatly packaged in religious doctrine. The khutbas that were analysed show evidence of several federal and state government policies on Islam that were discussed in these khutbas, such as the position of Islam as the religion of the Federation and the execution of Islamic law. Khutbas have provided serious arguments as to why the Muslim community should support the effort to implement Islamic law completely, including *hudud* law. For a long time, Islamists in Malaysia were quite alone in their effort to promote the implementation of *hudud* laws; however, in recent years, the nation has witnessed religious institutions moving their campaigns in that direction, thus shaping the community's attitude towards the need for the implementation of these laws.

One cause of concern is that there are no external bodies that monitor, evaluate or improve the content of the khutbas. There is no post-khutba forum for Muslims to question, discuss or voice dissent with a khutba's contents. When listening to a khutba in a government-controlled mosque, one must listen with obedience rather than understanding or pleasure (Errihani 2011). In Malaysia, there is no room for the congregation to discuss the khutba, to correct its contents or to debate it in any form. This emphasizes the idea that everything that is spoken in a khutba is correct and must be adhered to by every Muslim. The act of criticizing or questioning the contents of a khutba is seen as a form of insult to the sultan. This premise was crafted by a mufti, who stated via the media that the 'duty to prepare the Friday khutba by Jakim or the Islamic Religious Department is one that is bestowed and approved by the Sultan (states) and the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (for the Federal Territories), therefore all parties should respect it' (Astro Awani 2013). Although this statement was made by only one mufti out of 14, it nonetheless gives the impression that serious religious authorities wish to silence any talk of a khutba's contents. The Malay Muslim community, which is particularly fond of the monarchical institutions in Malaysia and acknowledges the sultan as the head of religion in their state, will thus find it hard to accept that khutbas can be criticized.

Clearly, some *khatibs* in Malaysia do not have a choice in delivering the khutbas, which impacts their freedom as religious scholars. Reeber (1991, 292) states 'If the *khatib* no longer has freedom of movement, other platforms will arise, away from the liturgical category of the mosque, where it proves possible to produce once more the instruction and doctrine of one's choice in complete freedom.' The question is, are imams in Malaysia looking for another platform from which to be heard since they cannot write their own khutbas? It is difficult to prove the existence of other platforms, as mentioned by Reeber, since the imams in Malaysian mosques are appointed by the Islamic authorities after their qualifications, political leanings and school of thought have been evaluated. It is certain that only those with visions in line with the Islamic authorities can be selected as imams and allowed to read the khutba. The downside to this is that they will most probably never question any of the contents prepared for them.

Conclusion

This article discusses khutbas in Malaysia that were initially controlled and prepared by the religious authorities to facilitate administration, reduce the burden on imams and convey certain government policies. However, this research has found that khutbas have become a platform for the religious authorities to present their worldview, which is in contradiction with Islam's nature as a religion that is broad, acknowledges diversity and encourages tolerance. The khutbas that were analysed have shown that ideas that may promote narrow religious interpretations and religious intolerance of Muslim minorities have been presented, albeit not every week, in thousands of mosques across Malaysia. At the same time, the religious authorities are serious in conducting their campaign for the implementation of hudud law, and are attempting to be champion defenders of Islam in relation to a variety of social, religious and political issues in this multi-ethnic society. However, listeners in the congregations come from a variety of backgrounds, such that some may be critical of what they hear, while others may simply accept it all as part of the teachings of Islam. This itself will most certainly cause some unease to the religious authorities in Malaysia, who have long assumed that they are the spokespeople for Islam.

The time has come for Muslims in Malaysia to contribute to the composition of khutbas without being controlled and monitored by the religious authorities. By allowing this kind of flexibility, Muslims may contribute intellectually in the relevant

Islamic forums in Malaysia and give a balanced perspective or counter-narrative on what the religious authorities propagate. In addition, the religious authorities need to provide a suitable forum for Muslims to discuss the contents of Friday khutbas, give feedback, correct mistakes and inaccuracies, challenge views, and even provide a different interpretation. Most importantly, the contents of khutbas should be allowed to be criticized and debated. This case study can be used as a guide and reference by any and all Muslim communities beyond Malaysia to prevent governments and religious authorities from controlling Friday khutbas and thus avoid the risk of their being manipulated to serve special interests.

References

- Albayrak, I. 2012. "Friday Sermons and the Question of Home-trained Imams in Australia." *Australian eJournal of Theology* 19 (1): 29–42.
- Ali, A. 2015. "Chong Eng disiasat." *Utusan Online*, February 12. Accessed 16 December, 2016. <http://www.utusan.com.my/berita/nasional/chong-eng-disiasat-1.58625>
- Antoun, R. T. 1993. "Themes and Symbols in the Religious Lesson: A Jordanian Case Study." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25 (4): 607–624.
- Aziz, A., and A. B. Shamsul. 2006. "The Religious, the Plural, the Secular and the Modern: A Brief Critical Survey on Islam in Malaysia." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 5 (3): 341–356.
- Azodanloo, H. G. 1992. "Formalization of Friday Sermons and Consolidation of the Islamic Republic of Iran." *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 1 (1): 12–24.
- Astro Awani. 2013. "Pertikai Isi Khutbah Jumaat Derhaka Kepada Institusi Diraja – Mufti Pahang." *Berita*, September 18. Accessed December 21, 2015. <http://www.astroawani.com/berita-malaysia/pertikai-isi-khutbah-derhaka-kepada-institusi-diraja-mufti-pahang-22393>.
- Borthwick, B. M. 1967. "The Islamic Sermon as a Channel of Political Communication." *Middle East Journal* 21 (3): 299–313.
- Calder, N. 1986. "Friday Prayer and the Juristic Theory of Government: Sarakhsī, Shīrāzī, Māwardī." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 49 (1): 35–47.
- Camilleri, R. 2013. "Religious Pluralism in Malaysia: The Journey of Three Prime Ministers." *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 24 (2): 225–240.
- El Shamsy, A. 2008. "The Social Construction of Orthodoxy." In *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, edited by T. Winter, 97–117. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Errihani, M. 2011. "Managing Religious Discourse in the Mosque: The End of Extremist Rhetoric during the Friday Sermon." *Journal of North African Studies* 16 (3): 381–394.
- Faier, E., and R. L. Torstrick. 2009. *Culture and Customs of the Arab Gulf States*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.
- Fathi, A. 1981. "The Islamic Pulpit as a Medium of Political Communication." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 20 (2): 163–172.

- Feener, R. M. 2012. "Social Engineering through Sharia: Islamic Law and State-Directed Da'wa in Contemporary Aceh." *Islamic Law and Society* 19: 275–311.
- Fink, S. 2007. "Preaching as Reimagining: Post-9/11 Khutbahs in the United States and Canada." *Comparative Islamic Studies* 3 (2): 195–212.
- Funston, J. 2014. "Malaysia." In *The Politics of Islamic Reassertion*, edited by M. Ayoob, 165–189. Hoboken, NJ: Taylor and Francis.
- Hamayotsu, K. 2012. "Once a Muslim, Always a Muslim: The Politics of State Enforcement of Syariah in Contemporary Malaysia." *South East Asia Research* 20 (3): 399–421.
- Hamid, A. A. 2003. "Inter-Movement Tension among Resurgent Muslims in Malaysia: Response to the State Clampdown on Darul Arqam in 1994." *Asian Studies Review* 27 (3): 361–387.
- Harding, A. 2002. "Keris, the Crescent and the Blind Goddess: The State, Islam and the Constitution in Malaysia." *The. Sing. J. International & Comparative Law* 6: 154–180.
- Hashem, M. 2010. "The Ummah in the Khutba: A Religious Sermon or a Civil Discourse?" *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 30 (1): 49–61.
- Hassan, M. H. 2007. "Explaining Islam's Special Position and the Politic of Islam in Malaysia." *The Muslim World* 97 (2): 287–316.
- Hoffstaedter, G. 2013. "Islam and Freedom of Religion: Anthropology, Theology and Clashes of Universalisms in Contemporary Malaysia." *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 24 (3): 270–289.
- Hooker, M. B. 2008. *Indonesian Syariah: Defining a National School of Islamic Law*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Jaim (*Jabatan Agama Islam Melaka*; Malacca Islamic Religious Department). 2014a. "Mempertahankan kesucian agama Islam." Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://jaim.melaka.gov.my/eng/khutbah/khutbah%20oktober/MEMPERTAHA%20KAN%20KESUCIAN%20AGAMA%20ISLAM%2031.10.14.pdf>.
- Jaim. 2014b. "Jauhi perkara yang boleh menggugurkan iman." Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://jaim.melaka.gov.my/bm/archive/khutbah/jauhi%20perkara%20yang%20boleh%20menggugurkan%20aqidah%2031-1-14.pdf>.
- Jaim. 2014c. "Berpegang kepada Akidah Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah." Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://jaim.melaka.gov.my/eng/khutbah/khutbah%20oktober/BERPEGANG%20KEPADA%20AQIDAH%20AHLI%20SUNNAH%2017.10.14.pdf>.
- Jais (*Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor*; Selangor Islamic Religious Department). 2010a. "E-masjid: Borang Penilaian Khutbah." Accessed January 10, 2015. <http://e-masjid.jais.gov.my/uploads/borangs/BorangPenilaianKhutbah.pdf>.
- Jais. 2010b. "E-masjid: Borang Aduan Khutbah Jumaat Jais." Accessed January 10, 2015. <http://e-masjid.jais.gov.my/uploads/borangs/KomenKhutbahJumaat.pdf>.
- Jais. 2014a. "Isyarat Bahaya Telah Dibunyikan." Accessed January 10, 2015. [http://e-masjid.jais.gov.my/uploads/uploads/KhutbahJumaat\(Rumi\)19122014.pdf](http://e-masjid.jais.gov.my/uploads/uploads/KhutbahJumaat(Rumi)19122014.pdf).
- Jais. 2014b. "Tanggungjawab Untuk Memelihara Sunnah Rasulullah Disamping Menangkis Serangan Golongan Anti Hadis." Accessed January 10, 2015. [http://e-masjid.jais.gov.my/uploads/uploads/KhutbahJumaat\(rumi\)25042014.pdf](http://e-masjid.jais.gov.my/uploads/uploads/KhutbahJumaat(rumi)25042014.pdf).

- Jais. 2014c. 'Penyelewengan Syiah.' Accessed January 10, 2015. [http://emasjid.jais.gov.my/uploads/uploads/KhutbahJumaat\(rumi\)20062014.pdf](http://emasjid.jais.gov.my/uploads/uploads/KhutbahJumaat(rumi)20062014.pdf).
- Jais. 2014d. "Hudud Daripada Perspektif Islam." Accessed November 14, 2014. [http://emasjid.jais.gov.my/uploads/uploads/KhutbahJumaat\(rumi\)05092014.pdf](http://emasjid.jais.gov.my/uploads/uploads/KhutbahJumaat(rumi)05092014.pdf).
- Jakim (*Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia*; Department of Islamic Development of Malaysia). 2013a. "Mempertahankan Akidah Ummah." Accessed January 10, 2015. http://www.islam.gov.my/sites/default/files/khutbahjakim/upload/rumi/doc/mempertahankan_akidah_ummah_rumi.doc.
- Jakim. 2013b. "Virus Syiah." Accessed January 10, 2015. http://www.islam.gov.my/sites/default/files/khutbahjakim/upload/rumi/doc/virus_syiah_rumi.doc.
- Jakim. 2014. "Hadith: Sumber Perundangan Islam." Accessed December 20, 2014. http://www.islam.gov.my/sites/default/files/khutbahjakim/upload/rumi/doc/hadith_sumber_perundangan_islam_rumi.doc.
- Jheains (*Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Negeri Sabah*; Islamic Religious Affairs Department of Sabah). 2014. "Membasmi Amalan dan Ajaran Bercanggah Syariat." Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://www.jheains.sabah.gov.my/downloads1/Khutbah-Jumaat/Tahun-2014/10-Oktober/Khutbah-Jumaat-22-Zulhijjah-1435H-Bersamaan-17-Oktober-2014.pdf>.
- Jheat 2014. 2014. "Anti-hadith: Fahaman yang sesat dan menyesatkan." Accessed November 14, 2014. [http://e-khutbah.terengganu.gov.my/files/Khutbah%20Anti-hadith%20fahaman%20Yang%20Sesat%20dan%20Menyesatkan\(J\).pdf](http://e-khutbah.terengganu.gov.my/files/Khutbah%20Anti-hadith%20fahaman%20Yang%20Sesat%20dan%20Menyesatkan(J).pdf)
- Jones, L. G. 2012. *The Power of Oratory in the Medieval Muslim World*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kamp, M. 2008. "Prayer Leader, Counsellor, Teacher, Social Worker, and Public Relations Officer: On the Roles and Functions of Imams in Germany." *Islam and Muslims in Germany*, edited by A. al-Hamarneh and J. Thielmann, 133–160. Leiden: Brill.
- Lai, A. 2014. "RoS Should Ban Organisations Spreading Contradicting Islamic Ideologies." *New Straits Times*, November 26. Accessed January 26, 2015. <http://www.nst.com.my/node/56711>.
- Lee, J. C. H. 2010. "Oversanctification, Autonomy and Islam in Malaysia." *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 11 (1): 27–46.
- Maidam (*Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Melayu Terengganu*; Council of Islam and Malay Custom Terengganu). 2013. "Menjauhi Ajaran Syiah." Accessed November 14, 2014. [http://e-khutbah.terengganu.gov.my/files/Khutbah%20Menjauhi%20Ajaran%20Syiah%20\(J\).pdf](http://e-khutbah.terengganu.gov.my/files/Khutbah%20Menjauhi%20Ajaran%20Syiah%20(J).pdf).
- Maidam. 2014a. "Agenda terancang untuk merosakkan aqidah umat Islam." Accessed November 14, 2014. [http://e-khutbah.terengganu.gov.my/files/khutbah%20Agenda%20Terencang%20Musuh-Musuh%20Islam%20Merosakkan%20Aqidah%20Ummat%20Islam\(J\).pdf](http://e-khutbah.terengganu.gov.my/files/khutbah%20Agenda%20Terencang%20Musuh-Musuh%20Islam%20Merosakkan%20Aqidah%20Ummat%20Islam(J).pdf).
- Maidam. 2014b. "Anti hadith: Fahaman yang sesat dan menyesatkan." Accessed November 14, 2014. [http://e-khutbah.terengganu.gov.my/files/Khutbah%20Anti-hadith%20fahaman%20Yang%20Sesat%20dan%20Menyesatkan\(J\).pdf](http://e-khutbah.terengganu.gov.my/files/Khutbah%20Anti-hadith%20fahaman%20Yang%20Sesat%20dan%20Menyesatkan(J).pdf)

- khutbah.terengganu.gov.my/files/Khutbah%20Kefahaman%20Yang%20Sesat%20Dan%20Menyesatkan(J).pdf.
- Maik (*Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan*; Kelantan Islamic Religious Council). 2013. "Kesesatan Fahaman Syiah Dan Cacian Mereka Terhadap Para Sahabat." Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://www.e-maik.my/v2/index.php/muatturun/category/3-khutbah-2013.html?download=35:siri-13-2013-kesesatan-fahaman-syiah-dan-cacian-mereka-terhadap-para-sahabat-pdf&start=40>.
- Maik. 2014a. "Hak Asasi Menurut Keutamaan Islam." Accessed January 10, 2015. <http://www.e-maik.my/v2/index.php/muatturun/category/4-khutbah-2014.html?download=8:siri-04-2014-hak-asasi-menurut-keutamaan-islam-pdf&start=40>.
- Maik. 2014b. "Pelaksanaan Hukuman Islam Pendidikan dan Pencegahan." Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://www.e-maik.my/v2/index.php/muatturun/category/4-khutbah-2014.html?download=255:siri-23-2014-pelaksanaan-hukuman-islam-pendidikan-dan-pencegahan&start=20>.
- Maik. 2014c. "Kewajipan Melaksanakan Hukum Islam." Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://www.e-maik.my/v2/index.php/muatturun/category/4-khutbah-2014.html?download=254:siri-22-2014-kewajipan-melaksanakan-hukum-islam&start=20>.
- Maik. 2014d. "Gejala Sosial." Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://www.e-maik.my/v2/index.php/muatturun/category/4-khutbah-2014.html?download=19:siri-15-2014-gejala-sosial-pdf&start=20>.
- Malaysian Insider. 2013. "Isu kalimah Allah, CFM desak Jakim henti tuduhan tanpa fakta." Accessed January 10, 2015. <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/bahasa/article/isu-kalimah-allah-cfm-desak-jakim-henti-tuduhan-tanpa-fakta>.
- Martin, R. 2004. *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. New York: Macmillan Reference.
- Mohamad, M. 2010. "The Ascendance of Bureaucratic Islam and the Secularization of the Sharia in Malaysia." *Pacific Affairs* 83 (3): 505–524.
- Mohamad, M. 2011. "Malaysian Sharia Reforms in Flux: The Changeable National Character of Islamic Marriage." *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family* 25 (1): 46–70.
- Moustafa, T. 2013. "Islamic Law, Women's Rights, and Popular Legal Consciousness in Malaysia." *Law & Social Inquiry* 38: 168–188.
- Moustafa, T. 2014. "Judging in God's Name: State Power, Secularism, and the Politics of Islamic law in Malaysia." *Oxford Journal Law Religion* 3 (1): 152–167.
- Muhammad, M. R. 2009. "IT Alignment in Malaysian Public Sector: e-Syariah as a Case of Study." In *Proceedings of the European Conference on E-Government*, edited by P. Hahamis, 501–509. London: University of Westminster.
- Musa, M. F. 2013. "The Malaysian Shi'a: A Preliminary Study of Their History, Oppression, and Denied Rights." *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 6 (4): 411–463.
- Muzakki, A. 2008. "Islam as a Symbolic Commodity: Transmitting and Consuming Islam through Public Sermons in Indonesia." In *Religious Commodifications in Asia: Marketing Gods*, edited by P. Kitiarsa, 205–219. New York: Routledge.

- New Straits Times. 2014. "‘Those Who Questioned Fatwa May Face Action’." *New Straits Times*, November 8. Accessed January 26, 2015. <http://www.nst.com.my/node/50719>.
- Reeber, M. 1991. "A Study of Islamic Preaching in France." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 2 (2): 275–294.
- Wan Mohd Saman, Wan Satirah, and Abrar Haider. 2013. "E-Shariah in Malaysia: Technology adoption within justice system." *Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy* 7.2: 256–276.
- Seda-Poulin, M. L. 1993. "Islamization and Legal Reform in Malaysia: The Hudud Controversy of 1992." *Southeast Asian Affairs* 224–242.
- Shiozaki, Y., and H. Kushimoto. 2014. "Reconfigurations of Islamic Authority in Malaysia." *Asian Journal of Social Science* 42 (5): 602–619.
- Tayob, A. 1999. *Islam in South Africa: Mosques, Imams, and Sermons*. Miami: University Press of Florida.
- Utusan Online. 2013. "Jakim nafi keluar khutbah Jumaat seru memusuhi penganut Kristian." *Utusan Online*, September 24. Accessed January 10, 2015. http://ww1.utusan.com.my/utusan/Parlimen/20130924/pa_05/Jakim-nafi-keluar-khutbah-Jumaat-seru-memusuhi-penganut-Kristian.
- Utusan Online. 2015a. "Jakim buat laporan polis terhadap Eric Paulsen." *Utusan Online*, January 12. Accessed January 25, 2015. <http://www.utusan.com.my/berita/jenayah/jakim-buat-laporan-polis-terhadap-eric-paulsen-1.47092>.
- Utusan Online. 2015b. "Khutbah nasihat ke arah kebaikan." *Utusan Online*, January 11. Accessed January 25, 2015. <http://www.utusan.com.my/berita/nasional/khutbah-nasihat-8232-ke-arah-kebaikan-1.46664>.
- Wardak, A. 2002. "The Mosque and Social Control in Edinburgh's Muslim Community." *Culture and Religion* 3 (2): 201–219.
- Wiktorowicz, Q. 1999. "State Power and the Regulation of Islam in Jordan." *Journal of Church and State* 41 (4): 677–696.
- Wiktorowicz, Q. 2001. *The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood, and State Power in Jordan*. Albany: State University of New York Press.