



THE ROLE OF ADAT PERPATIH IN THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIO-POLITICAL  
ORGANIZATION OF NEGERI SEMBILAN DURING  
BRITISH COLONIAL ERA

BY

NUR ASMIRA BINTI ANUAR

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for  
the degree of Master of Human Sciences in  
History and Civilization

Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and  
Human Sciences  
International Islamic University Malaysia

MAY 2017

## **ABSTRACT**

Adat Perpatih is one distinctive feature that differentiates Negeri Sembilan from other Malay states in Malaysia which practise Adat Temenggung. Among the prominent values of the customary law derived from a Minangkabau law, Adat Tuah Disakato is matrilineal system, clanship and democracy. Due to lack of study done so far on Adat Perpatih, the study aims to highlight the condition of Adat Perpatih in Negeri Sembilan during the British rule, the nature of relationship between the local Malays and the British colonizers as well as disputes that occurred between both parties and the solutions achieved to end the conflicts. Using the qualitative research technique based on primary and secondary sources, the study shows that even though the influence of Adat Perpatih was overshadowed by the British bureaucratic system, particularly in terms of politics, the customary law continued to have impact especially on the social affairs of the Malays as indicated in the British's land regulation in Negeri Sembilan. Worth mentioning also is though at first the British and the local Malays had some issues in their relationship, their attitude improved towards one another as time went on through compromise and diplomacy. This partly contributed to the maintenance of Adat Perpatih in the state. The study is expected to encourage the Malays to be proud of their heritage. Finally, many prospective research topics can be conducted in the future.

## ملخص البحث

"عادات بيرباتيه" قانون عربي ينظر إليه كونه أحد السمات البارزة التي تميّز ولاية "نجري سيمبيلان" عن بقية الولايات الملايوية في ماليزيا والتي تمارس هذه العادات. من بين القيم البارزة في القانون العربي المستمد من قانون "مينانقباو" أي عادات "تواه ديساكاتاو" النظام الأمومي، والعشائري والديمقراطية. نسبة لعدم وجود دراسات أجريت حتى الآن على "عادات بيرباتيه" فإن هذا البحث يهدف إلى تسليط الضوء على وضع "عادات بيرباتيه" في ولاية "نجري سيمبيلان" خلال الحكم البريطاني، وطبيعة العلاقة بين حكام الملايو المحليين، والمستعمرين البريطانيين، إضافة إلى النزاعات التي حدثت بين الجانبين، والحلول التي تم التوصل إليها لإنهاء الصراعات. من خلال استخدام تقنيات البحث النوعي، واعتمادا على المصادر الأولية والثانوية، فإن هذا البحث أكد بأنه بالرغم من أن تأثير "عادات بيرباتيه" قد غطى عليه النظام البيروقراطي البريطاني وتحديدًا في الناحية السياسية، فإن هذا القانون العربي استمر في لعب دور مؤثر سيما في الشؤون الاجتماعية لشعب الملايو كما أشار إلى ذلك قانون الأراضي في ولاية "نجري سيمبيلان" وتجدد الإشارة إلى أنه وبالرغم مما شاب العلاقة بين البريطانيين وحكام الملايو المحليين من خلافات بادئ الأمر، فإن الدبلوماسية واتباع سياسة التراضي والتفاهات أسهمتًا بمرور الزمن في تحسين مواقفهم تجاه بعضهم البعض. هذا الأمر أسهم جزئيا في الحفاظ على "عادات بيرباتيه" في ولاية "نيجري سيمبيلان". من المتوقع أن تشجع هذه الدراسة الملايويين على الافتخار بتراثهم. وأخيرا فإنه من الممكن في ما بعد إجراء دراسات في الموضوعات البحثية المستقبلية.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion; it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in History and Civilization.

.....  
Fauziah Fathil  
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in History and Civilization.

.....  
Wan Suhana Wan Sulong  
Examiner

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of History and Civilization and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in History and Civilization.

.....  
Fauziah Fathil  
Head, Department of History and  
Civilization

This dissertation was submitted to the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in History and Civilization.

.....  
Rahmah Bt. Ahmad H. Osman  
Dean, Kulliyyah of Islamic  
Revealed Knowledge and Human  
Sciences

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Nur Asmira Binti Anuar

Signature.....

Date .....

**INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA**

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION OF  
FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

**THE ROLE OF ADAT PERPATIH IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
SOCIO-POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF NEGERI SEMBILAN  
DURING BRITISH COLONIAL ERA**

I declare that the copyright holder of this dissertation are jointly owned by the student and IIUM.

Copyright © 2017 Nur Asmira Binti Anuar and International Islamic University Malaysia. All rights reserved.

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purposes.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieved system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

By signing this form, I acknowledged that I have read and understand the IIUM Intellectual Property Right and Commercialization policy.

Affirmed by Nur Asmira Binti Anuar

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date

*This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Finally, I completed the thesis writing after three years of study. I might not have succeeded without help from anyone whom I trusted in. Therefore, I want to express my gratitude to the Almighty Allah for giving me strength and courage to complete the thesis. My acknowledgement also goes to my parents and family members who have supported me throughout my study in this university. I would like to give my appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Fauziah Fathil for kindly and persistently guiding me to write the thesis. I express my sincere thanks to all lecturers who have given their commitment to give education about History. I appreciate the assistance from the Department of History and Civilization, Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, Center for Postgraduate Studies as well as English and Arabic Writing Laboratory. Not to forget, the acknowledgement is for my friends who were very helpful and encouraging towards my efforts to finish the writing.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	ii
Abstract in Arabic.....	iii
Approval Page .....	iv
Declaration .....	v
Copyright .....	vi
Dedication .....	vii
Acknowledgements .....	viii
List of Tables.....	xi
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	4
1.3 Research Questions .....	5
1.4 Research Objectives.....	5
1.5 Significance of the Study .....	5
1.6 Literature Review .....	7
1.7 Methodology.....	16
1.8 Chapterization.....	18
1.8.1 Chapter One: Introduction.....	18
1.8.2 Chapter Two: Adat Perpatih in Negeri Sembilan before British Rule .....	18
1.8.3 Chapter Three: Adat Perpatih and the Politics of Negeri Sembilan under British Rule.....	19
1.8.4 Chapter Four: The Social and Economic Aspects of Adat Perpatih under British Rule.....	19
1.8.5 Chapter Five: Conclusion.....	19
<b>CHAPTER TWO: ADAT PERPATIH IN NEGERI SEMBILAN BEFORE BRITISH RULE.....</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1 Background of Negeri Sembilan .....	20
2.2 Origin of Adat Perpatih.....	21
2.3 The Coming of Adat Perpatih to Negeri Sembilan.....	25
2.4 Fundamental Features of Adat Perpatih.....	33
2.4.1 Matrilineal and Patriarchal System.....	33
2.4.2 Matrilocality .....	35
2.4.3 Clanship .....	35
2.4.4 Democracy .....	37
2.5 Establishment of Negeri Sembilan .....	39
2.6 Conclusion.....	43
<b>CHAPTER THREE: ADAT PERPATIH AND THE POLITICS OF NEGERI SEMBILAN UNDER BRITISH RULE .....</b>	<b>45</b>
3.1 Arrival of the British in Malay Peninsula .....	45
3.2 Arrival of the British in Negeri Sembilan .....	46

3.2.1 The British in Naning: Changing the Map of the Old Confederation of Negeri Sembilan.....	47
3.2.2 The British in Rembau: Separation of Tampin from Rembau and Establishment of Post of Tunku Besar Tampin .....	50
3.2.2 The British in Sungai Ujong: The Beginning of Residential System in Negeri Sembilan.....	53
3.2.3 The British in Seri Menanti and Tanah Luak Mengandung: Breaking-up of the Old Confederation of Negeri Sembilan.....	55
3.2.5 The British in Jelebu: The Dissolution of Post of <i>Yamtuan Jelebu</i> .....	57
3.3 The Role of British and Chieftains of Adat Perpatih in the Establishment of Modern Negeri Sembilan .....	59
3.4 Effects of British Rule on Traditional Political Posts of Adat Perpatih .....	62
3.5 Adat Perpatih Inspired Political Movement against Malayan Union .....	65
3.6 Conclusion.....	67

**CHAPTER FOUR: THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF ADAT PERPATIH UNDER BRITISH RULE .....69**

4.1 English Common Law, Adat Perpatih and Shari‘Ah Law .....	70
4.2 Adat Perpatih as Guidance for British Policy on the Land Regulations.....	72
4.3 Modern Industries and their Impacts on the Society of Adat Perpatih .....	78
4.4 Relationship between the British and Adat Perpatih Society in Negeri Sembilan .....	81
4.5 British Literature on Adat Perpatih.....	82
4.6 The Opposition towards Adat Perpatih among the Malays in Negeri Sembilan.....	84
4.7 Conclusion.....	86

**CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....87**

5.1 Summary .....	87
5.2 Conclusion.....	88
5.3 Limitations of Research .....	93
5.4 Recommendations for Future Research .....	94
5.3 Recommendations for the Practitioners .....	95

**BIBLIOGRAPHY.....97**

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1	Data Analysis Procedures	18
-----------	--------------------------	----

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Negeri Sembilan is a unique state compared to other states in Malaysia due to its practice of Adat Perpatih. The significance of Adat Perpatih can be gauged by a popular Malay phrase regarding adat, “*biar mati anak, jangan mati adat*” (let the children die, but the custom remains) which signifies its importance in the Malay society and culture.

The practice of Adat Perpatih in Negeri Sembilan has connection with Minangkabau society and history. *Adat Tuah Disakato* was the customary law which was introduced by Dato’ Perpatih Nan Sebatang, the ruler of East Minangkabau state. The followers of Dato’ Perpatih brought the customary law with them to the Malay Peninsula, specifically to Negeri Sembilan.<sup>1</sup>

The transmission of *Adat Tuah Disakato* from Minangkabau to Negeri Sembilan caused several changes to the customary law itself. Due to socialization with the aborigines in Negeri Sembilan, *Adat Tuah Disakato* had been modified in order to suit the social atmosphere in the new state.<sup>2</sup> The customary law in Negeri Sembilan is a combination of laws from the people of Minangkabau, Siak and Jakun who occupied Negeri Sembilan at that time. The process of assimilation among these people was easily conducted because they had one common characteristic; they were

---

<sup>1</sup> Abdul Rahman Mohammad, *Dasar-dasar Adat Perpatih*, (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Pustaka Antara, 1964), 24.

<sup>2</sup> Norhalim Ibrahim, *Adat Perpatih: Perbezaan dan Persamaannya Dengan Adat Temenggung*, (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn. Bhd., 1993), 95.

matrilineal societies.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the attitude of tolerance and cooperation among the existing societies had created a new set of law which is known today as Adat Perpatih.

The role of the Minangkabau society in the establishment of Negeri Sembilan cannot be denied since the people were the ones who opened several districts in the state. During the Sultanate of Malacca (1400-1511), a uniformed state of Negeri Sembilan did not yet appear even though districts like Rembau and Sungai Ujong had come to existence and acted as individual states (compared to their status now as districts in Negeri Sembilan). States in Negeri Sembilan were inter-related or linked due to historical and customary bonds that they shared.

Rembau, Sungai Ujong as well as Naning, another district in Negeri Sembilan, paid their homage to Malacca until Malacca's fall into the hands of the Portuguese.<sup>4</sup> After that, the Sultanate of Johor, the successor of the Malaccan Sultanate, established suzerainty over Negeri Sembilan<sup>5</sup>. It is worth mentioning that the states in Negeri Sembilan only recognized the Sultanate of Johor as their nominal ruler as their homage was more to Pagarruyung, Minangkabau due to cultural and historical connections<sup>6</sup>.

The arrival of the British in Negeri Sembilan is recorded in several works, for instance in the papers written by Zulkarnain (2001) and Abdullah (1995). The first interaction between the society in Negeri Sembilan and the British is when the British temporarily governed Malacca after the signing of the Kew Letters with the Dutch in February 1795.<sup>7</sup> The British, in order to safeguard the stability of Malacca, tried to

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>4</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya & Leonard Y. Andaya, 52.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>6</sup> Norhalim Ibrahim, *Negeri yang Sembilan: Daerah kecil pesaka adat warisan kerajaan berdaulat*, 174.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 176-177.

extend friendly trading relationships with neighbouring states, one of them was Rembau.

The intervention of the British in the politics of Negeri Sembilan began in 1874. Zulkarnain claims that this was due to the prominence of Sungai Ujong as an economic centre (since the era of the Malaccan Sultanate) that attracted internal and external powers to control the place and eventually the whole of Negeri Sembilan.<sup>8</sup> Later, the British, under P. J. Murray began to interfere in the politics of Seri Menanti beginning from 26<sup>th</sup> of November 1875 following a political unrest.<sup>9</sup> In Rembau, the British tried to expel Dato' Haji Sahil, *Undang* (Chief Law-Giver) of Rembau through the publication of a fake agreement dated 27<sup>th</sup> of September 1877 which stated that Dato' Haji Sahil granted Kampung Simpang to the British.<sup>10</sup>

Subsequent developments led to further spread of the British influence in Negeri Sembilan. After being persuaded by Governor Weld, local chiefs in Sri Menanti, Jelebu and Rembau agreed to directly consult British officers instead of accepting advice from Johor.<sup>11</sup> Between 1889 and 1898, a uniformed state of Negeri Sembilan was established. The popular claim is that Negeri Sembilan was named after nine original districts of the state which came together under the British influence, namely Johol, Jelebu, Rembau, Sungai Ujong, Naning, Segamat, Hulu Pahang, Jelai and Klang. The new state received a British Resident, Martin Lister in 1895 and Tuanku Muhammad, son of Yamtuan Antah was appointed as *Yamtuan*

---

<sup>8</sup> Zulkarnain Abdul Rahman, "Ekonomi Sungai Ujong prakolonial: 1800-1870-an", in *Jendela Masa: Kumpulan Esei Sempena Persaraan Dato' Khoo Kay Kim*, edited by Mohammad Redzuan Othman, (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya), 161.

<sup>9</sup> Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, "Pribumi dan penjajah: Gerakan tentangan di Malaysia", *Malaysia dari segi sejarah*, no. 23, (1995): 19. Google Scholar, Repositori Digital Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, <<http://myrepositori.pnm.gov.my/handle/123456789/3133>>.

<sup>10</sup> N. S. Dharmala, *Nasionalisme di Negeri Sembilan (Dari 1830 ke Alaf Baru 2000)*, (Batu Caves: Thinker's Library Sdn. Bhd., 2009), 14-16.

<sup>11</sup> Norhalim Ibrahim, *Negeri yang Sembilan: Daerah Kecil Pesaka Adat Warisan Kerajaan Berdaulat*, 117.

*Besar* on 29<sup>th</sup> of April 1898.<sup>12</sup> In 1896, Negeri Sembilan joined the Federated Malay States after the Treaty of Federation was signed until the independence of Malaya on 31<sup>st</sup> of August 1957.<sup>13</sup>

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Despite the abundance of academic sources on the background of Adat Perpatih, there is lack of information about the law during the British era in Negeri Sembilan. The British rule had resulted in several changes to the political situation in Negeri Sembilan such as unification of districts which formed a new united Negeri Sembilan today as well as the introduction of modern policy of land ownership. Apart from these contributions by the British, Norhalim says that British administration had also caused legal-beaurocratic political change which affected the traditional political system in Negeri Sembilan based on Adat Perpatih.<sup>14</sup> Hence, it is the aim of the study to look at the effects that British rule had on Adat Perpatih in Negeri Sembilan.

The study is also motivated to examine the interactions between the local population which practised Adat Perpatih and the British administration. As stated by several scholars, both parties tried to maintain their policies or laws in Negeri Sembilan and made effort to ensure that their policies or laws were maintained and enforced. To what extent British policies and Adat Perpatih's traditions clashed and complimented one another has yet to be discovered. The study gives details about the traditions of Negeri Sembilan practised before the arrival of the British as well as what changed when the British ruled the state. The efforts of the society in Negeri Sembilan in maintaining the tradition of Adat Perpatih are also analyzed.

---

<sup>12</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya & Leonard Y. Andaya, 17.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>14</sup> Norhalim Ibrahim, *Negeri yang Sembilan: Daerah Kecil Pesaka Adat Warisan Kerajaan Berdaulat*, 11.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In conducting the study, the researcher attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1) What were the main features of Adat Perpatih in Negeri Sembilan before the arrival of the British?
- 2) What were the stance and attitude of the British administration towards Adat Perpatih and what were the socio-political changes made to Adat Perpatih due to British policy?
- 3) What were the stance and attitude of leaders of Adat Perpatih (i.e. Undang, Buapak, etc.) towards the British administration?
- 4) To what extent do the Negeri Sembilan people maintain the traditions?

### **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

This research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To identify the main features of Adat Perpatih in Negeri Sembilan before the arrival of the British.
- 2) To assess the stance and attitude of the British administration towards Adat Perpatih and changes made to Adat Perpatih due to British policy.
- 3) To examine the stance and attitude of leaders of Negeri Sembilan towards the British administration.
- 4) To analyze the efforts made by Negeri Sembilan's people in maintaining their traditions.

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is intended to clarify information about Adat Perpatih which was practised in Negeri Sembilan during the British administration. This study is significant as it attempts to overcome the lack of sources in local libraries where existing works only

focus on Adat Perpatih in this current era and its comparison to Adat Temenggung. Even several primary sources like the piece written by Martin Lister deals mainly with the history of Adat Perpatih instead of relating his experience in dealing with the Malay society in Negeri Sembilan during his term as the British Resident there. This is similar to the work by R. O. Winstedt, another British official which does not have any information on Adat Perpatih in the state during the British era. Information on the economic, political and social lives of the society which propagated Adat Perpatih during the British administration has so far not been carefully recorded in a scholarly manner. Furthermore, the knowledge about them is scattered and the topic has yet to be thoroughly discussed.

This study attempts to provide a better understanding of the historical roots of Adat Perpatih in Negeri Sembilan as well as in one area outside the state, namely Naning, which shares common customary belief. The decree made by the fourth Yang Dipertuan Besar Negeri Sembilan, Tuanku Ja'afar ibn Almarhum Tuanku Abdul Rahman in 1974 attested to the lack of knowledge on Adat Perpatih among the people:

Walaupun begitu, kerana tidak ramai orang yang mempunyai pengetahuan yang mendalam terhadap Adat Perpatih ini, kebanyakan mereka memberi tafsiran dan pandangan yang keliru dan kadang-kadang salah terhadap Adat Perpatih ini.<sup>15</sup>

[trans: Since many people do not have in-depth knowledge about Adat Perpatih, most of them could only provide confusing and unclear opinions about it, some of which are also wrong.]

The same suggestion was put forward by Undang Luak Sungai Ujong, Yang Amat Mulia Dato' Klana Petra Mohd Kassim bin Dato' Nika Haji Abdul Rashid who was in power in 1974.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> *Seminar Persejarah dan Adat Perpatih*, (Seremban: Majlis Belia Negeri Sembilan, 1974).

<sup>16</sup> "... dari zaman berzaman itu telah disebut2 orang sebagai Adat Perpatih Negeri Sembilan itu jika tidak diketahui dan dikaji secara mendalam maka pengetahuan dan peraturan hidup mereka2 pada

Thus, from this study and the above decree of His Highness, it is hoped that the people of Negeri Sembilan specifically, and the Malays generally, will appreciate and be proud of the uniqueness of our Malay culture which has become a symbol for the Malay race. Furthermore, by understanding the condition of Adat Perpatih during the British administration, one can have a better understanding about modern cultural lives of the Negeri Sembilan society.

Furthermore, this research provides information about the efforts of the people of Negeri Sembilan to protect their customs despite being under British colonization which subsequently contributed to the continuation of Adat Perpatih in the state until modern times. For instance, due to the implementation of Adat Perpatih, Rembau managed to maintain its independence from colonial powers, namely the Dutch and the British for quite a long time even though Rembau had to release some of its territories to them eventually. Such efforts were also the hope of the fourth Yang Dipertuan Besar Negeri Sembilan, Almarhum Tuanku Ja'afar ibn Almarhum Tuanku Abdul Rahman who, in His Highness' decree dated April 1974, urged the people to strive in maintaining the customary law for generations to come.<sup>17</sup>

## **1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are several works that can be reviewed regarding this topic which include both books and articles in journals. However, some important information about Adat Perpatih during the British era is quite difficult to find as it is scattered. Several

---

*zaman purba itu akan hilang begitu sahaja daripada ingatan anak2 cucu kita dibelakang hari kelak.”* In *Seminar Persejarahan dan Adat Perpatih*, (Seremban: Majlis Belia Negeri Sembilan, 1974).

<sup>17</sup> “*Sebenarnya keagungan sesuatu bangsa itu adalah pancaran dari keteguhan sistem masyarakatnya yang meliputi seluruh bidang kehidupan masyarakat. Dalam hubungan ini, Beta anggap Adat Perpatih telah memberikan tapak yang kukuh bagi membolehkan masyarakat di sini menjalani hidup bersama dengan harmoni, mencorakkan suatu suasana hidup yang indah dan kekal zaman berzaman.”* In *Seminar Persejarahan dan Adat Perpatih*, (Seremban: Majlis Belia Negeri Sembilan, 1974).

writings focus on the socio-economic aspect of Adat Perpatih. Still, the existing works are useful even though they are not quite comprehensive.

The sources that have been reviewed are related to the focus of the study which covers the society of Adat Perpatih in Negeri Sembilan, the arrival of the British to the state as well as maintenance or changes of Adat Perpatih in the state during the British administration.

Norhalim Ibrahim discusses the history of Adat Perpatih which began in Minangkabau as well as the customary law in Negeri Sembilan in his book "*Adat Perpatih: Perbezaan dan Persamaannya dengan Adat Temenggung*".<sup>18</sup> However today, Adat Perpatih is seen more as a symbol than a lifestyle of the society in Negeri Sembilan and is portrayed as a tourist attraction. He then lists several causes to the problem. The informality of Adat Perpatih itself contributes to this. Adat Perpatih has not been documented and is mainly spread through oral tradition. In addition, the arrival of the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought a different and superior European culture, together with *Islah* and *tajdid* movements in the 1920s and 1950s, had made Adat Perpatih quite irrelevant to the society, especially with its matrilineal system. This book is very informative and interesting to refer to; however, the author only clearly compares both customary laws in their homeland which is Minangkabau. He also writes about Adat Perpatih during the colonial timeframe, yet only provides little information about the interaction between the people of Negeri Sembilan with the colonial powers.

Next, a book entitled "*Sejarah Negeri Sembilan*" by Buyong Adil examines the history of the main districts in Negeri Sembilan from their early period until the

---

<sup>18</sup> Norhalim Ibrahim, *Adat Perpatih: Perbezaan dan Persamaannya Dengan Adat Temenggung*.

British's arrival.<sup>19</sup> It includes the role of Minangkabau immigrants who brought their tradition to the new state. The author also shows the changes made to Adat Perpatih during the British intervention in Negeri Sembilan due to political conflicts that happened among some influential figures in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This book is a good one to read but still, the author minimally touches on the interactions between Adat Perpatih and the British administration's policy in Negeri Sembilan. It only emphasizes the development of the districts in Negeri Sembilan by highlighting the role of the aborigines, the Minangkabau society as well as the British.

In addition, Norazit Selat examines the fundamental values of Adat Perpatih that have sustained through out time and the different situations through his work entitled "*Adat Melayu: Kesenambungan dan Perubahan*".<sup>20</sup> The writer studies Adat Perpatih that is practised in Negeri Sembilan, particularly in Nanning. He believes that even though the practitioners lived as a minority group in Malaysia, they managed to sustain this traditional lifestyle because Adat Perpatih has its own fundamental concept which is clanship or *suku* which relies on matrilineal line. The clanship influences all aspects of the practitioners' lives. However, some traditions are seen to have deviated from Islam. Although the Islamic revivalist movement was active in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they have been continued until today. Moreover, what is absent in his article are the effects of colonization, especially of the British on Adat Perpatih in Negeri Sembilan.

From time to time, the loose confederacy of Negeri Sembilan was put under protection of several powers but the latest and prominent one was the British. The arrival of the British to Negeri Sembilan and its interference in the state's political

---

<sup>19</sup> Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Negeri Sembilan*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1981).

<sup>20</sup> Norazit Selat, "Adat Melayu: Kesenambungan dan Perubahan", in *Adat Melayu Serumpun*, edited by Abdul Latiff, (Melaka: Perbadanan Muzium Melaka, 2001).

affairs was discussed by John M. Gullick in his book, “A History of Negri Sembilan”.<sup>21</sup> Negeri Sembilan was distinctly governed by Supreme Law-Giver known as Undang until they invited Raja Melewar in 1773. But, due to a political problem, the confederacy broke up. The British reformed the uniformed state between 1889 until 1898. Gullick also believed that the migration of Minangkabau people to Negeri Sembilan can be attributed to the Dutch who successfully weakened the Sultanate of Aceh in the 18<sup>th</sup> century which in turn opened a route from Minangkabau to the Malay Peninsula through the Straits of Malacca. It was also the Dutch’s role to prevent the Bugis from continuously settling at Kuala Linggi at the end of the 1750s, thus, allowing Minangkabau society to migrate to the Malay Peninsula. Gullick was one of the British Malayan Administration officers who used to be stationed in Negeri Sembilan and further information on British policy in Negeri Sembilan was expected from his writing. However, he did not collect any thoughts from his colleagues about the propagation or implementation of Adat Perpatih in Negeri Sembilan.

More information about British interference in the politics and economy of Negeri Sembilan can be traced in a book entitled “They Came to Malaya” by Swaran Ludher.<sup>22</sup> Since Raja Melewar came to Negeri Sembilan, it always faced civil wars merely due to struggle over power. Clash over control of Sungai Ujong caused the British to intervene in the politics of the state while protecting its interests there. The civil war ended with Sungai Ujong receiving a British Resident, followed by other districts. Ludher did provide information on the coming of Adat Perpatih to Negeri

---

<sup>21</sup> John M. Gullick, *A history of Negri Sembilan*, (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 2003).

<sup>22</sup> Swaran Ludher, “They Came to Malaya,” Google Books, <[https://books.google.com.my/books?id=4Z\\_BvBgAAQBAJ&pg=PT5&dq=NEGERI+SEMBILAN+during+british&source=gbs\\_toc\\_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q=NEGERI%20SEMBILAN%20during%20british&f=false](https://books.google.com.my/books?id=4Z_BvBgAAQBAJ&pg=PT5&dq=NEGERI+SEMBILAN+during+british&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q=NEGERI%20SEMBILAN%20during%20british&f=false)> (accessed 9 September 2015).

Sembilan and causes for the fall of Negeri Sembilan into British hands. However, he did not state the practice of Adat Perpatih in Negeri Sembilan during the British era. He also did not thoroughly explain the War of Sungai Ujong, especially the roles of the British in helping Dato' Kelana against his rivals.

Another author, N. S. Dharmala presented how the society of Adat Perpatih tried to protect their tradition under British colonization in his book entitled "*Nasionalisme di Negeri Sembilan (Dari 1830 ke Alaf Baru)*".<sup>23</sup> This book informs the readers about the spirit of nationalism in Negeri Sembilan from the era of British colonisation until today. The struggles and efforts of the people in Negeri Sembilan in protecting their lands and culture in Seri Menanti, Sungai Ujong as well as Rembau from British intervention are highlighted in this book. The establishment of Maktab Perguruan (Teacher's College) Sultan Idris in 1922, the Malay Army by Tuanku Muhammad in 1933, several political parties in the 1930s and Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Young Malay Association) in 1941, according to the author, strengthened the spirit of nationalism among the people. Dharmala nevertheless, did not identify the specific role of Adat Perpatih in the nationalism of Negeri Sembilan. He did not for instance, relate several occasions involving the abandonment of the traditional custom by the British which led to the uprising of people to fight the colonial power.

Since the coming of the British, the community of Adat Perpatih tried to sustain their customary law. Nevertheless, modifications in several aspects of people's lifestyle cannot be avoided because Negeri Sembilan was a protectorate of different political entities or powers until 1957. They still continue to be practised by today's generation but some of them have been modified or have been completely removed.

---

<sup>23</sup> N. S. Dharmala, *Nasionalisme di Negeri Sembilan (Dari 1830 ke Alaf Baru 2000)*, (Batu Caves: Thinker's Library Sdn. Bhd., 2009).

Nonetheless, the people in Negeri Sembilan in general still uphold the fundamental values of Adat Perpatih, at least those which are related to public occasions.

One author, Zulkarnain Abdul Rahman argues that the practice of Adat Perpatih had changed during the British administration, especially in terms of economy. In his work, “*Ekonomi Sungai Ujong Prakolonial: 1800-1870-an*” intends to give information about the economic condition in Sungai Ujong before the administration of British.<sup>24</sup> In his work, Zulkarnain mentions how Adat Perpatih influenced the economy of the region by giving example of Clause 110 of *Undang-undang Sungai Ujong* and *Undang-undang Adat Tanah* or the Land Customary Law that clarifies the issue of legal ownership of land. Zulkarnain states that during the British administration in 1891, economic activities in Sungai Ujong became more developed due to the construction of Seremban-Port Dickson railway in addition to tin mining activities. Zulkarnain explains this topic really well, especially regarding changes in traditional economic activities to modern ones; however, he did not touch upon clashes between Adat Perpatih customary land tradition and British modern land policy which continue to become a problem in Negeri Sembilan until today.

A work produced by Azima Abdul Manaf entitled “*Masalah dan Cabaran Tanah Adat Minang di Dunia Melayu Malaysia dan Indonesia*” gives an idea on how the era of colonization and reformation (in Indonesia) affected Adat Perpatih.<sup>25</sup> She agrees that the colonial powers had changed the structure of land administration in Malaysia, while in the case of Indonesia, it happened due to reformation under the Dutch. In Malaya, the British introduced several formal land laws such as Law of

---

<sup>24</sup> Zulkarnain Abdul Rahman, “Ekonomi Sungai Ujong Prakolonial: 1800-1870-an,” in *Jendela Masa: Kumpulan Esei Sempena Persaraan Dato' Khoo Kay Kim*.

<sup>25</sup> Azima Abdul Manaf, “Masalah dan Cabaran Adat Minang di Dunia Melayu Malaysia dan Indonesia”, *Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2009): 69-78. UKM Journal Article Repository, via Google Scholar, <[http://journalarticle.ukm.my/923/1/7.2009-1-azima\\_abdul\\_manaf-melayu-3.pdf](http://journalarticle.ukm.my/923/1/7.2009-1-azima_abdul_manaf-melayu-3.pdf)>.

Land of 1887, Land Regulation of 1889 and Enactment of Ownership of Customary Law of 1926. People had to pay land tax as land was considered government ownership and it was no longer considered as clan property. While this study is useful for this research, Azima did not touch upon differences between Adat Perpatih in Negeri Sembilan and Minangkabau in regards to land ownership and political organization that supervised matters on land in both states.

Author Azizah Kassim also agrees with Azima. The changing of traditions among the people of Negeri Sembilan can be detected in a case study conducted by Azizah entitled “Women, Land and Gender Relations in Negeri Sembilan: Some Preliminary Findings”.<sup>26</sup> This research was done in Mukim Seri Menanti, Kuala Pilah in 1986. It is based on the researcher’s self-observation as a resident in the area until the early 1960s. She also used the method of interviewing so as to provide information for the study. The changes, as argued by the author, were caused by British administrative policy and modernization; however, she excludes affairs related to matrilineal clanship, exogamous marriage, post-marital residence and hereditary of lands. Azizah mentions that before and during the 1960s, women were seen as having relative autonomy but their status changed after that due to modernization. However, in reading this article, it arouses a question to her claim on the changes in Adat Perpatih. It seems only the society had evolved in order to suit the situation that they were living in while Adat Perpatih was still maintained to serve as a guide for them. In addition, her research was conducted only in Seri Menanti, which covers only a small part of Negeri Sembilan and involved a small number of correspondents.

---

<sup>26</sup> Azizah Kassim, “Women, Land and Gender Relations in Negeri Sembilan: Some Preliminary Findings”, *Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 26, no. 2 (September 1988): 132-149. Kyoto University Research Information Repository, via Google Scholar, <<http://repository.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/56327/1/KJ00000131440.pdf>>.