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# COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ISLAMIC AFFAIRS MANAGEMENT IN MALAYSIA AND BRUNEI

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## ABSTRACT

***Malaysia and Brunei are recognized as Islamic monarchies with strong Malay-Islamic cultural heritage and advanced implementation of Islamic law. Both uphold Islam as the official religion and often align in regional matters such as politics, education, economy, and defense. However, each nation has its own unique approach to administering Islamic affairs. These differences offer useful insights for improving Islamic governance globally. This study therefore aims to compare the administration of Islamic affairs in Malaysia and Brunei and propose enhancements for the benefit of the wider Muslim community. Using a qualitative approach, the research relies on document analysis, followed by comparative and deductive methods. Findings reveal that both countries possess strengths consistent with their political, economic, and socio-cultural contexts. Malaysia is notable for institutional diversity and progressive Islamic thought, while Brunei excels in policy consistency and broader Sharia implementation. This comparison provides valuable guidance for balancing monarchy, Sharia traditions, and contemporary need.***

**KEYWORDS:** Comparative Analysis, Malaysia, Brunei, Management, Islamic Affair.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Similar to Malaysia, the Sultanate of Brunei also recognizes Islam as its official religion. Both countries serve as splendid examples for the practice of Islamic affairs. Their historical background, socio-political situation, and legal frameworks uniquely position each country. Comparing both countries shows that each possesses similarities and differences in religious governance, application of Sharia law, Islamic banking, and the societal roles of religious bodies (Hamza, 2013). Though both countries identify as Sunni Muslims and work to foster the teachings of Islam, the two nations' governance frameworks, legal systems, and economic policies have resulted in divergent approaches to Islamic issues. Due to its federal parliamentary system and multicultural society, Malaysia has adopted a more decentralised approach to Islamic governance on the state level. With a smaller homogenous population, Brunei's monarchy embraced a more Islamic comprehensive governance model. Examining the two models offers profound comprehension of the multifaceted relationship between Islam and the state in today's world.

The history of the country, the political framework, and the socio-cultural context deeply influence how Islamic affairs are managed in countries with Muslim populations. In Southeast Asia, Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam stand out as remarkable examples where Islam is recognised constitutionally as the state religion of the country and is also intricately woven into the government apparatus (Yusoff & Sarjoon, 2016). Both countries practice Sunni Islam of the Shafi'i school, but they serve as opposing models of Islamic governance due to differing legal traditions, administrative frameworks, and demographic profiles (Hamza, 2013; Kamali, 1998).

This study conducts a comparative study of Malaysia and Brunei's management of Islamic affairs in four key areas: (1) Governance Structures and Religious Authority, (2) Sharia Law Implementation, (3) Islamic Finance and Economic Development, and (4) Contemporary Challenges and Future Directions. Within these categories, the paper analyses how each country implements Islamic governance in the context of contemporary statehood, and the degree of integration of Islam into legislation, socio-economics, and politics. The selection of the four key dimensions has been justified by their importance to the consolidation, implementation, and current dynamics of Islamic governance. Each dimension defines a primary area through which Islamic affairs are managed in contemporary Muslim-majority countries, and collectively, they form a solid basis for a comparative analysis between Malaysia and Brunei. The following explains the rationale for these gaps:

### *1.1. Governance Structures and Religious Authority*

This dimension is critical as it determines who can represent Islam in deed and voice in a given country. Islam has a constitutional and political role in both Malaysia and Brunei, but it is integrated differently because of differing state structures: Brunei is a monarchy while Malaysia has a federal structure. Through this comparison, the study illustrates the relationship between the religious power politics and governance structures and administrative systems, as well as the execution of policies relevant to religion (Yusoff & Sarjoon, 2016; Kamali, 1998).

### *1.2. Sharia Law Implementation*

The most controversial Islamic governance practice is the enforcement of Sharia law which Islam symbolizes its principles. This dimension enables the study to evaluate the scope, jurisdiction, and scholarship of each country's Sharia law political geography. It addresses important issues of legal pluralism, fundamental rights, civil liberties, and governance which are necessary for locating Islamic law in contemporary legal thought and practice (Faruqi, 2008; Sirat & Othman, 2009).

### *1.3. Islamic Financing and Economic Development*

This dimension was chosen because it is a strong indicator of Islamic ethical policy in practice at the level of the government. As the world's foremost Islamic finance practitioner, Malaysia is complemented by Brunei's gradual investment into the sector as part of its development plans. The comparison of this industry opens up the examination of how deeply the two countries embed Islamic principles into planning, governance, and development (Razak & Kasim, 2014; Hamid, 2020).

### *1.4. Contemporary Challenges and Future Directions*

This aspect underscores the need for the study to pay attention to the challenges of the future, as well as the issues of policy. It captures the dynamics both countries encounter as they seek to administer Islamic affairs in the context of rapid advancement, global integration, terrorism, religious radicalism, activism by the young population, and calls for openness. With this focus, the research is able to

document how institutionalised order exists, but also assess how adaptable and viable these frameworks are over time (Mustaffa et al., 2023; Abdullah, 2012). The social fabric of Malaysia, a federal constitutional monarchy, is its multiracial makeup. Malaysia exercises decentralised Islamic governance, which allocates control of administrative responsibilities to State Islamic Religious Councils and Syariah courts to manage the respective jurisdictions' religious matters.

On the other hand, Brunei, as a unitary Islamic monarchy with a population that is unitary in composition, exercises centralised control over Islamic affairs, and the Sultan also functions as the Head of State and simultaneously the Head of Islam. This position helps implement a more streamlined and centralised system for the application of religious laws and policies (Sirat & Othman, 2009; Hamat, 2015). This study seeks to construct an understanding of the Islamisation of governance in modern nation-states, arguing the dynamics of structural tradition versus modernity, the balance of decentralisation versus centralisation, and the duality between religious conservatism and practical governance. With the hope that the contrasts analysed will stimulate interdisciplinary debates and policy frameworks regarding Islamic governance and institutional architecture in contexts that have a Muslim majority population.

## *2. LITERATURE OVERVIEW*

The study of Islamic affairs in Malaysia and Brunei reveals a relative wealth of literature on governance, encompassing religion, law, politics, and various sociocultural aspects. These two countries have embraced Islam as a part of their constitutional and administrative makeup, which invites scholarship probing the ways Islamic norms are embedded and operationalised in contemporary governance, prompting a surge of research looking at Islamic affairs in these countries. It also cuts across other fields such as political science, Islamic studies, sociology, law, and public administration.

In Malaysia, scholars have focused on the tension between a federal system's ability to foster cooperation in the governance of religion at the state level, the role of the monarchy in Islamic governance, and the interplay between Syariah and civil law (Faruqi, 2008; Hamat, 2015). In Brunei, however, the focus has been on the Sultan's centralised and absolute political dominance, the enforcement of the Syariah Penal Code, and the singular religious view endorsed and propagated by the state (Sirat & Othman, 2009; Yusoff & Sarjoon, 2016). In combination, these works begin to engage comparative scholarship, though there is still much to be done in looking across borders to understand the relationships between these systems and how they might learn from one another or serve as models in the discussion of Islamic governance.

### *2.1. Governance Structures and Religious Authority*

The political authority over Islamic affairs in both Malaysia and Brunei corresponds to their constitutional setups and historical political cultures. In Malaysia, the governance of Islamic affairs is fragmented because of the federal system, whereby each of the thirteen states has the constitutional power to manage Islamic affairs. This extends to the establishment and functioning of State Islamic Religious Councils (Majlis Agama Islam Negeri), which govern the administration of mosques, Islamic schooling, fatwa issuance, and the functioning of Syariah courts (Mustaffa et al., 2023). The historical autonomy of the Malay states, which existed before the formation of the Federation of Malaya in 1948, helps explain the enduring state control over religious matters. Consequently, there is a mufti and a religious council for every state, which results in varying interpretations and implementations of Islamic policies within the country.

Although the federal government does not actively enforce Islamic laws, its role is largely coordinative through the Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (JAKIM). JAKIM advises the federal government on Islam-related issues, formulates Islamic education programmes at the national level, and attempts to unify the practice of religion and fatwas among the states (Rasid et al., 2022). Bound as they are to the framework of 'coordinating' policy, they are bound to face limitations because states have the autonomy to accept or decline federal suggestions, resulting in inconsistencies and legal fragmentation within the greater Islamic legal system (Kamali, 1998).

Brunei Darussalam, in contrast, operates under a centralised structure of religious governance in alignment with its unitary absolute monarchy status. The primary government body overseeing the entire spectrum of Islamic affairs is the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which oversees mosque construction and management, religious education governance, fatwa issuance, and Syariah criminal and civil law enforcement (Grassa, 2013). The Sultan of Brunei, both Head of State and Head of Religion, commands ultimate jurisdiction on all religious matters, which results in a more cohesive and

controlled application of Islamic policies (Sirat & Othman, 2009). This centralised structure, unlike the Malaysian system, mitigates jurisdictional disputes that arise with differing regional governments while still granting autonomy to diverse regions. This consolidation avoids a diverse range of Islamic scholarly traditions by narrowing branches of government that engage as executors of Islam under one ruler.

Still, Brunei's model permits firm governance especially concerning the worship-related governance changes, such as the enactment of the Syariah Penal Code Order 2013, which was applied in a unitary manner as it is not fragmented like in federal systems. In summary, the difference in regulatory frameworks of Malaysia and Brunei Islam has distinct consequences for the management of Islamic matters. Malaysia's decentralised structure supports context-specific applied religious governance, although it is susceptible to coordination difficulties, whereas Brunei's centralised structural model offers to ensure coherence of the policies at the expense of marginalising wider societal participation in religious conversations.

### *2.2. Shariah Law Implementation*

The cases of implementation of Sharia law in Malaysia and Brunei illustrate not only the differences in their legal heritages, but also how each of them seeks to apply Islamic principles to contemporary politics. In Malaysia, the application of Sharia law both in terms of scope and jurisdiction is very limited, owing to the country's dual legal structure. Under this system, Sharia Courts exist side by side with civil courts. However, their jurisdiction is limited to personal and family affairs of Muslims, which includes marriage, divorce, custody, apostasy, and inheritance (Mohamad, 2017). Sharia courts are created by state statute, and due to the division of powers, a lack of jurisdiction to apply hudud or qisas punishment does not mean that there is no jurisdiction under which these crimes would be punished—these are federal funds governed under the Penal Code.

This division of legal systems has resulted in the creation of some conflicting patterns of jurisdiction, especially in the area of cross-cultural custody disputes and conversion disputes, which are handled arbitrarily depending on the state. Although the Federal Constitution (Article 121(1A)) mandates the lack of Syariah and civil court jurisdiction over each other, gaps in the application of laws and overlap in the processes have caused friction in the Malaysian legal environment as a whole (Kamali, 1998; Faruqi, 2008). In contrast, Brunei Darussalam has been much more comprehensive and unified in its approach to applying Sharia law. The enforcement of the Syariah Penal Code Order (2013) marked a milestone as it covers provisions for hudud, qisas, and taʿzir offences. These laws prescribe stoning and flogging, as well as amputation, for theft, adultery, and apostasy, although their use is heavily restricted and staged (Sirat & Othman, 2009). While domestically the code is apprehended and internationally it is criticised, human rights organisations are particularly concerned with the alleged deviation from international human rights standards and more (Grassa, 2013).

Brunei and Malaysia differ in scope and enforcement; both countries acknowledge the need for Shariah-compliant financial governance. On this note, Shariah Supervisory Boards (SSBs) are crucial for monitoring Islamic banking and financial services as they ensure that all products and operations are aligned with Islamic law and ethics. These boards serve as internal and external advisors which significantly impact the Islamic finance industry (Abdullah, 2012). The credibility, independence, and constancy of SSB rulings are essential for maintaining the public's trust in the Islamic financial systems and Sharia governance to safeguard holistic Islamic supervision (Hamza, 2013). There remains concern within both jurisdictions regarding the fragmentation, inconsistency between institutions, lack of standardisation, and issuing of fatwas by different SSBs.

To conclude, Brunei has embraced a sweeping, state-enforced Islamic legal framework, while Malaysia exercises a more limited, state-specific application of Sharia pertaining to personal law. These differing stances bring to light more fundamental issues of state-religion dynamics, juridical pluralism, and the difficulties of reconciling Islamic legal frameworks with universal human rights norms in a modern context.

### *2.3. Islamic Finance and Economic Development*

Both Malaysia and Brunei have identified Islamic finance as a critical pillar for advancing their economic development strategies, sensing its capacity to both resonate with religious tenets and reinforce national economic resilience, diversification, and competitiveness on the global stage.Malaysia has developed one of the most advanced ecosystems in the world for Islamic finance over the last twenty years that encompasses Islamic banking, takaful (Islamic insurance), and an Islamic capital market (BNM 2022). This has been bolstered

by the proactive BNM and the Securities Commission Malaysia, which has provided both institutions regulatory guidance on Shariah compliance and financial stability.In fostering the Islamic financial ecosystem, the Malaysian government has spearheaded initiatives such as issuing sovereign sukuk (Islamic bonds), innovation of Shari'ah compliant financial products, and collaboration between both conventional and Shari'ah banks. Consequently, Malaysia has become a major participant in the sukuk market and is home to leading institutions like the International Shari'ah Research Academy (ISRA) and the Islamic Financial Services Board (IFSB), which have bolstered Malaysia's reputation and leadership as a knowledge and regulatory centre in the Islamic finance industry (Razak & Kasim, 2014).

Brunei Darussalam, while smaller in size, has similarly demonstrated strong efforts toward developing its Islamic finance industry. The creation of Islamic banks like Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam and the takaful operators signifies an attempt to integrate Islamic finance into the broader contours of the national development strategy. With the adoption of regulatory policies to bolster the financial system, strengthen financial infrastructure along with consumer confidence, and ensure compliance with Shariah regulations, the Brunei Monetary Authority has been hamid (2020). Bruneian Islamic finance is also viewed as a tool to stimulate economic diversification in light of the country's heavy dependence on oil and gas exports, as well as a means to entice foreign direct investment from Muslim-majority countries.

In both countries, Islamic finance is framed not only as an alternative financial system but also as a sustainable and ethical model of doing business that advances justice, transparency, and risk-sharing, which also supports broader policies like socioeconomic inclusion and environmental sustainability. In addition, countries like Malaysia and Brunei which practice mixed legal systems comprising common law and Shariah law are in a better position than many other jurisdictions as they have more freedom to respond with regulatory changes to social and economic shifts (Razali & Sing, 2015). Such a system allows countries to incorporate Islamic teachings into modern legal and economic frameworks without stifling financial creativity and international benchmarks.

Islamic financial institutions maintain deposits, extend credit, lease (ijarah), and finance homes just as conventional financial institutions do. Muslim finance forbids riba (interest), gharar (excessive ambiguity), and investment malpractice. Their implementation supervision is with Shariah councils or boards. Their vetting role on financial instruments ensures compliance and reinforces Muslim consumer trust in the system (Abdullah, 2012). To conclude, both Malaysia and Brunei have used Islamic finance as a tool of economic development, albeit with differing degrees of sophistication and evolution. Malaysia leads in institutional sophistication and global integration. Brunei aligns its Islamic finance more closely to its vision of an Islamic welfare state. Their experiences jointly provide evidence towards the usefulness and flexibility of Islamic finance across different national circumstances.

## *3. RESEARCH METHDOLOGY*

To conduct a thorough comparison of Malaysia and Brunei regarding the management of Islamic affairs, this study employs a qualitative comparative research method to spotlight parallels and divergences on issues such as legal frameworks, institutional arrangements, policy execution, and societal consequences. The methodology comprises four major parts, each of which addresses specific issues of the research questions.

### *3.1. Comparative Study Framework*

This research employs a comparative approach to investigate the governance functions focusing on managing Islamic affairs within the two countries. The framework highlights four distinct thematic areas: (i) governance systems and religious leadership, (ii) enforcement of Sharia law, (iii) Islamic banking and economic growth, and (iv) emerging issues. For instance, the study analyses the Brunei Sultan's dual role as Head of State and Chief Religion Officer, comparing it to the semi-decentralized Malaysian theocratic governance through its Conference of Rulers.

### *3.2. Legal and Institutional Overview*

This part entails the policymaking documents in both countries that govern the practice of Islam. In Malaysia, the study looks at the Federal Constitution, specifically Articles 3 and 121(1A), regarding the participatory powers of each state to form its own Islamic religious council and Syariah court. Take, for example, the supervisory role of the Selangor Islamic Religious Council (MAIS), which manages the mosque and Islamic education services in Selangor.

In Brunei, the focus shifts to the Syariah Penal Code Order 2013, the Islamic Religious Council Act (Chapter 77), and the powers given to the Minister of Religious Affairs. A notable illustration of this would

be the monopolized system of Friday sermons customarily prepared by the Ministry for distribution to all mosques for uniform delivery.

### *3.3. Policy and Practice Review*

In this section, the methodology encompasses state policies concerning the education of religion, da'wah, and the development of Islamic finance with an emphasis on the da'wah policies parts. For instance, in Malaysia, the National Fatwa Council's ruling on yoga practice in 2008 and its subsequent declaration as haram fatwa demonstrates how policies emanate from fatwas and the influence of such policies on practices revolves around federal–state relations.

Brunei's Theory of the Islamic Development of the Sultanate encapsulates the fatwa's view and thus serves as the illustrative example of the paradigm. All Bruneian Muslim girls aged 7–12 are mandated to attend Sekolah Ugama, which translates as Religious School and is publicly funded. This demonstrates Brunei's holistic policy that merges Islamic education with national development. Moreover, the study analyses the Masterplan 2 of Malaysia's Capital Markets issued in 2011 to 2020 and Brunei's Financial Sector Blueprint 2016-2025. Both documents are part of national economic planning and contain sections on the growth of Islamic finance.

### *3.4. Literature Review and Theoretical Contextualization*

The comprehensive literature review augments the comparative analysis by identifying the gaps associated with Islamic law, governance, and practices. For example, Kamali (1998) offers foundational perspectives on the legal pluralism framework in Malaysia, while Sirat and Othman (2009) chronicled the history of Sharia law implementation in Brunei. The addition of recently published works on Islamic environmental ethics, such as Khan and Khurshid (2024), enriches the theoretical scope of the study while locating Islamic governance concerning global issues.

## *4. DISCUSSION*

Brunei and Malaysia boast some achievements in Islamic Affairs management. However, both countries face several contemporary challenges. Emerging extremism, modern financial systems, and the ever-changing social fabric create a suffocating environment for Islamic institutions in the 21st century. Such challenges call for thoughtful change that strikes a balance between Islamic resilience and authority frameworks that becomes outdated amidst rapid dynamism.

The unique federal governance structure of Malaysia results in a fragmented religious authority and a high degree of decentralisation, with each state having control over Islamic law and administration. Although this provides some degree of context adaptability, it creates a mess concerning legal interpretations, fatwas, and other forms of religious enforcement throughout the entire country. Such differences can be bewildering to the public, and can, in fact, hinder efforts towards a cohesive national Islamic governance unification (Mustaffa et al., 2023). In this regard, Malaysia may consider pursuing a more centralised, systematic, and harmonised Islamic laws and practices framework for all states, perhaps coordinated through JAKIM or restructured Majlis National Syariah Council.

In Brunei, the centralised Islamic system ensures uniformity, though it may risk stagnating religious creativity and intellectual pluralism. As the Sultan has total command over matters Islamic, public participation and independent academic debate may be minimal. A major improvement area is to expand frameworks for public participation, including working with scholars, religious leaders, youth, and other Bruneians through designed dialogues to ensure policy Islamic frameworks align with the changing Bruneian societal visions (Yusoff & Sarjoon, 2016). The same approach can help build resilient responses to extremist views while broadening the framework of Islam governance.

For both countries, strengthening institutional credibility and capacity remains pressing priorities. The growth of Islamic financial institutions has created a need for independent and well-qualified Shariah Supervisory Boards (SSBs) due to the new developments in Shariah compliant products. These institutions remain vital for safeguarding adherence to Islamic legal and moral boundaries, but their effectiveness is contextually dependent on autonomy, consistency, and transparency (Abdullah, 2012). A credible structured framework can protect Islamic institutions from reputational and operational risks while boosting consumer confidence.

In addition, fatwa transparency, policy enforcement, policy development, and overall Islamic affairs governance also require public accountability to strengthen community trust. Public finance is only one aspect, whilst the issuance of fatwas, policy enforcement, and creation demand for greater institutional trust. There is also a need for public reporting and the setting of auditing standards.

With regards to Islamic finance, there is also a problem specific to this sector. Islamic banks have been facing challenges with demand for profit sharing deposit accounts and limited capital expansion due to stringent investment contracting limits, making them appear far less efficient than conventional banks (Serly & Handayani, 2020). While there may be new opportunities presented by digital Islamic banking or fintech innovations, these too must be conservatively adhered to Shariah law.

## *5. CONCLUSIONS*

Brunei and Malaysia are expected to further their roles as models of Islamic governance by investing in frameworks that allow institutional reforms and building capacity. Managing Islamic affairs in both Malaysia and Brunei enables us to view the two countries as remarkable models of Islam governance in the Southeast Asian region, each distinctly different yet compelling. One Malaysia demonstrates a more decentralized and pluralistic while Brunei shows a more centralized, conservative system. To sum up the core findings from the comparative analysis between Malaysia and Brunei, the following table provides a synthesized overview of key dimensions explored throughout the study. It highlights the distinct approaches taken by both countries in the management of Islamic affairs, focusing on governance structure, legal implementation, institutional authority, financial development, and contemporary challenges. This visual representation is intended to ease understanding and offer a clear point of reference for readers.

***Table 1: Synthesized overview of comparative analysis between Malaysia and Brunei in Islamic Affairs Management.***

| Aspect | Malaysia | Brunei |
|---|---|---|
| System of Governance | Federal constitutional monarchy | Absolute Islamic monarchy |
| Religious Authority | State-level authority with Sultans as Heads of Islam | Centralized under the Sultan as Head of Religion |
| Application of Sharia Law | Limited to personal/family law; Syariah courts parallel to civil courts | Comprehensive; includes Syariah Penal Code (hudud, qisas, ta'zir) |
| Islamic Financial Development | Highly developed; global Islamic finance hub | Developing sector; state-driven with national Islamic banks |
| Education System (Islamic) | Decentralized; state-managed Islamic education | Centralized; compulsory Islamic education for Muslims |
| Legal Framework | Federal Constitution (Art. 3 & 121(1A)); legal pluralism | Syariah Penal Code Order 2013; centralized religious laws |
| Public Participation in Religious Affairs | Moderate participation through NGOs, civil society, and fatwa councils | Limited; top-down religious authority, minimal open discourse |
| Challenges | Inconsistencies across states, legal overlaps, managing diversity | International criticism on Syariah law, lack of pluralistic engagement |

Based on Table 1, without a doubt, both nations have made considerable achievements in embracing Islamic values, rendering religious services, and achieving social cohesion. Adapting to the complexities of the modern world is where the countries face persistent challenges. This comparative analysis showcases two unique and yet fruitful approaches to the integration of Islam as a public element in government within the context of Malaysia and Brunei's state governance.

Although both countries are committed to Sunni Islam as the state religion, Malaysia's absolute Islamic monarchy differs greatly from Brunei's federal constitutional Islamic monarchy, thus profoundly shaping Islamic governance policies in both nations. From a governance perspective, the fragmentation of power in the decentralized approach creates gaps in consistency and coherence of responsiveness at the local level. The branched centralized policy in Brunei provides functional uniformity with rapid execution, but the absence of intellectual diversity stifles public involvement in religious discourse.

Brunei's controversial expansion of Syariah punishments under the 2013 Syariah Penal Code Order highlights the gap between Malaysia's dual legalistic Syariah jurisdiction limitations and Brunei's more Islamized state approach. In economic

development policies, Malaysia holds an integrated global position with advanced cross-border collaboration partnerships and Islamic regulatory institutions, ranking first in Islamic finance. While developing its financial sector, Brunei seeks to diversify its economy as it reduces reliance on hydrocarbon exports under the Islamic nation-building framework, positioning Islamic finance as a pillar in aiding these goals.

With public trust weakening, institutional decay and expectation shift from Muslim societies, both nations grapple with new age challenges rooted in religious extremism. Given the circumstances, Malaysia has an imperative to balance Islamic governance at the state level, while Brunei could use more openness and participatory policymaking. In both nations, the strengthening of independence and consistency of Shariah Supervisory Boards, coupled with accountability in religious offices, are critical in the quest for enduring Islamic governance.

These two countries emphasize important considerations for other Muslim-majority countries that wish to juxtapose religious credentials with bureaucratic efficacy, Islamic tenets with contemporary governance norms, and practicality. The point, however, is that however different the approaches may be, what remains constant is the desire to achieve Islam's relevance in contemporary dynamics while preserving its sanctity. The immediate priority for both Malaysia and Brunei is to bolster Islam, foster interfaith appreciation and understanding, embrace flexible legal paradigms, and restructure their frameworks to align with the realities of changing societal needs. Achieving effective Islamic governance in the two countries hinges on nurturing the fundamentals of justice, equality, compassion, religious plurality, free thought, progressive social order, and Malaysia's multifaceted society where governance is built on policies that balance civic participation with ethnic motivation towards nation-building and social contribution.

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