

# A Reflection on the Role of Ulama and Community Leaders in Raising Socio-Cultural Capital to Deal with Terrorist Groups in Bukit Jalin, Aceh Besar

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## **ABSTRACT**

The emergence of terrorist groups in the Aceh Province, which is spreading, was revealed after reports from residents and local clerics about armed training carried out by this radical group in Bukit Jalin, Aceh Besar, in September 2009. This terrorism case attracted the attention of the local government and local community. All of this has mainly happened because the expansion of the material world and technology has structured new settings for needs and patterns of life and created fields or jobs (occupations) that are very different from what had developed in the agrarian society in Aceh that was pre-Islamic. -industry. These changes in employment are directly related to economic development in the era of capitalism, which in turn requires investment in capital goods and an increase in the standard of prosperity. As a result, "as the economy develops, the need for skilled workers, technologists, and generally educated people increases almost geometrically". Thus, what is then witnessed is the continuous adjustment efforts of the traditional and modern world of education into the dynamics of the expansion of the material and technological world. With the emergence of terrorist movements and radical movements that try to offer perspectives and solutions that are based on considerations of violence in addressing the problems of modernity and Indonesianness, it is necessary to play the role of ulama and community leaders who are able to raise socio-cultural capital to deal with the problems of radicalism and terrorism in Aceh/Indonesia in the era of capitalism, in addition to strict law enforcement to eradicate terrorism that threatens our people in Aceh and Indonesia.

Keywords: Islam, ulama, terrorism, Indonesia, Aceh, TQISM, Wahabi, GAM.

## **Background**

Many people do not believe in the existence of terrorist groups in Aceh who call themselves Tandzhim al Qoidah Indonesia Serambi Mekkah (TQISM).<sup>1</sup> This outside group came to Aceh at the beginning of 2005 and originally intended to help Aceh over the tsunami disaster that struck Aceh on

In this regard, it must be recognized that the emergence of the precarious issue of Aceh terrorists occurred after reports from the local community and the clerics about the armed training carried out by this radical group in the hills of Jalin, Aceh Besar, in September 2009.<sup>2</sup>

In the police attack to quell the Bukit Jalin terrorists, nine victims received compensation funds of IDR 1.1 billion. They were victims of shootings during the crackdown on terrorism in Bukit Jalin, Lamkabau, Seulimum District, Aceh Besar, in 2010. "This time, we provide compensations for victims of past terrorist incidents during a gun battle on Mount Lamkabau, Aceh Besar. One person was seriously injured, eight were moderately injured, and the victims were all officers", said Deputy Chairperson of the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK) Achmadi, at the Aceh Governor's Hall, Wednesday (8/3/2010). Achmadi said those who were victims had gone through a verification and validation process before being included in the list of compensation payments.<sup>3</sup>

In this regard, unraveling the root causes of acts of terrorism in Bukit Jalin above is very difficult. However, there are at least two points of view:

The first view is called the structuralist approach. For proponents of this approach, acts of terrorism are a form of reaction by a marginalized group against a group that they imagine is oppressing them. In the case of radicalization in France, the French social scientist Giles Kepel sees the economic, social, and marginalization of immigrants and anti-Islam as the main triggers for feelings of disappointment that end in militancy. Therefore, Oliver Roy, a French social scientist, rejected this first view. The second view represented by Roy is that terrorism is a very specific individual case. Usually, it starts from the process of releasing individuals from large groups that become the mainstream. In Indonesia, big groups can be like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. In Oliver Roy's view, individuals whom this organization does not accommodate will look for or form their own smaller groups. This is where they feel accommodated. Therefore, in Roy's eyes, seeing the values that are believed, the "turning point" of personal life, and the psychological condition of the offender is much more important.<sup>4</sup>

Seeing the cases of terrorism that have emerged in Indonesia, these two "structural" and "individual" factors do not stand alone. These two factors work well when bound by an ideology or the beliefs of the actors. This ideology is the way of seeing the world, the value system, and even the direction of their movement.

In the case of terrorism in Bukit Jalin- Aceh Besar, the terrorist movement is trying to seize the local area as their social base to build territorial terrorism (*tamkin* terrorism). This territorial (*tamkin*) terrorism is a dangerous new group because they build a social basis and territory use technology and the Internet in their planning and action.<sup>5</sup> The terrorists are literate on the Internet, and this technology is a scourge of society. As Lucas Kello from Oxford University said (Lucas Kello, 2017), in the virtual domain of cyber (Internet), strategic operations vital by terrorists take place "shrouded in secrecy", which causes difficulty for police, intelligence, researchers, security forces, defense operators, and policymakers to track them down.<sup>6</sup>

This group was immediately pursued and ambushed by the Special Anti-Terrorism Detachment 88 under the coordination of the National Police Headquarters. The strength of terrorists in Aceh that emerged from 2009 to 2010 amounted to 151 people who were all armed. This group was later crippled by the Special Detachment 88 Anti-Terror Police of the Republic of Indonesia.<sup>7</sup> A total of 9 people were shot, and 21 people were arrested. The rest fled to North Sumatra, Riau, and West Sumatra and acted there in the form of horrendous terrorism. These terrorist groups from terrorist groups in Java from the year 2000 have carried out acts of terror throughout Indonesia with bombings and armed robberies. They recruited many members to train with them in several places in Aceh. Some Acehnese also participated in the terrorist acts carried out by this group against several foreign workers in Banda Aceh.<sup>8</sup>

## Notes on Methodology

The method employed in this paper was interdisciplinary by using religious, historical, and anthropological research methods that emphasized the discovery and excavation of data to trace the Bukit Jalin. These Aceh communities were strengthened by the literature studies from textbooks and the results of previous studies related to the history of Aceh society and its cultural aspects.

Research at that location is based on local people's information, strengthened by literature references, in addition to ethnographic interviews with residents living around the site on Bukit Jalin Aceh and former participants of TQISM. Here, descriptive analysis is used to answer problems about the historical and socio-cultural background of the Bukit Jalin communities, Aceh, and its surroundings. The main analysis in this study focuses on the social function of the mukim as an administrative entity of the Acehnese government in the past, which was not used by the colonial government until the post-independence period. This *mukim* administrative entity is then used as the socio-cultural power of the Acehnese people so that they have the power to regulate forests, seuneubok (fields), estuaries, markets, and the sea. Terrorist groups who are members of the armed training in Bukit Jalin use the power and hegemony of the mukim to hide themselves from the surveillance of the security forces. It also uses the traditional *mukim* authority to manage the operations and logistics of seven groups currently training in the military in Bukit Jalin, Aceh Besar District, Aceh Province. Due to the very central socio-cultural position of the *mukim*, the anthropological methodology is mostly applied in this research.

## The Emergence of Acehnese Terrorists

What amazes and intrigues many scholars is the emergence of "Acehnese terrorists", who have been regarded as having no culture of religious violence. Although some differences are quite striking culturally, it turns out that this group does not consist entirely of people outside Aceh. Many are also from Java, North Sumatra, Makassar (Sulawesi), Banten, Central Java, and West Java, with diverse cultures. However, whatever their actions in Aceh, the Aceh region differs from Java. Aceh has its own jihad concepts and strategies. This should be understood by terrorists who call themselves "mujahidin" from Java. In fact, with the current situation in Aceh, there is a historical irony. Now, the situation is the opposite of the previous case: if the Acehnese were suspected in the past because they were considered separatists, all Javanese in Aceh are suspected of having links with terrorist networks. In the past, the Acehnese were raided. Now, the Javanese are raided, especially those from Banten.<sup>9</sup>

For many people in Aceh, there are indeed fears that the arrival of officers will enter the villages to pursue terrorists, and tense situations will disrupt the activities of the Acehnese in seeking sustenance. Not yet exhausted the gripping and unsafe atmosphere of the DOM (Military Operations Area)<sup>10</sup> from 1989-1998, which eradicated separatism, martial Law emerged in 2001-2003.

False shots, stray bullets, and other things are considered deliberate, wrapped up in various reasons that have often happened in Aceh. Many people initially considered this because the Indonesian apparatus had never been happy with Aceh's peace. In fact, they are never happy with anything about Aceh. Many people also strongly criticized the attitude of the police, who were over-acting in handling terrorism cases in Aceh.

There are views of some people who claim that those who surrender are actually not terrorists.<sup>11</sup> They have weapons, but they are all suspected of being organic. Even though so far, the public understands that terrorists have never had organic weapons, except for spoils of war. A number of speculations and statements were circulating in the community.<sup>12</sup>

The most surprising is the statement that ex-GAM parties have been involved in terrorist activities in Aceh so far.<sup>13</sup> The statement was not worthy of being issued before concrete data that mentioned GAM's involvement in terrorism in Aceh. Not only because of their capacity to not focus on research on terrorism, they should not issue opinions that are not their expertise, especially without concrete data. Indeed, some terrorism observers a week before President SBY made a statement about not being involved in ex-GAM in the terror network, terrorism observers or researchers have stated that there is no element of GAM in terrorist activities in Aceh because of different ideological chemistry.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, many parties are worried about our statement, but we try as scientifically and wisely as possible with the statement without having to abandon the real analysis that occurs in the field. It is indeed not easy to satisfy everyone when a crisis is happening. At least, this is what researchers in Aceh deeply feel. In situations without crisis alone, political accommodation is very difficult to occur ideally, especially when the Aceh crisis is so complex. It is necessary to examine how the Acehnese people are affected by the preaching of the terrorist movement. Radical movements involved in acts of terrorism in Aceh generally have Salafi jihadi leanings, and they are greatly influenced by the works of Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, Usamah Bin Ladin, Al-Zarqawi and others.<sup>15</sup>

A number of speculations also enlivened the escalation of the emergence of "Aceh terrorist" cases. For example, by exaggerating the issue of Aceh terrorism that made the Acehnese feel embarrassed and uncomfortable, many observers in Java exaggerated this issue with an analysis that had to be balanced by other researchers. Many observers say the involvement of ex-GAM (Sydney Jones and Imparsial),<sup>16</sup> the motives of perpetrators of criminal acts of terrorism to use marijuana resources for the political power of radical Islamic groups (Mardigu),<sup>17</sup> about the linkage of terrorist groups in Aceh with the Shiite Islamic groups of ah (Dino Cresbon)<sup>18</sup> and others. Despite all the existing limitations, we tried to examine existing field data. To understand this situation, we need to analyze and parse the roots of the problem far back to Aceh's social history to be able to provide a basic description of the Islamic ideology in this Rencong Land.

Looking at the times and the needs of the community for calm and peace in life, the *dayah* produced national and international quality scholars. *Dayahs* should also present the sciences that have been taught along the lines of religion, including standard Indonesian. Also, international languages only require the activation of the Arabic language that they have mastered so far passively.

There are several assumptions that researchers can formulate in giving direction and understanding to examine further the role and authority of ulama institutions in Aceh: (1) Aceh is a part of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, which is bound by the principles of the Unitary State and Indonesia Islamic State, so the legal system that applies in Aceh is not an Islamic legal system. However, Aceh was given the privilege of managing its own religion and customs according to the mandate of the Law. (2) The implementation of Islamic Law in Aceh is legally recognized, and the role of the ulama is made one of the privileges given by the Central Government to the Regional Government in Aceh. In fact, ulama in Aceh has been compiled in one official institution or institution that is legally recognized in accordance with the contents of Article 9 of Law Number 44 of 1999 concerning the Privileges of Aceh and strengthened again by Law Number 11 of 2006 concerning Aceh Government. (3) The weak position, function, and authority of the role of ulama today in the system of governance in Aceh is a challenge for the ulama in Aceh, especially those who are members of ulama associations in the MPU and can be the object of research by constitutional experts in Aceh to help scholars sought the format of the success of the ulama in order to play an active role in the system of governance in Aceh. (5) The importance of the ulama's understanding of the political system and the current system of government

in Aceh was felt in order to obtain a proper and calculated position in the political arena or in the system of regional government in Aceh. Ulama also needs a better cadre so that the generation that understands Islam and its rules does not become scarce later.

Decentralization is the main principle in the concept of regional governance in Indonesia, and specifically for this concept, there are two decentralizations, namely, symmetric decentralization and asymmetric decentralization. This understanding of asymmetric decentralization is to understand that in each region, there is special treatment that is not possible in each region. This causes a difference in treatment for the Aceh region and other regions in Indonesia.

It started after the definitive defeat of GAM (the Free Aceh Movement) in 2005, which failed to give a gift of independence to the people of Aceh. There was an involutive situation that immediately ambushed Aceh, and several people tried to glance back to the power of Islam. For the Acehnese, according to Fachry Ali, there are some consequences of the results of this latest development in which Islam was used as an ideology in the liberating movement.

The first is regarding the idea of the existence of Acehnese. The rise of modern Islamic schools in the 1930s has been regarded as the rise of Islam. Because Islam has become a "popular religion" and is an integral part of Aceh's identity, the rise of Islam through the spread of schools is also experienced as the rise of Aceh. In other words, the rise of Islam is used as a means of awakening an ethnicity. It means, accompanying the emergence of modern schools, the historical awareness and politics of the community were reaffirmed.

Secondly, the development of the madrasas provided a new sociological structure for scholars. In the present context, the existence of organizations or jihadists who practice terrorism is considered a new system in the struggle. Unlike *dayah*<sup>19</sup> in Aceh's national education system, the madrasa system is more leaning on a new structure where ulama can emerge as public figures.<sup>20</sup>

Encouraged by the need to spread reformist thought, the ulama moved out, crossed the boundaries of the madrasa, and made *tabligh* in various meetings, inviting the community to move one breath with the madrasa movement. As a result, various madrasas have sprung up here and there, especially in Pidie, North Aceh, and East Aceh. This means widening the network of constituents of reformist thinking. This kind of madrasa structure transformed ulama into public leaders with broad mass support. The era of the madrasa, thus marking the arrival of a new era in Aceh, not only with the emergence of various public figures from among the ulama but also with the intensification of mass political awareness.

Third, the growth of the madrasa is closely related to the process of developing reformist young Islamic leaders in the future. As an alternative to the Dutch education system, the madrasa is the only modern educational institution available to the majority of the Acehnese people and thus serves as a massive absorbent institution, a mass of youth. In the midst of the highly politicized environment, the madrasa became a vehicle to deepen the historical and political awareness of Acehnese youth. It is not surprising that their "Islamic nationalism" ideas grew through madrasas and not from modern elite schools established by the Netherlands. Through Islam and madrasa, the Acehnese found the main tool for articulating their political awareness.

Perhaps this problem that can be drawn from the above phenomenon is that at that time, the value of certain religious education was closely related to the cultural fibers of society so that a person has the skills and education in religious knowledge and is itself structured into the cultural fiber network. However, we must admit that the position of the ulama as well as the nine Guardians in Java, is an integral part of the Acehnese community. But above all, those ulamas have functioned not only as disseminators of Islam but also teachers and educators of the Acehnese community. For centuries, the

Acehnese were "cared for" under the roles carried out by the ulama. However, religious education and educated people in the matter are considered to be an integral part of the network of cultural fibers. How should we explain why the position of the educator is even higher in society, even though the position of a king? In the context of the current conversation, the question is very important because the answers will provide an understanding of the changes that have taken place and have contributed to marking the development of the future masses of the Acehnese people who are undergoing the arrogant transformation toward the industrial society.

For some of the phenomena mentioned above, it must be seen in the nature of agrarian society before the birth of industrial society, as demonstrated by the Acehnese people at that time. In this context, Fachry Ali said that although a pre-industrial agrarian society was no longer a perfectly isolated society, an argument was put forward.

Robert Redfield<sup>21</sup> noted that the development of the material world and its technology is very limited, which causes the development of this society not to be expansive. Hence, there is a great tendency for material and technological figures to be more oriented towards local nature than out, "... peasant technology", Nash wrote, "are ingenious high levels of skill and performance, but are still very simple,"<sup>22</sup> a situation that immediately caught up with Aceh when the industries and services that accompanied it were cultural shocks and unpreparedness of experts ready to use to play industrial gears. Immediately after this development came to Aceh, the role and position of the ulama became absurd. Ulama, especially in the face of local social, economic, and political developments in the area, soon caught up in the game carried out by local political actors.

By developing the material world, politics offers material benefits that can be achieved by ulama if they join in political activities. Ulama, through this process, has experienced a narrowing of roles: (1) from being concerned about people's problems to practical political issues; (2) from the insights of the Indonesian, European, and world to the orientation of regional level political institutions with little meaning; (3) from the knowledge that has a far-reaching perception of the orientation just before the election (as vote-getter); (4) from the role of high politics played with moral appeals to low-level political games in practical political dynamics; and what is even more sad is (5) from the insights of the ulama who used to have aqidah politics to "non-aqidah politics" or sell all religious laws for the interests of the ruler at the local level. The local ruler feels more ferocious than the one at the center, but wherever to act and establish communication nationally is the minimum required of a cleric. So, in the political tradition of Aceh, which has been so long sedimentated,<sup>23</sup> the ulama are also blamed by the people (apart from flattery and respect, which are almost identical). In history, we have heard oral literature that reads: *Nyang Peutamong Belanda Panglima Tibang, Nyang Peutamong Jepang Pemuda PUSA* ", the ulamas must act cautiously in responding to the occurring developments. When ulamas become political media, they are only seen as "tools" in the people's view, losing its human value. Ulama, as political figures, will be absorbed into a bureaucratic system with complicated links that function as a clue and interpreter for the community when experiencing agitation, so religion is present in the middle of the community called Greetz<sup>24</sup> and experiencing an involution.

Thus, it is not too wrong to make decisions about Acehnese scholars now about the same as the kiyai in Javanese society. Geertz implicitly says that kiyai has a role as a "cultural broker" (culture broker). Only kiyai want to develop the basis of their power, which tends to cooperate with government officials. With this cooperation, ironically, Acehnese scholars have domesticated under the political influence of local authorities.<sup>25</sup>

To answer all this, it would be very suitable if understood more in the principle of asymmetric decentralization, which began with no uniform regulation of authority content that formed the degree of different relations between asymmetric regions and political units/other governments both horizontally (between regions) and vertically (nations). In other words, the asymmetrical pattern of one or more local government units is "possessed of varying degrees of autonomy and power" (owned by various levels of autonomy and power).<sup>26</sup>

The limited development of the material and technological world has socio-cultural consequences in politics. In the case of Aceh, the phenomenon of the emergence of "Acehmorden" (the assassination of Aceh or 'Aceh pungo'), was a consequence of Aceh's definitive defeat of the Netherlands and the emergence of modernization, which moved in an uproar bursting into the lives of Acehnese people.

The current problem is that, at present, the centers of Islamic education no longer have privileges in terms of influence and authority as experienced by Islamic education figures and centers in the agrarian period (before the 1960s). In other words, the emanations of influence and authority reproduced by the education center or the characters are no longer effective at a higher level. As is known together, the ulama factor that causes the process of dimming the spiritual aura of influence lies primarily in the fading of the structure of the agrarian society itself - due to the process of modernization and capitalization. The perspective imposed above to see the socio-cultural structure of agrarian societies, modernization, and capitalization - which start from the technical and industrial revolution in Western society - means expanding the material world and technology on a broader scale and is almost unpredictable. Therefore, the expansion of the material world will have a widespread influence and, in some ways, be unimaginable.

At the world level, the expansion of the material world and technology, which was driven by the industrial revolution (especially after the 19th century), gave birth to what Baraclough called an *"achievement with great speed marked by Erich Marcks, a German historian— the world becomes harder, 'more warlike, more exclusive; it is also more than ever before, a great unit in which everything collides and clashes.'* In a shorter sense, the fact that the forces of the world were scattered and isolated beforehand had been forced into one, with all the positive and negative consequences.

At the local level, the integrative world powers forced the isolation of all rural areas into isolation, which caused them in the context of non-Western nations, colonialism, and then the birth of nations opened up from various outside influences. Modernization, technologization, and capitalization were carried out by the previous colonial government and by the national state. After that, it was a process of expansion of the material world that took place massively on the structure of society and agrarian culture. Technically, this process gave birth to radical changes when local-oriented tendencies within agrarian societies could no longer be maintained, forcing them to deal more intensively with outside forces. Technically, this process gave birth to radical changes when local-oriented tendencies within agrarian societies could no longer be maintained, forcing them to deal more intensively with outside forces. Conceptually, the expansion of the material world and technology has changed the ethos and outlook of life on the evaluative dimension or the model dimension of the ideal picture of the world of society, which at the same time means overhauling cognitive networks that have been valid.

### **The Role of Ulama and Community Leader**

Many previous studies have discussed repositioning and the role of scholars both in terms of history and sociology in Aceh and elsewhere. Some scholars point out that the role of ulama is increasingly minimized and eliminated in the state system and state law or in the field of everyday life. The role of

the ulama in national politics is getting smaller and even gone. For this reason, there is a need to reposition the role of ulama in national politics. This opinion was expressed by the leader of NU cleric KH Ma'ruf Amin, in Jakarta on November 11, 2007.<sup>27</sup>

In this context, the spirit and spirit of religion in national politics today has died and must be revived. Therefore, ulama must carry out movements through a forum of social, religious organizations and an Islamic, moderate, and nationalist political party forum. This is done to maintain the integrity of the NKRI. Besides that, the condition of the Indonesian people at this time is still a life of concern.

For this reason, Islamic scholars and ulemas must have the responsibility in accordance with the demands of religion to meet the needs of the community (matholib al ammah). While alluding to later scholars going into the realm of practical politics, the role of the ulama will shift, Ma'ruf Amin said this would not happen because scholars will not leave their main duties as syiar religion. Ulama will not leave the Islamic boarding school. However, Islamic scholars only guard how to achieve a better democracy.

In its history, it is not uncommon for us to see that the legitimacy of the ulama to one party will give rise to the resistance of the party to the legitimized party. That resistance can be fatal. Because the legitimacy will be regarded as the justification of scholars for one party and 'blame' on the other. In addition, the ulema's position behind the ulama will also get a resistance attitude from some other communities. The effect is that other truths that the scholars will convey will be difficult to be heard and obeyed by all components of society. This is certainly not something ideal. Suppose the ulama, as a central figure in translating religion, is considered to have justified one group. In that case, the possibility of the birth of one group's anarchism that is given such legitimacy to the delegitimized group is a very open consequence.

In the context of efforts to reposition the ulama's work, according to Iskandar Budiman,<sup>28</sup> some interesting things can be used as a format for the role and position of present-day Acehese scholars in reorganizing people's lives in the midst of globalization. First, the wisdom of the ulama in responding to various religious issues is not too confrontational and always persuasively pursued; second, respecting and upholding the "courtesy council" by respecting the opinions of others; third, open insight without immediately imposing penalties without being supported by valid data (still paying attention to tolerance/tasamuh); fourth, if there is a difference in understanding back to Allah and the Apostle (Qur'an and Sunnah); fifth, ulama do not live on ivory towers for the interests of their parties/groups that ignore Sharia substance and the interests of the ummah. That is, in a political context, what the ulamas should do is to build a political awareness of the people about how they maintain their affairs with Islamic Law.

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The offer of an ideal position for the ulama should receive remarks from the ulama in order to maintain the authority and dignity of the ulama themselves. The ulama should only engage in politics and establish relations with the authorities, but the ulama must be able to occupy their ideal position so that they are not trapped in the pragmatic interests of one party, nor both parties that support the postponement of regional elections, as well as those who support the elections on time. Ideal scholars like this will surely continue to be heard by the community and far from their resistance. On the other hand, ulama who fall into the political interests of one party is certain to get resistance from supporters of the political attitudes of the other party. In a situation like this, the various truths of religious values that the ulama will convey will be difficult for the public to hear.

Perhaps here, our scholars need to study the strategic position they can play in the political stage in Iran. In Iran, the ulamas do not involve themselves in supporting one candidate in the general election. They play a role when recruiting candidates who are feasible and who are not feasible. When a decent candidate has been established, the ulama will no longer interfere to support one of the candidates in order to maintain community unity. Thus, Aceh ulamas should also be able to play a role as a controller of the political agenda in Aceh so that all attitudes of political actors and their political orientation can always be on the path of truth.

Looking back on Aceh's socio-cultural history, it can be seen that the first physical meeting of Acehnese Islam and the modern world of the Netherlands occurred in the political and military fields, not in the field of culture and humanity. This meeting was crucial in shaping Acehnese Islam for later periods. When the Aceh sultanate fortress fell to the Dutch in 1873,<sup>29</sup> and in the late 1890s, the Dutch launched a massive offensive throughout Aceh, the new Acehnese political community was soon formed: The fall of the sultanate and *uleebalang* leadership and the rise of the ulama as a new layer. As conceptualized by Fachry Ali, the emergence of this new element of leadership has injected fresh blood into Aceh's resistance to the Netherlands. Christiaan Snouck (1906) Hurgronje said that what was faced by the Dutch in Aceh was not a group of keumala, nor was it a group of intruders (robbers), but a national group, as far as possible in Aceh, was mobilized together and organized by ulama.<sup>30</sup>

To give a religious spirit to support the resistance to the infidels (colonial), according to the findings of Fachry Ali's research,<sup>31</sup> the ulama offered Islam as a movement. Developing in times of war, Islam in the hands of the ulama was transformed into the ideology of resistance. It was during this period that Acehnese Islam formed typically. In order for Islam to be more comprehensively a war ideology, the ulama also translated religious teachings into the hikayat of prang sabi (holy war). This story essentially promises a paradise for martyrs (*syahid*),<sup>32</sup> and thus arouses the war spirit of the Acehnese from the cradle to the grandparents,<sup>33</sup> after losing the lives of around 250,000 in 1879<sup>34</sup> and 20,000 in 1890.<sup>35</sup>

What is important here is that the formation of Islamic ideology as a universal religion has been specifically transformed into the ideology of war. This transformation made Islam in Aceh more of a political tool to fight against its enemies, establish self-identification, and therefore draw a line of fundamental differences between Acehnese people and their enemies and local traitors.

Above all, the teachings of Islam have been transformed into the Story of the Sabi War. Now, no Acehnese poet or poet also includes "millions" of poets currently scattered in Indonesia who can make a poem sebat Hikayat Prang Sabi, which is capable of mobilizing the people to fight without fear of death. The present reality shows that writers are indeed "sick". At this stage of development, Islam - almost in its true sense - turned into a "popular religion", which has naturally influenced the social relations and cultural behavior of the Acehnese people. In this position, Islam has actually shaped the Acehnese as a separate ethnic group when this teaching has experienced ethnicity.

"The Achenesed Islam" (Islam that is blended with Acehnese tradition and culture) refers to the term Fachry Ali - continuing as the identity of Aceh's self-confidence when, since the 1920s, the Netherlands modernized Aceh by, as in Java before, developing a special education system for uleebalang children. The first is Western, which generally comes from the uleebalang element. After all, the entrance to "Europeans" was very narrow, so those who were Westernized consisted of only a handful of people. As a result, the development of urban, secular culture took place alongside the Acehnese Islamic culture. On the contrary, on the basis of Islamic modernism, the ulama established various madrassas in the 1930s, which progressively adopted the modern teaching method after experiencing the process of Islamization.

The progress of Acehnese clerics in the reform era is increasingly needed in playing its role in overcoming terrorism and creating peace and social order when the democratic procession is held both in elections / presidential elections and regional elections, which often pierce and disperse our hearts as a society. But it is a pity that every time there is an election, the presidential election, the ulama, who is actually expected as a unifying symbol, advisor, and controller, is often trapped in the practice of legitimizing the political attitude of one party and delegitimizing the political attitudes of the other party. In the case of Aceh regarding the election, for example, the emergence of a group of scholars who urged the postponement of the elections and a group of other scholars who supported the election procession was held on time. But that does not mean that the ulama cannot participate in the political arena because the role of the ulama is also important to direct the goals of the state better and according to the rules of religion.

Regarding the 2004 tsunami threat of terrorism in Aceh, our research in the field found that the Acehnese scholars had prepared a vision and mission and a strategic step to deal with it. The scholars who, in general, still inherit the tradition and spirit of the PUSA (Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh), which was formerly chaired by Abu Daud Beureueh, who is very charismatic and historical, continue to move the teachings and tabligh, build networks and communication with the lower society while asserting that the scholars will always oppose radicalism/terrorism and urge that acts of terrorism/extremism be prevented and stopped because terrorism is an extraordinary crime, extraordinary crime, which is diametrically opposed to the teachings of Islam. Acehnese people have had enough with the 2004 earthquake/tsunami and the enactment of the DOM (Military Operation Area) of the New Order era that made Aceh a region of conflict and violence. Acehnese clerics and carefree umara moved from village to village, from boarding schools to pesantren, to disseminate wasathiyah Islam, moderate and peaceful middle-ground Islam. They also approach and deal with terrorists who have escaped prison while persuading them to repent and return to a straight, peaceful, and dignified path.

At present, where modernization is proceeding so profusely, the roles of the clergy have also shifted. As seen strikingly in Aceh, the structure of Acehnese society has undergone a change. In the past, the structure of the Aceh community consisted of the Sultan of the Uleebalang, ulama, and farmers. So, with progress stabbing into the heart of social politics. The culture and economy of the Acehnese

structure have undergone a change. There are peasants in the village with a subsystem culture. There are clerics who survive in the villages and occasionally appear "on the surface" in the city. There are umara who control the government administration and are managers of government projects of the traders, most of whom are former *uleebalang* and students who are idealists who stand in two worlds, real and theoretical.

Therefore, Acehnese clerics felt that it was not enough to condemn terrorism, with the argument that terrorism was an act that was not in accordance with religious norms. Especially in Islam, there has never been a suggestion to take actions that could harm others. In Islam, it has never been recommended to enforce *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar* by killing themselves.<sup>36</sup>

What must be underlined is that radicalism and new Islamist extremism in Aceh are using the latest communication methods and sophisticated technology. Hence, scholars need to provide advanced technology for surfing social media since suspicions that the world is facing a new wave of terrorism that uses the Internet and social media to carry out its actions. This confirms the findings of Gabriel Weimann (2015), who revealed that around 90 percent of radicals organized, and terrorism used the Internet for their operations. For example, they use the Internet to recruit new friends and to get support throughout the world. In this context, the Internet has become a powerful tool to facilitate recruitment, reach global audiences, connect with other extremist groups, and disseminate "hate speech" and 'other hoax material' that encourage the others to commit violence and terrorism in Aceh, Jakarta, Surabaya, Manila, Jolo, Mindanao and around the world.

Looking at the issues of radicalism and terrorism that emerged in Aceh after the New Order of 1998, we see socially and face the reality of the many Acehnese who are marginalized to find work. Most of them left Aceh for Malaysia and Singapore to sell their energy. This means that Aceh, which is rich in resources, is still unable to provide sufficient food and a decent livelihood for its people, especially with social issues that are not enough development programs from the government to overcome them.

### **CONCLUDING REMARK**

Many things are often overlooked by the central government of Aceh. In addition to the potential of mukims and local government administrative structures in Aceh, there is also the socio-cultural potential of Panglima Laot, Pawang Uteun, Haria Pekan, and traditional local clerics as an important part of the central political power to control security. The neglect of the use of the potential of local wisdom and local genius in Aceh has led to the loss of Indonesia's security pillars in the border areas.

With social, cultural, and religious capital, the ulemas in Aceh — as they once played a role in the critical conditions faced by the Acehnese — are still important now to play a role as socio-cultural and civilization forces. Unfortunately, the inclusion of technology and the new instruments of value that have accompanied it has made it difficult for ulemas to adapt (apply precisely and appropriately) the teachings of religion into the life and technological advances that bind the people in the era of capitalism.

For this reason, the government and the state must strengthen the 'technical' capacity and capability of the ulemas and empower them as well as pesantren (dayah, traditional Islamic institution, or Islamic boarding school) to form a strong and resilient civil society to face the era of capitalism.

The clerics and ulemas (Islamic scholars) are still heard and trusted by the communities and become informal leaders outside the bureaucracy and state institutions (executive, legislative, judicial). They are the hope for the people of Aceh to protect and educate Acehnese people, overcome anomie and socio-economic alienation, face radicalism and terrorism, and overcome the chaos and emptiness of religious and cultural values of the era of modernism.

By learning from the experience of overcoming the 2009 terrorism cases that rocked the Islamic ummah in Aceh, communication and cooperation between clerics (ulemas), society, and umara (state officials) who were caring and committed became very crucial in the present and the future. However, the problem of radicalism and terrorism is a common problem faced by the community, ulemas, and the state. Here, social justice, the rule of Law, and good governance must be upheld because it is the key to overcoming the roots of the terrorism problem that is rife in the current era of reform.\*\*\*

### INTERVIEW:

Interview with Ulemas, clerics, and Islamic Scholars in Aceh, December 2012

Interview with DR. M. Solly Lubis, S.H. Banda Aceh, tanggal 21 Oktober 2011

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>TQISM is an abbreviation of Tandzhim al Qaidah Indonesia Serambi Mecca. See, Abu Musa Ath-Thoyar a.k.a Ubaid, "Statement from the Aceh Mujahidin", Muslim Jihady Media, available at [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org), accessed March 12, 2010. (TQISM adalah singkatan dari Tandzhim al Qaidah Indonesia Serambi Mekkah (Komando Jihad Indonesia Serambi Mekkah). Lihat, Abu Musa Ath-Thoyar a.k.a Ubaid, "Surat Pernyataan dari Mujahidin Aceh", Muslim Jihady Media, terdapat di [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org), diakses tanggal 12 Maret 2010. This paper is part of the result of field research in Aceh 2010-2012.

<sup>2</sup>*Serambi Indonesia newspaper*, 15 September 2009

<sup>3</sup> *Serambi Indonesia newspaper*, 9/3/2010

<sup>4</sup> Noor Huda Ismail, Sebaran Ideologi Kekerasan, *Detik News*, 23 November 2016. Lorne Dawson, "Olivier Roy and the "Islamization of Radicalism": Overview and Critique of a Theory of Western Jihadist Radicalization", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Spring 2022, No. 33: 797-814. For comparison, see Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, Washington: Columbia University Press, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Herdi Sahrasad and Al Chaidar, 'Tamkin' terrorism a new security threat", *The Jakarta Post*, Saturday, Nov 17, 2018.

<sup>6</sup>Lucas Kello, *The Virtual Weapon and International Order*, Yale University Press, 2017

<sup>7</sup>*Serambi Indonesia*, 22 September 2009.

<sup>8</sup>There are 14 Acehnese native people who participated in this group. This is unique and is the only case of terror involving Acehnese whose Islamic culture is very different from the Muslims in Java (Ada 14 orang asli Aceh yang ikut di dalam kelompok ini. Ini menjadi keunikan tersendiri dan merupakan satu-satunya kasus teror yang melibatkan orang Aceh yang budaya keislamannya sangat berbeda dengan orang Islam di Jawa. )

<sup>9</sup>*Serambi Indonesia*, 23 September 2012.

<sup>10</sup>About DOM, see, Al Chaidar, Yarmen Dinamika, Sayed Mudhahar Ahmad, *Aceh Bersimbah Darah: Mengungkap Penerapan Status Daerah Operasi Militer (DOM) di Aceh, 1989-1998*. Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 1998.

<sup>11</sup>*Waspada*, 4 Oktober 2009.

<sup>12</sup>This view from Irwandi Yusuf, Gubernur of Aceh ketika itu. Juga berasal dari Muzakkir Manaf, ketua Komite Peralihan Aceh (KPA). *Serambi Indonesia*, 2 Oktober 2009.

<sup>13</sup>*Serambi Indonesia*, 4 Januari 2010.

<sup>14</sup>See, publication from Muslim Jihady Media, "Tikaman terhadap Jihad fii Sabilillah", di [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org), diakses tanggal 12 maret 2010.

<sup>15</sup>About this da'wah, see the writing Mujahid Tandzim Al-qoidah Indonesia Serambi Mekah, "Misi kami Dakwah tauhid", Muslim Jihady Media, diunduh dari [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org), diakses tanggal 13 Maret 2010.

<sup>1</sup>Sydney Jones's view, *Serambi Indonesia*, 15 Desember 2010.

<sup>1</sup>*Kompas*, 14 Desember 2010.

<sup>1</sup>*Media Indonesia*, 16 desember 2010.

<sup>2</sup>*Dayah* is a traditional Islamic institution that does not conform to the modern environment. Aside from being passive, the ulamas tend to treat Islamic teachings as a private, Isoteric reality. *Dayah*, therefore, it is not mobile. (*Dayah* merupakan institusi Islam tradisional yang tidak berkesesuaian dengan lingkungan modern. Selain bersifat pasif, para ulamanya cenderung memperlakukan ajaran islam sebagai kenyataan Isoteris yang bersipat pribadi. *Dayah*, oleh karenanya tidak *mobile*.)

<sup>2</sup>The author refers to the interpretation Eric E. Morris, "Aceh: Social Revolution and the Islamic Vision", in Audrey Kahin, (ed). *Regional Dynamics of the Independence Revolution, Unity from Diversity*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup>See, Robert Redfield, *Little Community, Peasant Community and Culture*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956.

<sup>23</sup>Manning Nash, *Primitive and Peasant Economic Systems*, California: Chandler Publishing Company, 1966, hlm. 20.

<sup>24</sup>This adage was born when the Cumbok war masses, around 1945-1946 in Aceh. This means that the Acehnese are able to balance the power of the two positions between the ulama and *uleebalang*.

<sup>25</sup>Clifford Geertz, *Agricultural Involution*, Los Angeles: Berkeley dan London: University of California Press, 1963.

<sup>26</sup>See, Clifford Geertz, "The Javanese 'kiyai': The Changing Role of Culture Broker", in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. II, 1960, hlm. 228-250.

<sup>27</sup>Robert Endi Jaweng, Keistimewaan Yogyakarta: babak baru yang menyisakan sejumlah catatan, *Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan, Desentralisasi Asimetris solusi atau problem*, Edisi 42 Tahun 2013, hlm. 107-108.

<sup>28</sup>KH Ma'ruf Amin: Perlu ada Reposisi Peran Ulama dalam Politik, See, <https://news.okezone.com/read/2007/11/11/1/60052/perlu-ada-reposisi-peran-ulama-dalam-politik>. As a comparison, see, Umar Hasyim, *Mencari Ulama Pewaris Nabi*, Surabaya: PT. Bina Ilmu, 1998. See, Abdul Qodir Djaelani, *Peran Ulama dan Santri Dalam Perjuangan Politik Islam Di Indonesia*, Surabaya: PT Bina Ilmu, 1990

<sup>29</sup>*Tribun Medan*, 25 Oktober 2011.

<sup>30</sup>The Kingdom of the Netherlands began its attack on Aceh in April 1873, after failing to force Aceh to recognize its sovereignty. See, Osman Raliby, "Aceh, Sejarah dan Kebudayaanannya", dalam Ismail Sunny (ed), *Bunga Rampai Aceh*, Jakarta: Bhratarata, 1980, hlm. 37. Fachry Ali, *The Revolt of Nation-State Builders*, (Thesis), Monash University, Melbourne, 1994.

<sup>31</sup>C. Snouck Hourgronjer, *The Acehnese Vol. I*, (trans. A. W. S. Sullivan), Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906, hlm. 188. Eric E. Morris, *Islam and Politics in Aceh*, Melbourne: Monash University Press, 1992, hlm. 58.

<sup>32</sup>Fachry Ali, *The Revolt of Nation-State Builders*, (unpublished MA thesis), Monash University, Melbourne, 1994.

<sup>33</sup>One verse from *Hikayat prang sabi* adalah sebagai berikut : *Hate beu teutap/Beu Sunggoh-sunggoh/Surak beurioh hai pahlawan/Deum Geutanyo pahlawan gagah /Ta mano darah cit bak masa prang.*

<sup>34</sup>For the profound consequences of *Hikayat prang sabi* in reviving the spirit of war for the Acehnese, See, T. Ibrahim Alfian, *Perang di Jalan Allah*, Jakarta: Penerbit Sinar Harapan, 1987. Bait lain dari syair hikayat perang sabil: *Do do da idang/Geulayang ka putohtalou/Beurejang rayeuk banta bedang /Beu eek ka prang musoh nanggroe.*

<sup>35</sup>Charles R. Beamer "The Acehnese-Dutch Ward and Its Effect on The Acehnese people: Their Land, Customs, and Institutions", makalah yang disampaikan pada "conference on Modern Indonesian History", 18-19 Juli 1975, Center for Southeast Asian Study, University of Wisconsin-Madison, hlm. 49.

<sup>36</sup>Eric Morris, "Aceh: Social Revolution and the Islamic Vision", dalam Audrey Kahin, (ed). *Regional Dynamics of the Independence Revolution, Unity from Diversity*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985, p.85.

<sup>37</sup>Interview with Ulemas, clerics and Islamic Scholars in Aceh December 2012

<sup>3</sup>Gabriel Weimann, *Terrorism in Cyberspace: The Next Generation*, Paperback– May 12, 2015, Woodrow Wilson Center Press / Columbia University Press (April 21, 2015)

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