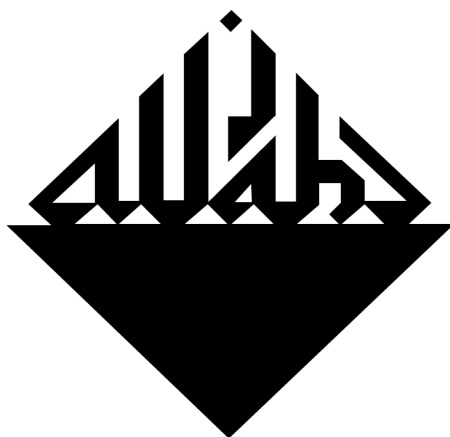


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LINKING IDENTITY TO COLLECTIVE ACTION:
ISLAM, HISTORY AND ETHNICITY IN THE ACEH CONFLICT

Mohammad Hasan Ansori

THE ROOTS OF THE WRITING TRADITION
OF ḤADĪTH WORKS IN NUSANTARA:
HIDĀYĀT AL-ḤABĪB BY NŪR AL-DĪN AL-RĀNĪRĪ

Oman Fathurahman

EDUCATION, YOUNG ISLAMISTS
AND INTEGRATED ISLAMIC SCHOOLS IN INDONESIA

Noorhaidi Hasan

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Mohammad Hasan Ansori

Linking Identity to Collective Action: Islam, History and Ethnicity in the Aceh Conflict

Abstrak: *Indonesia merupakan salah satu negara di Asia Tenggara yang memiliki sejarah panjang konflik dan kekerasan etnis. Tumbanganya Orde Baru pada tahun 1998 memicu muncul dan makin besarnya eskalasi konflik dan kekerasan di berbagai daerah, seperti di Aceh, Ambon, Papua, dan Kalimantan Barat. Pada tahun 2002, semua konflik tersebut telah mengalami de-eskalasi, bahkan terselesaikan secara baik, kecuali konflik Aceh yang melibatkan Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM) dengan Pemerintah Indonesia. Dibandingkan dengan konflik lain di Indonesia, konflik Aceh memiliki dua keunikan penting. Pertama, konflik tersebut secara umum digerakkan oleh dua gerakan separatis dengan dua ideologi yang berbeda, yaitu Darul Islam (1953-1959) yang cenderung Islamis, dan GAM (1976-2005) yang lebih sekuler. Kedua, konflik Aceh secara luas seringkali dianggap sebagai salah satu konflik yang paling lama dan paling banyak memakan korban di Asia.*

Sejumlah pertanyaan kritis mendasari artikel ini, di antaranya mengapa terdapat resistensi yang kuat terhadap pemerintah Indonesia di Aceh daripada di bagian wilayah lain Indonesia; mengapa orang Aceh bersedia mengambil resiko kematian dan hilangnya harta benda mereka; dan bagaimana menjelaskan keputusan sejumlah besar orang Aceh bergabung dengan GAM. Inilah beberapa pertanyaan penting yang menjadi fondasi reflektif studi ini. Secara khusus, studi ini mengkaji dinamika munculnya tindakan kolektif skala besar dalam konflik Aceh dengan cara menghubungkannya dengan identitas khusus orang Aceh, yang merupakan hasil interaksi kreatif antara identitas keislaman, memori kolektif sejarah Kerajaan Aceh, dan unsur lokal etnis lain.

Para analis konflik banyak yang mempersepsikan elemen-elemen tersebut beserta faktor-faktor struktural lainnya, khususnya eksploitasi ekonomi dan ketiadaan representasi politis, sebagai faktor-faktor determinan munculnya konflik Aceh. Akan tetapi, studi ini mencoba melihat lebih jauh dengan secara khusus mengkaji proses sosial konstruksi makna dari faktor-faktor struktural tersebut. Faktor-faktor struktural ini tidak dengan sendirinya secara mekanistik membuat orang Aceh memutuskan untuk bergabung dengan GAM. Akan tetapi, mereka sangat bergantung pada agensi aktor (human agency), yaitu inisiasi para elit GAM yang secara sadar mengkonstruksi secara diskursif faktor-faktor struktural tersebut menjadi sebuah makna yang melegitimasi atau berkontribusi aktif bagi tindakan kolektif mereka.

Dengan demikian, secara akademis, studi ini berupaya untuk mengisi dan menghubungkan dualisme level makro dan mikro analisis konflik (dualisme struktur/motivasi individual) dengan mengusung analisis konflik level menengah (intermediate level) yang berkuat pada konstruksi makna. Perspektif dualisme dalam analisis konflik seringkali memandang munculnya tindakan kolektif seperti GAM di Aceh sebagai konsekuensi dari logika sistem atau hasil keyakinan dan preferensi personal.

Studi ini juga bermaksud mengeksplorasi lebih lanjut mengapa resistensi hanya menjadi perhatian besar suku Aceh (Acehnese ethnic group), dan mengapa aliansi antaretnis relatif lemah. Definisi etno-politis Aceh sebagai satu kesatuan tunggal dalam provinsi tersebut telah gagal memotret struktur etno-sosial konflik Aceh. Aceh harus didefinisikan secara horizontal dengan merujuk pada kelompok etnis lainnya di Aceh. Dengan demikian, Aceh harus diposisikan sebagai salah satu dari delapan kelompok etnis di Aceh yang memiliki atribut dan perlengkapan etnis masing-masing. Studi ini secara umum berpandangan bahwa Aceh sebagai sebuah kelompok etnis tertentu bukan wujud primordial, tetapi dikonstruksi secara sosial lewat proses kultural, politis dan historis dalam jangka waktu yang lama. Kohesi etno-sosial secara umum dibentuk dan diperkuat oleh stratifikasi dan hubungan internal antarkelompok etnis di Aceh, yang memberikan kontribusi penting terhadap terbentuknya struktur etno-sosial konflik Aceh.

Mohammad Hasan Ansori

Linking Identity to Collective Action: Islam, History and Ethnicity in the Aceh Conflict

الخلاصة: تعد اندونيسيا من الدول في جنوب شرقي آسيا ما كان لها تاريخ طويل في الصراع والعنف العرقي، ولقد أشعل سقوط نظام الحكم الجديد عام ١٩٩٨م تصعيد الصراع والعنف في مختلف المناطق مثل آتشيه وآميون وبابوا وكاليمنتان الغربية؛ وفي عام ٢٠٠٢م تم احتواء تلك الصراعات، بل وصلت إلى حل نهائي؛ إلا صراع آتشيه الذي تورطت فيه حركة تحرير آتشيه والحكومة الاندونيسية؛ وبالمقارنة مع الصراعات الأخرى في اندونيسيا كان للصراع الآتشي خاصيتان هما: أولاً أن الصراع تحركه حركتان انفصاليتان مختلفتان إيديولوجيا وهما دار الاسلام (١٩٥٣-١٩٥٩م) ذات الاتجاه الاسلامي، وحركة تحرير آتشيه (١٩٧٦-٢٠٠٥م) ذات الاتجاه العلماني؛ ثانياً أن الصراع الآتشي يعد في كثير من الأحيان من الصراعات التي استمرت فترة أطول وأكثرها عدداً في الضحايا في آسيا.

ينبغي هذا المقال على عدد من الأسئلة النقدية، منها لماذا كانت المقاومة ضد الحكومة الاندونيسية في آتشيه أقوى مما كانت موجودة في المناطق الأخرى من اندونيسيا؛ لماذا فضل الآتشيون الموت وضياح أموالهم وكيف يتم توضيح هذا الموقف الذي اتخذته الآتشيون للانضمام إلى حركة تحرير آتشيه؟ هذه هي الأسئلة الهامة التي تمثل الأساس التأملي لهذه الدراسة، وبشكل خاص تبحث هذه الدراسة في ديناميكية ظهور العمل الجماعي على مستوى أوسع في صراع آتشيه عن طريق صلتها بهوية الآتشييين الخاصة التي كانت نتيجة التفاعل الابداعي بين الهوية الاسلامية والذاكرة الجماعية من تاريخ مملكة آتشيه والعناصر المحلية العرقية الأخرى.

يتصور كثير من محلي الصراعات تلك العناصر والعوامل الهيكلية الأخرى خاصة الاستغلال الاقتصادي وانعدام التمثيل السياسي على أهما العوامل المحددة لنشوء الصراع الآتشي؛ بيد أن هذه الدراسة تحاول أن تنظر إلى أبعد من ذلك بحيث تبحث بشكل خاص في العملية الاجتماعية للتشكيل المعنوي من تلك العوامل المذكورة؛ وهذه العوامل الهيكلية لا تجعل الآتشين بالضرورة يقررون على الانضمام لحركة تحرير آتشي، وإنما يعتمدون بدرجة كبيرة على وكالة ممثلة، أي قيام النخبة من حركة التحرير بالاستهلال عن وعي في بناء تلك العوامل الهيكلية بشكل استطرادي حتى تشكل معنى يبرر أو يسهم بشكل فعال عملهم الجماعي.

وهكذا فإن هذه الدراسة من الناحية الأكاديمية تحاول أن تسد الفراغ وتصل ما بين ثنائية المستويين الكبير والصغير في تحليل الصراع (ثنائية الهيكل/العوامل الفردية) بأن تلجأ إلى تحليل الصراع على المستوى الأوسط الذي يتركز في بناء المعنى، فإن المنظور الثنائي في تحليل الصراع كثيرا ما ينظر إلى ظهور العمل الجماعي مثلما يحدث لحركة تحرير آتشي على أنه كان نتيجة لمنطق نظام أو اعتقاد أو تفضيل شخصاني.

تستهدف هذه الدراسة أيضا مزيدا من البحث لماذا كانت المقاومة موضع اهتمام القبيلة الآتشي بالذات ولماذا كان التحالف بين العرقيات ضعيفا؟ إن تحديد العرقية السياسية لآتشي كوحدة واحدة في تلك المحافظة قد فشل عن تصوير هيكل العرقية الاجتماعية لصراع آتشي، إذ يجب تعريف آتشي بطريقة رأسية مع الرجوع إلى المجموعات العرقية الأخرى في آتشي، وبالتالي فإنه يجب وضع آتشي في موضع تمثل فيه إحدى العرقيات الثمانية في آتشي الذين لهم سماتهم ومعداتهم الخاصة؛ وترى هذه الدراسة بشكل عام أن آتشي كمجموعة عرقية معينة ليست وجودا أساسيا وإنما تم تشكيله اجتماعيا عن طريقة العملية الاجتماعية والسياسية والتاريخية خلال مدة طويلة؛ وتماسك العرقيات الاجتماعية عموما تتشكل وتتوثق بالتطبيق والعلاقات الداخلية بين المجموعات العرقية في آتشي والتي تسهم إسهاما هاما في تكوين هيكل العرقية الاجتماعية لصراع آتشي.

The story of Aceh is tremendously depicted as a long history of human disappointment and a horrible human tragedy, displaying a portrait of one battlefield to another battlefield over the successive changes of periods. They first fought against the Dutch colonialists (1873-1903) and then against the central government after the Indonesia's independence. The last fight has been definitively related to Darul Islam rebellion (1953-1962) and the Free Aceh Movement/GAM (1976-2005).¹ The length of the disappointments has not only caused a huge number of casualties, the psychological damages and infrastructural deteriorations, but also produced a sort of culture of war and violence. Surprisingly, countless Acehnese children are so much familiar with the gunfire that they could easily identify and name the type of the gun from distant area and particular sound of its gunfire.²

During the field research, I was invited by an Acehnese friend of mine on November 27, 2009, to celebrate *'id al-adhá* (Festival of Sacrifice), a religious holiday celebrated by Muslim people worldwide, in Aceh Besar Regency adjacent to Banda Aceh, the capital of the province. My attention was quickly grabbed by an interesting appearance of Acehnese children's military parade. They wore complete military uniforms with fake guns hung on their shoulders. My Acehnese friend then told me that the children in Aceh often performed it every time they celebrated the holiday of Islamic festival. Of course, they are not real child soldiers who are mostly aged between 5-10 years old. They just played a game of war with their Acehnese fellows by following the behaviors and performances of either the GAM's Armed Forces (TNA) or the Indonesia National Armed Forces (TNI). They did what they saw and heard everyday at the time of conflict, the battle, killing, kidnapping, gunfire, etc. For the children, being a soldier and getting involved in a battle probably means a high personal pride and social honor.

The contemporary debate over Aceh conflict has revolved around the structural causal factors. Much of the works have been highly concerned with historical-political characteristic of the resistance (e.g. Sjamsuddin 1985; Reid 2006).³ Current trends among other conflict analysts have shifted the analytical focus into locating the political dynamic of state-periphery relation (e.g. Bertrand 2004; Drexler 2001; Morris 1983).⁴ Another body of works has been investigating Islam and

the cultural identity of the resistance (e.g. Ramakrishna 2005; Aspinall 2009; Jones & Smith 2003).⁵ Another line of works explicitly make some efforts of combining the variety of causal factors, giving more weight on the unequal economic development or natural resource exploitation (e.g. Aspinall 2007; Djuli & Jereski 2002; Kell 1995; Schulze 1997; Robinson 2001).⁶

Scholars have largely treated the ethnic identity along with the brutal natural resources exploitation as the causal factors of Aceh conflict, either as triggering or as sustaining ones. However, less effort has been made to examine the way the ethnic identity dynamically become socio-politically relevant and instrumental in the Aceh conflict. The prototypical ethnic line, sharing a common language, history, religion, customs, sense of homeland, has been frequently exploited for specific communal and individual reasons and interests. The politicization of ethnicity often occurs when the economic and political benefits are distributed across ethnic line, making ethnicity socially relevant.⁷ However, it is important to emphasize that ethnic commonality, particularly common belief, historical collective memory and identity, are not “out there” mechanically constraining and/or automatically making Acehnese people join the Free Aceh Movement (GAM),⁸ which is the main focus of this study. Rather, we need to consult human agency and its historicist-dynamic context.

The emphasis of one set of structural variables and the negligence of various individual motivational forces of the restless people, their perceptions, collective hopes and futures, expectations, frustrations, grievances, their emotional states of discontents, anxieties or angers, reflect the biases of the conflict.⁹ Furthermore, in each instance, adequate explanation requires the establishment of a link between the structural constraints on one hand and the motivational forces of individual behavior on the other.¹⁰ That is, inside the dualism of the macro and micro levels, based on Melucci’s model of socially constructed collective identity,¹¹ is the need for an intermediate level of analysis linking the structural objective variable with collective interpretation of the objective circumstances as injustice and grievance that legitimate the emerging collective action.

The political salience of the constructed Acehnese ethnic distinctiveness, whose building materials are particularly taken from Acehnese Islam, the historical collective memory of glorious Aceh

Sultanate, geographical resources, and biological heredity,¹² would only emerge with the initiation of the GAM elites or the religious leaders affiliated with GAM, who politically dogmatized and upgraded its salience for their resistance through their eloquent rhetoric, preaching and message. That is, it does not become socio-politically instrumental in its course; rather, it is crucially “activated” under the broader construction of ethnic commonality by the GAM elites that primarily serve as “submerged group/network”.¹³

The GAM elites’ privileged roles could be generally summarized as controlling information through their grip on the media, shaping and constructing beliefs through clever framing, appealing to norms, and inflaming and intensifying emotions with reference to the Acehese Islamic identity and myths, ceaseless reminders of Aceh’s past historical glory, and continual remembrance of Aceh’s massive natural resources exploitation by the Indonesian Government.¹⁴ As a result, the GAM rank-and-file members’ motivations for joining the rebel movement, to certain extent, are largely flavored by the elites’ tastes. Understood in this way, the socio-political salience of Acehese ethnic identity lies in the way that it connects with the potency for mobilizing the people and organizing collective action in pursuit of a shared goal,¹⁵ which is a common end of independence, as well as legitimating the rebel movement and its violent actions.¹⁶

This study examines the way the Acehese ethnic identity provides the driving force for the emergence of powerful regional resistance and militancy in Aceh by specifically focusing on the Acehese Islamic belief, historical collective memory of the glorious Aceh Kingdom, and the ethnic cohesion process through internal ethnic relations and stratification. In this study, I will first portray the dynamic context of the secessionist movement in Aceh. Then, I will examine the source of the emergent rebellious power by looking at the Acehese Islamic belief and the history of Aceh Sultanate. Finally, I will discuss the ethnicity situation, ethnic relations and the rising ethno-social structure of Aceh conflict. The data presented here are primarily drawn from several open-ended interviews with former GAM members, Acehese scholars and ethnic/religious leaders and secondary governmental reports and documents, published academic studies and local and national mass media sources.

Putting the Aceh Conflict in a Context

As one of the current 33 Indonesian provinces, Aceh is geographically located on the northernmost tip of Sumatra Island, one of the five big islands in Indonesia, as well as on the westernmost Indonesian archipelago. However, although it lies on the periphery of the modern Republic of Indonesia, Aceh assumed particular importance in Asian commerce because of its location and its resources. The northern and eastern edge of the province is bordered by the Malacca Straits, which is widely known as a golden heritage of the littoral states, such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, an important international waterway and as the second busiest and the oldest shipping lane in the world, “through which travels approximately one quarter of the world’s oil, two thirds of liquid natural gas and as much as one third of all other trade”.¹⁷ Aceh is one of the richest Indonesian provinces in natural sources: oil, 1.5 millions barrel per day; gas, 38% of world production-number one in the world. Other products of Aceh include: gold, platinum, molybdenum, iron ore, tin, rubber, coffee, tea, and timber.¹⁸ Kingsbury & Fernandez affirmed that the important value of Aceh relates to its economic source of oil and gas deposits and/or LNG operated by Exxon Mobil Oil. In addition, Aceh is also widely recognized as having extensive mining, forestry, and plantation agriculture, including wood, coffee, coconut, chocolate, pepper and tobacco.¹⁹ Aceh’s abundance of natural resources makes the strategic value of Aceh to Indonesia extremely important. While the southern part of the province has a borderline with the neighboring province of North Sumatra, its western side has a frontier with Indian Ocean. The province’s width is approximately estimated to be 57.365 Km².²⁰

Aceh’s *Central Bureau of Statistics* data indicates that the population number of the province in 2005 (after the tsunami disaster) is estimated to be 4.031.598. Before the tsunami disaster, however, the population number was assessed at 4,2 millions in 2000, or 3% of the Indonesian population and nearly a quarter of the population of Sumatra Island as a whole and sixty times as large as overall Indonesia.²¹ There are a slightly different population number of more than 200.000 before and after the tsunami disaster hit the province in 2004. The catastrophe, Kingsbury said, resulted in more than 240,000 Acehnese listed as missing. The latest population census undertaken by the Government of

Indonesia in May, 2010, reported that the current population of the province is estimated to be 4, 36 millions.²²

Most of the ethnic Achenese population lives in the coastal regencies, which again helps encourage ethnic cohesion. The population is spread out in 23 regencies, Simeulue, Aceh Singkil, South Aceh, Southeast Aceh, East Aceh, Central Aceh, West Aceh, Aceh Besar, Pidie, Bireun, North Aceh, Southwest Aceh, Gayo Luwes, Aceh Tamiang, Nagan Raya, Aceh Jaya, Bener Meriah, Banda Aceh, Sabang, Langsa, Lhokseumawe, Pidie Jaya, and Subulussalam.²³ However, the number of Aceh's districts has been steadily growing as a result of the provincial division policy (*Pemekaran Wilayah*). For instance, the districts of Simeulue, Nagan Raya, Aceh Jaya, Southeast Aceh, Aceh Jaya, Bener Meriah, Aceh Tamiang, Aceh Singkil, Langsa, Lhokseumawe, Pidie Jaya and Subulussalam have been emerging as the products of the policy implementation in the province since 1999. The administrative system has all the districts consist of a number of sub-districts (*kecamatan*). With reference to Acehnese tradition, the sub-districts are locally designated as “*mukim*”, coordinating some villages (*desa/kelurahan*). In total, Aceh province currently has 266 sub-districts.²⁴ Each sub-district is further divided into many villages, which are often called “*gampong*” in the local tradition.

The “Acehnese” aspect of government has been fostered because although the local governmental system in Aceh is not really different from other provinces in Indonesia, the people of Aceh have adopted many traditional names/titles, which are mainly derived from the legacy of the Sultanate of Aceh.²⁵ For instance, the village head (*gampong*) is usually called “*geuchik*” or “*keuchik*”, rather than *lurah* or *kades* (*kepala desa*) that nationally apply in the rest of Indonesian provinces. Each “*mukim*” (sub-district level) is led by a head of *mukim* (or *imam mukim*). The concept of *mukim* essentially refers to the legal and political unit, which is comprised of several *gampong* and is directly administered under the heading of *Sagoe Cut* (*kecamatan*/sub-district). Above a head of *mukim* is *uleebalang* defined as a local authority officer (Malay language: *hulubalang*).²⁶

In addition to the formal governmental system, some ethnic institutional systems have played an important part in maintaining the culture of Aceh, such as *tuba peuet* and *tuba lapan*.²⁷ Finally, the leadership of ulama (religious leaders) has also played decisive roles in

the province.²⁸ Many traditional titles are commonly adopted in Aceh, including *teuku* (given to those who have a family line with *uleebalang*), *teungku* (granted to the prominent or distinguished ulama/religious leaders) and *sayyid* (honorable title for the Prophet's descendents).²⁹

Reflecting on the Aceh's cultural specificity, Reid argued that although the people of Aceh have shared some similarities with the Javanese people in terms of language, culture, religion, and other similarities, Acehnese are distinct people. What distinguishes them from the rest of Indonesia people is their distinct identity "being curved out for her by the Acehnese Sultanate in the period 1500-1874".³⁰ The historical distinct identity and culture has provided them with a powerful stepping stone to take up fierce resistance against the government. More importantly, the New Order's cultural homogenization policy, strongly constraining the usage of the national cultural symbols and cultures, such as *camat*, *bupati*, *kepala desa*, and other cultural symbols, has substantially infused the emotional flame of the people of Aceh. In this regard, Fajran, one of the local respected NGO leaders in Aceh, commented:

The New Order's centralistic system has definitely resulted in cultural repression in Aceh. As a cultural entity, Aceh could not express itself since the government unilaterally introduced a cultural uniformity which is extraordinarily crafted out from Javanese culture. For example, on the governmental issue, the government introduced the cultural systems of *lurah* and *camat* which are typically Javanese. The people of Aceh were definitely uncomfortable with the cultures since they have been using their own cultures of *keuchi* and *mukim*. We need a unity as a nation, but we don't need the uniformity".³¹

Islam, History and Identity: Searching for the Rebellious Power

The salience of embracing the history of Aceh lies in the way that it would primarily generate the refreshing insights on Aceh's society, institution, and critical epoch, where the secessionist movement exists and develops, or lives its life.³² Overall, the historical research and literatures on Aceh can be generally classified into three basic concerns. First, the historical scholarship on Aceh is predominantly preoccupied with the penetration of Islam into the region and its effects on the construction of Aceh's Islamic culture and tradition, including the role of ulama in Aceh,³³ the Acehnese Islamic vision and tradition,³⁴ Islam

and the center-periphery relation in Aceh.³⁵ Second, the sultanate of Aceh along with its external/international and internal dynamics have been the most dominant theme of the historical research and literatures.³⁶ Third, Aceh's resistances against the outside controls have also grabbed the attention of numerous prominent historians.³⁷ Finally, other scholars have largely engaged in the history of Aceh's resistance against the Indonesian Government.³⁸

The culture of Aceh is perhaps relatively different from other provinces in Indonesia, largely due to the prominence of Islam in the province. Islam has constructed the culture of Aceh; and thereby its influence has been penetrating all the aspects of life in Aceh, including the government, the law, the art, and many others.³⁹ During the Sultanate, Aceh was portrayed as a small miniature of Arab land; and thereby was dubbed as "*Serambi Mekkah*" (the Porch of Mecca).

Hadi argued that Sultan Iskandar Muda has been the primary reference of Acehnese in the making of their traditions and Syah Kuala Shaykh 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Singkili in constructing their religious tenets and traditions. In such doing, their worldview unifies political and religious history.⁴⁰ Similarly, Atjeh and Syamsuddin argued that Aceh is the ideal area of Islam. The culture of Aceh is widely portrayed as a result of acculturation with many other cultures, but the influence of Islamic values, norms and tenets are largely extensive.⁴¹ Andaya further added that the making of the Acehnese Melayu-Islamic identity was highly facilitated by two Melayu texts written in the Acehnese court: the *Tāj al-salātīn* and the *Hikayat Aceh*. The *Tāj al-salātīn* (translated as "Mirror of Kings"), which was written in 1603 by Bukhari al-Jauhari and much relies on Persian sources, is seen an important source of the creation of Acehnese model of Muslim Melayu kingship in the 17th century under the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda. The *Hikayat Aceh*, which is assumed to be written sometime after 1612 and largely derived from Melayu, Mughal, and Persian traditions, mainly consists of praise to Sultan Iskandar Muda.⁴²

Moreover, the closeness of Islam to the culture of Aceh has been considerably expressed in *Hadi Maja* and/or their local words, such as "*hukom (syariat Islam) ngon Adat, lagee zat ngon sifeut*" (the relation of Islam to Acehnese culture/tradition is like the relation of an entity to its descriptive attributes),⁴³ "*seubakhe-bakhe ureng Aceh, wate geuteueh nan Allah nan Nabi teuiem atauwa seungap*" (Acehnese people, even the

foolish ones, would be silent when the names of their God and His Prophet are cited or stated), and “*han teupeh bak tajak, han teupeh bak tawoe, sabei keudroe-droe ta mita bahagia*” or “*han teupehbak tajak han teupeh bak tawoe saboeh nangroe Tuhan Peulara*” (religious values and tenets have been extensively penetrating the social and cultural aspects of Aceh).⁴⁴ The words explicitly reveal how Islamic values and tenets have deeply imprinted in the hearts and minds of Acehnese.

The local traditions of Aceh, which are basically built on Islamic law, have largely been a sort of guiding principles of social behaviors for Acehnese people. The content of *Hukom Adat Aceh* (traditional law) is developed and enriched by significantly adopting the laws and traditions practiced in the period of the Sultanate of Aceh, or particularly when Sultan Iskandar Muda ruled the Kingdom of Aceh in the 17th century. All the commands of the ruling sultans were further compiled in one volume called “*Hadi Maja*”, which are mostly referred to as social or communal ethics, law and norms for Acehnese and passed on over generations.⁴⁵ “*Hadi Maja*” is then defined as consisting of traditional norms and laws that are poetically worded or phrased in Arab-Malay language. Examples of *Hadi Maja* include:

1. *Hudep lam donya ibadat tatueng* (while living in the world, people should do prayers).
2. *Adat raja bak na rakyat* (every king should have people he/she will rule).
3. *Hukom bak Syiah Kuala* (Syiah Kuala is the symbol of justice, honesty, and religiosity).
4. *Hukom Syariat tatueng lam kitab* (the main source of syariah law is Qur’an).
5. *Tamalee hana iman* (a pious person should have a humility).
6. *Teumakot bak hukom Tuhan* (one should abide by the God’s laws).
7. *Tamalee bak keu pakaian* (one should be ashamed of having an inappropriate dress).⁴⁶

One illustration of how Islam shapes the culture of Aceh is the institution of *meunasah*, which is widely known as a public forum that can be found in every *gampong*. In *meunasah*, derived from the Arabic word “*madrasah*”⁴⁷ (conventionally translated as the place for studying religious subjects, particularly Qur’an), Acehnese people discuss their problems and daily activities. In addition, guests coming from

other far areas can spend the night in *meunasah*. Above all, *meunasah* traditionally serves a center for all Islamic activities, including studying the Koran and performing *ṣalat* (the ritual prayers).⁴⁸ Every *meunasah* has its leader called *Teungku Imum Meunasah*. Through institutions like *meunasah*, religious leaders (ulama) maintain their influence over life in the community. Moreover, for Acehese people, a mosque [along with a *meunasah*] does not only serve as a place for conducting ritual prayers, but it also functions as a strategic center for Acehese culture and civilization.⁴⁹ In addition to *meunasah*, Acehese also have *dayah*,⁵⁰ which similarly functions as an Islamic boarding school that is called “*pesantren*” in other Indonesian regions. Aceh’s *dayah* seems to be a popular destination for those who are determined to be expert in Islamic studies. As a result, the majority of the Acehese ulama (religious leaders) are *dayah*’s graduates.

Other widely known Aceh’s cultural terms are *kanun* and *reusam*, largely crafted from the legacy of the Sultanate of Aceh. The word *kanun* is originally transcribed from Arabic word “*qānūn*”, etymologically meaning a law. According to Ahmad, *kanun* and *reusam* are related to Acehese customs and attitudes. During the Sultanate of Aceh, *kanun* were referred to as laws produced by a legal institution, widely known as *qānūn al-āshī* and intended to be a court of justice. The production process of *kanun* usually involves varied representatives of groups of people in a society. However, the original meaning of *kanun* has experienced a few changes adjusting to the contextual changes and challenges.⁵¹ *Kanun* temporarily serves as legal regulations (*peraturan perundang-undangan*), which provides further detailed dictates for the government regulations (*peraturan pemerintah*). In this sense, the content of *kanun* should not oppose to the main Government Regulations. *Reusam* is generally defined as traditional habits or ethics that commonly exist in a society over generations, which are much related to the religious and social ceremonies.⁵²

This Islamic base has been fused with other characteristics of local culture, which help explain why Acehese people militantly resist against the Government of Indonesia. Some of their well-known attributive characteristics are clearly expressed in *Hadi Maja*, including, but not limited to:

1. “*Ureueng Aceh meunyo hate hana teupeh*” (Acehese would not hurt other people’s feelings).

2. “*Aneuk kreh jeuet taraba*” (Acehnese people are open and welcoming).
3. “*Meunyo hate ka teupeh*” (Acehnese people would punish those who hurt them).
4. “*Meunyo kreueh beu beutoi kreueh*” (Acehnese people are tough and vigorous).⁵³

Taken together, at one point, cosmopolitanism, welcoming and openness to aliens have long characterized Acehnese. At another point, Acehnese are also well-known for their toughness and vigorousness. Acehnese consistently refuse to be dictated to or “bossed around” by the central government. They would openly confront whoever has deprived them. In this case, Reid emphasized that “Aceh was always the most reluctant member of the polity ruled from Jakarta, except for the period 1945-1950 when the Indonesian nationalists seemed allies in the struggle to rid Aceh of Dutch influence... Aceh is a state born in struggle”.⁵⁴

Again, there is no denying the fact that Aceh is one of the most Islamic provinces in Indonesia. Their culture is distinctly different from other provinces given their strongly Islamic culture, tenet and tradition. However, the Islamic distinct identity of Aceh does not mechanically make the Acehnese people resist against the Government of Indonesia. Yet, it becomes politically salient and thereby provides a great potency for generating a large scale of collective action only with the initiation of the GAM elites’ or the religious leaders (ulama) affiliated with GAM who politically dogmatized and upgraded its salience for their resistance through their clever and eloquent rhetoric, preaching and message. For this reason, GAM has been often criticized for their ambiguous attitudes towards Islam.⁵⁵ While the GAM elites often publicly claimed that the goal of the movement is not about Islam and its political ideology are explicitly based on territory rather than on religion,⁵⁶ a large number of the GAM rank-and-file members declared that their motives and goals are about the application of syariah law.⁵⁷ As one of the GAM rank-and-file combatants, Syahidan, broadly shared:

The local religious leaders (ulama/*Tengku*) here in Pidie often preached some sermons in the mosques, arguing that Aceh would be only powerful and supreme with syariah Islam. Therefore, we were all required to straggle for the syariah Islam. When I was a child, my grandfather often told me about the supremacy of the Aceh Kingdom. But how is Aceh now? It

is only about time that everybody would die, but it is always better to die while struggling in the way of God (*fi sabil Allāh*). If we died while struggling for Islam or after joining GAM, we would die a martyr's death (*mati syahid*) and thereby would be granted immediate admission to heaven (*surgā*). Since our prime intention was *fi sabil Allāh*, we would get a reward (*pahala*) from God.⁵⁸

The GAM's ambiguous attitude towards Islam in the region is primarily enforced and possibly made by twofold intertwined factors. First, Islam as a religion has been an integral part of Acehnese' identity and culture.⁵⁹ The logical consequence, as Abubakar asserted, is that "whoever rebels in the region under the banner of Islam would be broadly accepted by Acehnese people. Since the syariah law has been currently applied in Aceh, any later claims for Islam would not be appealing any longer".⁶⁰ The second one is the politicization of Islam for generating much more recruits. As it was emphasized by Wahyudi, the local governmental officer, "the GAM leadership extensively exploited Islam as a strategic means for mobilizing Acehnese since it strongly reflects the Acehnese's culture and identity".⁶¹ The politicization of syariah law during the conflict, which is the ideological crystallization of Islam, is particularly to increase GAM membership extension and not because the religion in its self plays a significant role in the goals of GAM's leadership.

The patronage of Islam and the development of a distinctive Acehnese culture were directly related to the rise of the Acehnese Sultanate,⁶² which is the second area on which historians have focused. Historians generally agree that it is in Aceh where Islam was first established in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, largely because of the region's strategic location. Being on the border with the Malacca Straits makes Aceh as a strategic international waterway and as the second busiest and the oldest shipping lane in the world, generally involving the traders from India, Arab and Europe, Cambodia and China.⁶³ Aceh was historically a magnet for the traders; Islam reached Indonesia through Arabs plying these trade routes. In his "*The First History*", Hazard argued that "the first Muslims to visit Indonesia were presumably seventh century Arab traders who stopped at Sumatra en route to China. Their successors were merchants from Gujarat who dealt in pepper, and who had established the unique combination of commerce and proselytizing which characterized the spread of Islam in Indonesia by 1100".⁶⁴

Likewise, Marco Polo noted, in his famous 13th century book, that Asians who lived in seaports were especially likely to be converted to “the religion of Mohammed [sic]” by the Saracen merchants. Although there is no agreement among the historians on the exact date of the emergence of Islam in Aceh, Abdullah Arif is believed as the first person who introduced Islam in Aceh in 12th century. Since then, Islam proliferates and spreads out to other areas in Indonesia (*Sriwijaya*), Kedah (currently Malaysia), Siam, Cambodia, Brunei, and the others. Although historians debate the historical evidence, it is widely believed that in the 11th century, or precisely in 1078, an Islamic Kingdom was first established in Perlak. Then, in 1205, the Islamic Kingdom of Samudra Pasai came into existence in Aceh Besar, currently turning into a district surrounding Banda Aceh.⁶⁵

Aceh was a sultanate, officially called the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam (Acehnese: *Keurajeun Acèh Darussalam*). The Sultanate was a major regional power in the 16th and 17th centuries before experiencing a long period of decline. Its capital was Kutaraja, the present Banda Aceh. In the early seventeenth century, it was the most wealthy, powerful and cultivated state in the Malacca Straits region. However, there are differences among the historians about the exact date of the rise of the Kingdom. For instance, according to Zainuddin,⁶⁶ the Kingdom came into existence for the first time in 1205 and Sultan Johan Syah (1205-1233) served as the first ruling king of the Kingdom. However, Anas Machmud differently argued that the Kingdom was first established in 15th century (two more centuries) and ruled by Muzaffar Syah (1465-1497).⁶⁷ The last and common version argues that the Kingdom came into existence for the first time in 16th century, rather than in 13th or 15th century. Ali Mughayat Syah was the first king to rule the Kingdom.⁶⁸ Even though there are again differing interpretations of the evidence, a current official publication, *Ensiklopedi Aceh* (2008), sees that the origin of the Aceh sultanate was in 1511 or 16th century, thereby corroborating the last version of interpretation.⁶⁹

Most historical attention has focused on the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda, literally meaning “Young Alexander” and/or having “direct descent from the legendary Islamic hero Iskandar Zulkarnain”,⁷⁰ who further brought the Kingdom into a golden age and a glorious history and supremacy. The grandeur of Aceh Kingdom has largely been

proved by its world-wide trading activities and diplomacies. During the rule of Sultan Iskandar Muda, the Kingdom was internationally and massively involved in a wide variety of trades, strategic cooperation and diplomacies with foreign countries, including China, Java, Siam, India, Turkey, French, England, and Dutch⁷¹ and specifically with other two major Islamic empires: the Ottoman and Safavid.⁷² Aceh's influence extended to most of Sumatra and Malay Peninsula. However, Aceh's contribution to Malay heritage development, which is complex, is too often disregarded due to state borders and Aceh's displacement as the center of Malay world by eighteenth century. Aceh has made an exceptionally important contribution in terms of Islamic rule.⁷³ In addition, Aceh allied itself with the other big empires, specifically with Ottoman Empire.⁷⁴

For this reason, Sultan Iskandar Muda has been presented as the symbol of the glory of Aceh. His tale is memorized and passed on over Acehnese generations and his name is finally adopted as the name of Aceh's international airport, Sultan Iskandar Muda International Airport, located in Blang Bintang, Aceh Besar Regency. It is probably safe to say that Sultan Iskandar Muda is the most prominent, respected and adored figure in the overall history of Aceh. To certain extent, the glorious history of Aceh Kingdom has been assumed as having subsidized crucial inspirations and enlightening motivations for Acehnese to establish an independent state. The shared memorable glory greatly helps them construct their ideological ethno-nationalist liberation. The Aceh's powerful resistance is substantially endorsed by the fact Aceh is not build up from nothing, but from something. As Robinson argued, "the experience and memory of previous rebellions has also helped to consolidate a myth about Aceh—as a unique center for Islamic tradition, as a region with a glorious history of independence and resistance to outside authority- that has instilled in both leaders and followers a sense of belonging to a political community, and has given a resonance to calls for Acehnese liberation and national independence".⁷⁵ Regarding this, Reid strengthened that the problems of Aceh are mainly related to a gap between the ethnic nationalism of Aceh with its memories of sultanate, making sense of its own distinctiveness, and the state nationalism of Indonesia proper.⁷⁶

During the Sultanate of Aceh, the decisive event and moment was the signing of the London Treaty often referred to as the Anglo-Dutch

treaty, in which the Dutch gained control of all British possessions on the Island of Sumatra, including Aceh. Yet the Dutch colonialists failed to capture Aceh fully. As Anderson insisted, “during the Revolution, Aceh was the one region that the Dutch never tired to reoccupy, and it was a stalwart military and financial bulwark of the revolutionary Republic”.⁷⁷ It just solidified Aceh’s reputation for the militancy and resistance. However, the most critical and problematic event for “many” Acehnese was often referred to the signing of the 1949 Roundtable Conference Agreements in Netherlands which was facilitated by the United Nations.

The agreements mainly resulted in the transfer of sovereign territory of the Dutch East Indies to Indonesia. However, for many Acehnese, the transfer become problematic when the Sultanate of Aceh was included as part of the transfer despite not having been formally incorporated into Dutch colonial possessions. Since then, Aceh has been claimed as part of Indonesia. The problematic transfer is often considered particularly by the GAM leaders as an illegal transfer resulted from a high conspiracy between the Government of Indonesia and the Dutch East Indies since Aceh has never been colonized or controlled by aliens, particularly by the Dutch East Indies.⁷⁸

However, the claim of the successor state is much refuted by Aspinall, who argued that the GAM’s recent construction of ethno-nationalism, which is largely influenced by the modern sense of nationalism, is not much relevant to the history of Aceh Kingdom.⁷⁹ Thus, the historical claim, Hiorth argued, is not only romantic, but also somewhat distorted. In addition, the GAM’s ethno-nationalist claim for the self-determination of Aceh-Sumatra is “inherently flawed” since Aceh historically did not have “sovereignty over the whole Sumatra”.⁸⁰ Apart from the debate on the validity of the historical claim for the successor state, the historical doctrine itself has been intentionally constructed by the GAM elites mainly for legitimating their existence and gaining wider supports from the people of Aceh. Seen in this way, the unique Aceh’s history, which brings about a substantial effect on the construction of Acehnese sense of ethnic distinction or ethnic belief, has explicitly shown its privileged role in the making of the emotional power of the conflict or in consciously embracing great personal services in the conflict.⁸¹

Moreover, the GAM’s claim for the unconnected history and

nationalism of Aceh with Indonesia has seemed to contain an internal contradiction. At one point, they widely claim Indonesia as having illegally colonized Aceh. At another point, they proudly emphasize the Acehnese people's willingness to support Indonesia during the revolution and their sincere acceptance of the compensated special region status, although it is further betrayed. For instance, the betrayal has seemed to be the primary concern of Muhammad, one of the former GAM top leaders:

“Indonesia existed as a state with significant support from the people of Aceh. Yet, once we supported them, they betrayed us. The people of Aceh had helped Indonesia a lot during its initial establishment, presenting two airplanes, Seulawah 1 and 2, and donating much money and gold for its internal consolidation. The Indonesia's frequent betrayals of the Aceh's special status had largely fueled our motivational drives to fight against them”.⁸²

The third area on which scholarly attention has concentrated concerns Aceh's long tradition of resistance and militancy against alien rulers. Overall, this historical account can be analytically divided into three periods. During the first period, Acehnese resisted against Dutch colonialists from 1873 to 1903. Although never successful, resistance in Aceh was marked by remarkable braveness and persistence by the people of Aceh.⁸³ The second period encompasses the fierce, although brief resistance against Japanese occupiers from 1942. The Japanese government was shocked by the depth of resistance faced by the Imperial Army in its bloody confrontation with Muslim leaders in Aceh (Reid 2006). Islamic spirit of Holy War (*Hikayah Perang Suci*) greatly fueled their resistances against the Netherlands-*Indies* and Japan occupations.⁸⁴ In short, during the war, Muslim leaders translated the Islamic doctrine into a religiously spiritual spirit of war. In such doing, fighting against them is spiritually valued as a Holy War or fighting against *kāfir* (unbelievers).

The last period comprises resistance against the Republic of Indonesia, widely known as Darul Islam rebellion and the most recently Free Aceh Movement (GAM). Although Darul Islam rebels sought Aceh's independence, they ultimately—if contradictorily—also wanted to transform the entire Indonesian archipelago into an Islamic republic governed by syaria Islam, or Islamic law. Darul Islam rebellion began in September 1953 in response to dissatisfaction with Indonesian President Soekarno. Teungku Muhammad Daud Beureueh, one of the

charismatic Muslim leaders, led the rebellion and gained significant indigenous support in Aceh. However, in May 1962, he ended the rebellion and declared his loyalty to the Republic of Indonesia.⁸⁵

Two main sources of discontent facilitated the birth of the rebellion. The first was ulama's disappointment with the constitution of *Pancasila*, rather than Islam. The second one was the discontent on the amalgamation of Aceh into North Sumatra province in 1950.⁸⁶ Although this event ended the Darul Islam rebellion, this anti-Jakarta insurgency would be the foundation of the subsequent Aceh Free Movement (GAM) with their framing strategy of discontinued Islamic vision.

Summing up, the historical argument generally centers on two basic reasons. First, Aceh was an independent state, the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam, and never part of the archipelagic Indonesia. Even after the fall of Soeharto in 1998, the GAM's public speeches and rhetoric were still classical and customary, repeating the old claims about the glories of Aceh's history and the artificiality of Indonesia. Second, Aceh was never fully conquered by the Dutch East Indies. On that basis, GAM further laid claim for the right to fully control and manage the land of Aceh independently from the colonialism of "Javanese-Indonesia", which is perceived as having illegally conquered their land.⁸⁷ Although GAM have given up demanding for the independence, following the signing of the 2005 Helsinki Peace Agreement, they still consistently and proudly highlight the historical glory of Aceh. Tengku Hamzah, for instance, the former supreme commander of *Gajah Keng* (the elite armed force of GAM), strongly underlined the history of Aceh as the basic rationale for releasing the secessionist demand:

We fought for freedom because we aimed to continue the free, sovereign, peaceful and developed state of Aceh. From 1614 to 18th century, Aceh was a really developed country. All the people of Aceh lived abundantly and prosperously. Nobody was found poor during that time. Aceh was internationally well-known and friend of other big countries. GAM just aimed to re-establish the state since Indonesia colonized Aceh. We rebelled to regain our robbed freedom. Why did the people of Aceh forget to struggle for their freedom? Because they had forgot their history. They forgot their history because they already lived abundantly and did not care about the fate of Aceh. We struggled for Aceh because we did not forget our history. I joined GAM because I did not forget the history of my country.⁸⁸

The substance of the claimed Aceh's history by GAM generally implies two senses, the sovereign existence and the shared identity of Aceh. It probably becomes the prominent factor distinguishing Acehnese from other ethnic groups in Indonesia with reference to the enduring reluctance in the region.⁸⁹ The historical ideology construction has obviously indebted to the GAM elites' conscious and ceaseless initiations and ingenious framing strategy. Consequently, the discourse on the history of Aceh has often become the "exclusive zone" of the GAM elites possessing much more intellectual prowess and knowledge than those of the rank-and-file members mostly having only lower education. However, it is worth noting that the political salience of history could be only located in its relation to the constituent of ethnic/collective identity.⁹⁰ Seen in this way, the history of Aceh becomes a collective memory, thereby generating collective action, once it is deemed as a common history shared by the people of Aceh that provides them with their exclusive identity and existence.

Ethnicity, Ethnic Relations and Ethno-Social Structure of Aceh Conflict

Against this background in which Islam, history and resistance are interlaced, scholars have been attempting to examine the genealogy of Acehnese. In this part, a primary question focuses on the reasons that explain why resistance has largely been an Acehnese concern, and why trans-ethnic alliances are relatively weak. The term *Acehnese* is often ambiguously used. At one point, it is largely referred to the whole population of Aceh; at another point, as one of the ethnic groups in contemporary Aceh. In this regards, Aspinnall asserted that "what was meant by the term Acehnese was contested. At the very least, it could mean residents of the territory of Aceh, or it could refer to individuals identified, or were identified, as ethnically Acehnese".⁹¹ It is most likely that the political studies on Aceh tend to view Acehnese as a singular group of people living in Aceh province. Noticing the flaw, Miller argued that "political studies of Aceh have tended to artificially construct the Acehnese as a singular ethnic and cultural entity. During the conflict, GAM promoted this representation to support their ethno-nationalist struggle. For different reason, Jakarta also portrayed the peoples of Aceh as a singular ethnic group within the Indonesian

nation”.⁹² As a consequence, the political studies often fail to portray the ethno-political structure of Aceh conflict.

The artificial abstraction of Acehnese as a singular entity in Aceh province seems to be the side effect of GAM’s ethno-nationalist identity construction, which is framed as an anti-thesis of the Indonesian nation. In this regards, as Schulze highlighted, Acehnese is referred to as one ethno-nationalism that is being positioned against the other Indonesian nationalism.⁹³ The ethno-political definition of Acehnese is mainly intended to cut any historical links binding Aceh to Indonesia. Acehnese, however, needs to be horizontally defined with reference to other existing ethnic groups in Aceh, and thereby positioned as one of Aceh’s eight ethnic groups equipped with all its unique ethnic attributes and properties. Drawing from Chandra, I then define Acehnese as one of ethnic identity categories in Aceh, in which eligibility for its membership is determined by its “descent-based attributes”, which primarily include those acquired genetically, such as skin color, gender, physical features, etc., or through cultural and historical inheritance, such as name, language, ancestor, the origin of one’s parent, etc.⁹⁴ By using the definition strategy, the term Acehnese consequently becomes restricted to a section of the province’s population rather than the whole.

According to Andaya, it was only in the early sixteenth century that a place named Aceh was first mentioned with a “population of fishermen”.⁹⁵ The respected local historian, Zainuddin, argued that Acehnese are part of the family nation of Malay (*rumpun bangsa Melayu*), including Mante, Lanun, Sakai Djakun, Semang, Senui and other people living in Perak and Pahang. All the nations ethnologically have a connection with *Phonesian* nation in Babylonia. Gayo people are originally referred to as the people that escaped to the mountainous areas from the east and the north Aceh since they rejected to convert to Islam. Likewise, Gayo Seumamah, Gayo Serbadjadi (north Aceh), and Gayo Takengon are originally escapees and refugees from Pasai, Peusangan and coastal areas of north Aceh. For that reason, the word *Kayo* that further turns into *Gayo* over times means “fear”.⁹⁶

Aceh is originally populated by indigenous Acehnese, specifically pointing to Gayo and Alas people, with some subsequent migration from western Sumatra to southern Aceh. Hing (1995, p.

162, 189) argued that in Aceh “many people from Nagore intermarry and reside, their progeny are known by the name of *orang dangan* (sic. *dagang* = trader)”.⁹⁷ Marsden thus invoked the intermarriage associated with Indian trading connections to explain the fact that Acehnese were generally “taller, stouter and of darker complexion” than other Sumatrans.⁹⁸

Aceh was once a meeting point for people from many nations. After the Portuguese occupation of Malacca in 1511, many Islamic traders passing Malacca straits shifted their trade to Banda Aceh. Lombard argued that some other traders coming from Arab, Persia, Turkey, and India/Bengali greatly contribute to the heterogeneous mixture of these people and the local people particularly living in the north coastal areas of Aceh.⁹⁹ As a result of the international marriage, a lot of local people in Aceh are actually Arabic, Persian, Indian, and Chinese descendents. A Large number of people with fair complexions, blue eyes and blond hair, and local traditions attributed to Turkish or Portuguese descendents could be easily found particularly in the region of Meureuhom Daya (Lamno). However, Chinese ethnic group or Chinese descendents are a distinct minority in Aceh, who are influential in the business and financial communities.

The category of Acehnese has been constructed by cultural/historical processes of biological blending and acculturation with traders coming from Arab, Persia, Turkey, and India/Bengali approximately long before 16th century. Aceh was once a meeting point for people from many nations. These people particularly live in the north coastal areas of Aceh, rather in mountainous areas, where the international trading activities were centrally conducted. Therefore, as a result of the international biological blending, a lot of Acehnese people are Arabic, Persian, Indian, and Portuguese descendents. The massive influx of the foreign people in Aceh brings about some changes in the communal aspects or ethnic properties of Acehnese. The communal elements of Aceh-ness, such as *bahasa Aceh* (Acehnese ethnic language), *baju Aceh* (traditional costumes), *peutron aneuk* (traditional ceremony)¹⁰⁰ are not essentially given and passed down from generation to generation, but constructed. As a result of the cultivated cultural/historical processes, no other identifications, such as Indian Acehnese, Arab Acehnese, Persian Acehnese, are found in contemporary Aceh. Thus, ethnic boundaries shift historically, and many individuals have multiple ethnic identities.

The lowland and coastal Acehnses see themselves (and are seen by others) as distinct from other groups, such as Gayo, Alas, Tamiang, Aneuk Jamee, Kluet, Singkil and Simeulue.¹⁰¹ Of these, the most significant are the Gayo and Alas.¹⁰² The major ethnic groups are Acehnese, making up between 79% and 80% of the people of Aceh.¹⁰³ That is, 20% of them are non-Acehnese ethnic groups, Gayonese (10%), Tamiang Malays (9%), and the Alas (2%). The small percentage of non-Acehnese does not really pose a substantive obstacle to the establishment of the rebel movement (Ross 2005, p. 38). Moreover, four religions are identified as currently existing in Aceh, Islam (97,6%), Christianity (1,7%), Hinduism (0,08%) and Buddhism (0,55%).¹⁰⁴ Of course, the extremely small percentage of the non-Muslim people in Aceh, which is about 3%, did not really effect on the movement's growth.

The ethnic groups, spread out in 23 Regencies in Aceh, have their own ethnic languages; however, they mostly use Indonesian *Bahasa* for their inter-cultural communications. As a dominant ethnic group in Aceh, Acehnese are distributed almost throughout regencies in Aceh, except Gayo Luwes, Sinkil, Subulusslam, Simeulue, South Aceh, Bener Meriah, Central Aceh and Southeast Aceh (*Department of Culture and Tourism of Aceh*, 2009). However, Acehnese are generally concentrated in the rest of Aceh's regencies and comfortably engaged in speaking their own ethnic language called Acehnese Language. Alas people who existed in Aceh over centuries centrally live in Southeast Aceh Regency and speak Alas Language.¹⁰⁵

Examining the Aceh's ethnic group formation would provide an enlightening and nuanced perspective on the ethnicity situation in Aceh. The debates on ethnicity are currently dominated by two contrasting schools of thoughts, *primordialist*¹⁰⁶ and the school of variously called *constructivist*, *instrumentalist* and *circumstantialist*,¹⁰⁷ which are relatively more dominant in the recent academic discourses of ethnic identity formation. Both of the schools are also occasionally attributed with some contrasting assumptions, such as essentialist vs. anti-essentialist, subjectivist vs. objectivist, *static* vs. fluid, dynamic, variable, and *processual*, endogenous vs. exogenous, etc.

By consensus, Geertz (1963) and Shils (1957) are often considered to be the leading proponents of *primordialist* school. More precisely, the so called-primordial attachments are primarily connected with these elements; assumed blood ties, race, language, region, religion,

and custom; or could be summarized, given-ness or ascribed-ness, fixity or static-ness and commonness of ancestry. These primordial elements are essentially given and passed down from generation to generation, and are not constructed. Perhaps because of the weakness of the *primordialist* approach, the circumstantial approach emerges and recently predominates over the *primordialist* approach.¹⁰⁸ Fredrik Barth's work, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969), is associated with the birth of the school, mainly positing that ethnicity is constructed or invented over time by conquest, religious movements, migration, biological blending, acculturation and absorption of ethnic-linguistic groups. Thus, ethnic boundaries shift historically, and many individuals have multiple ethnic identities.¹⁰⁹

Moreover, the instrumentalist view of ethnicity, emphasizing the role of self-interested rational action, is often referred to as a direct-economic oriented conception of ethnicity; and *circumstantialist* one assumes ethnic boundaries as strongly correlated with social, economic and political environment.¹¹⁰ However, the *circumstantialist* approach has been criticized for its inability to explain the strong tie of ethnic boundary and the individuals' genuine sacrifice of their own interests and lives for the sake of their ethnic groups and for its explicitly linking the boundaries of collective action to economic characteristics. Given the respective criticisms directed against both *primordialists* and *circumstantialist* approaches to the study of ethnicity, the *constructionist* approach emerges as a response to the weaknesses of both approaches. The *constructionist* approach, which is generally seen as combining aspects of both *primordialist* and *circumstantialist* analysis, should be then considered as a third approach that is different from them, in that it accounts for change but, unlike *circumstantialist*, states that change includes social-psychological factors as well as personal interest.¹¹¹

In reviewing the ethnicity situation in Aceh, and in relating it to the Acehnese environment, it would seem that ethnicity in Aceh, and generally in Indonesia, can be best explained by constructionist perspective, rather than by a purely *primordialist* or *circumstantialist* one. Observing the mobility of ethnicity in Indonesia, Malley highlighted that "ethnicity in Indonesia experiences some changes although relatively slow. It is a matter of fact that almost no ethnic group in Indonesia is found static".¹¹² The constructionist perspective, that is, is more adequate and helpful in examining the formation of the existing

eight ethnic groups in Aceh, Acehnese, Gayo, Alas, Tamiang, Aneuk Jamee, Kluet, Singkil and Simeulue. It is hard, if not almost impossible, to examine the formation of the ethnic groups entirely based on “hard” *primordialist* view, assuming the ethnic groups as given and *static*. The truth is that the ethnic groups are not *primordially* given and *static*, but rather socially constructed through cultural, historical and political processes or *situationally* constructed over time, either by conquest, religious movements, migration, biological blending, acculturation or absorption of ethnic-linguistic groups. The ethnic groups change very slowly in a very long period of time or even centuries.

Understanding the situation and the composition of ethnicity in Aceh provides some refreshing insights needed for specifically portraying the ethno-social structure of the conflict. The zones of the conflict often have a close connection with the ethnic structure in Aceh. In this sense, certain ethnic groups that are concentrated in certain regencies openly oppose GAM, rather than support it. As a consequence, certain regencies in Aceh become the ethnic territories of GAM and certain others do not. The formation of the ethnic territory and non-ethnic territory of the conflict is often enhanced by ethnic relations and stratifications in Aceh. Ethnicity often matters in everyday life in Aceh. People “count” or “don’t count”¹¹⁴ often along ethnic lines, rather than social classes. However, class and ethnicity always commonly overlap.

The Acehnese ethnic group, making up about 80% of the people of Aceh and being concentrated in the regencies located in the north coastal areas of Aceh, is widely recognized since 1970s as the major supporters of GAM whose founding fathers are mostly Acehnese.¹¹⁵ The non-ethnic territorial areas of the movement, which are commonly labeled as “white zones”, are usually the regencies whose residents are more heterogonous. Thus, while Acehnese people are generally identified as and/or affiliated with GAM, the non-Acehnese people, including Gayo, Alas, Tamiang, Aneuk Jamee, Kluet, Singkil and Simeulue people, are often recognized as the opponents of GAM. However, in many cases, a few of them also decide to join the movement especially during the Indonesian Reform (*Reformasi*). What follows is the summarizing table of the ethno-social structure of the GAM supporters:¹¹⁶

No.	Regency/City	Ethnic Groups	Ethnic Territorial Area
1	South Aceh	Aneuk Jamee and a few Acehnese	Non-Ethnic Territory
2	Southeast Aceh	Alas	Non-Ethnic Territory
3	East Aceh	Aceh	Ethnic Territory
4	Central Aceh	Gayo and a few migrants from Java, Batak, Minang, China and Sunda	Non-Ethnic Territory
5	West Aceh	Aceh and a few migrants from Java, Padang and China	Ethnic Territory
6	Aceh Besar	Aceh	Ethnic Territory
7	Pidie	Aceh	Ethnic Territory
8	North Aceh	Aceh and a few migrants from Java, Batak and Padang and China	Ethnic Territory
9	Simeulue	Simeulue	Non-Ethnic Territory
10	Aceh Singkil	Sinkil	Non-Ethnic Territory
11	Bireuen	Aceh	Ethnic Territory
12	Southwest Aceh	Aceh and a few migrants from Minang and China	Ethnic Territory
13	Gayo Luwes	Gayo	Non-Ethnic Territory
14	Aceh Jaya	Aceh	Ethnic Territory
15	Nagan Raya	Aceh and a few Javanese migrants	Ethnic Territory
16	Aceh Tamiang	Tamiang	Non-Ethnic Territory
17	Bener Meriah	Gayo and w few migrants from Java	Non-Ethnic Territory
18	Banda Aceh (the capital of the province)	Aceh, Alas, Gayo, Kluet, Singkil, Tamiang, Aneuk Jamee	Non-Ethnic Territory
19	Sabang	Aceh	Ethnic Territory
20	Lhokseumawe	Aceh	Ethnic Territory
21	Langsa	Aceh	Ethnic Territory
22	Pidie Jaya	Aceh	Ethnic Territory
23	Subulussalam	Sinkil and a few Pak Pak and Javanese	Non-Ethnic Territory

The Regencies of Sabang, Aceh Besar, West Aceh, Pidie, Pidie Jaya, Lhokseumawe, Bireun and North Aceh are widely recognized as the ethnic territorial areas of GAM since Acehnese are generally concentrated in the regencies. Other regencies, including Bener

Meriah, Gayo Luwes, Sinkil, Subulusslam, Simeulue, Aceh Tamiang, Central Aceh, and Southest Aceh, where non-Acehnese and other heterogeneous ethnic groups live in, are largely considered as the non-ethnic territorial areas of the movement. Logically, the conflict is supposed to be more intensified and escalated and thereby causes more victims in the ethnic territorial areas, rather than in the non-ethnic territorial ones. Only a few scattered cases of clashes probably appeared in the non-ethnic territorial areas during the conflict. The following data primarily outlines the conflict victims distributed in the 23 Regencies of Aceh:¹¹⁷

No.	Regency/City	2007	2008
1	South Aceh	-	1.186
2	Southeast Aceh	-	234
3	East Aceh	175	1.424
4	Central Aceh	-	277
5	West Aceh	-	759
6	Aceh Besar	175	607
7	Pidie	350	1.817
8	North Aceh	175	2.174
9	Simeulue	-	70
10	Aceh Singkil	-	15
11	Bireuen	175	1.501
12	Southwest Aceh	-	337
13	Gayo Luwes	-	180
14	Aceh Jaya	-	622
15	Nagan Raya	-	436
16	Aceh Tamiang	-	325
17	Bener Meriah	-	364
18	Banda Aceh	9	72
19	Sabang	-	48
20	Lhokseumawe	-	380
21	Langsa	-	93
22	Pidie Jaya	-	998
23	Subulussalam	-	96
Total		1.059	14.015

The data clearly shows that, in 2008, 85% of the conflict victims are found in 11 (out of 23) regencies in Aceh, including South Aceh, East Aceh, Lhokseumawe, Aceh Jaya, Nagan Raya, West Aceh, Aceh Besar, Pidie, North Aceh, Bireuen, and Pidie Jaya, where Acehnese people are centrally concentrated in. However, only 15% of the conflict victims are detected in the rest of 12 regencies, including Central Aceh, Southeast Aceh, Langsa, Subulussalam, Gayo Lues, Banda Aceh,

Sabang, Bener Meriah, Aceh Tamiang, Aceh Singkil, Southwest Aceh, Simeulue, where the non-Acehnese people and other heterogeneous people, such as Javanese, Chinese, Sundanese, Pak Pak, Minang and Batak people reside. The dominance of the conflict victims distributed in the ethnic territorial areas mainly results from the conflict acceleration and escalation that intensely happened in the areas. The anatomy of the ethnic territorial and non-ethnic territorial areas of GAM could be substantially buttressed by looking at the following data of the GAM political prisoners distributed in the regencies:¹¹⁸

No.	Regency/City	Political Prisoners
1	South Aceh	144
2	Southeast Aceh	12
3	East Aceh	285
4	Central Aceh	31
5	West Aceh	37
6	Aceh Besar	125
7	Pidie	247
8	North Aceh	269
9	Simeulue	0
10	Aceh Singkil	4
11	Bireuen	366
12	Southwest Aceh	52
13	Gayo Luwes	10
14	Aceh Jaya	111
15	Nagan Raya	42
16	Aceh Tamiang	52
17	Bener Meriah	36
18	Banda Aceh	29
19	Sabang	12
20	Lhokseumawe	113
21	Langsa	43
22	Pidie Jaya	0
23	Subulussalam	0
Total		913

Similarly, it can be inferred from the data that 81% of the GAM political prisoners live in 11 (out of 23) regencies in Aceh and 19% of them are distributed in the rest of 12 regencies in Aceh. The ethnic territorial areas, where the conflict's tensions are more accelerated and intensified, have significantly produced a large number of political prisoners. That is to say, the GAM combatants and

civilians are centrally based in the regencies where Acehese ethnic group, the major exponents and followers of GAM, are concentrated.

Internal ethnic relations in Aceh often significantly enhance the construction of pro and contra of GAM. The structure of majority-minority relation or ethnic stratification in Aceh has produced a situation that places one ethnic group as socially being more privileged than the others.¹¹⁹ Ethnic stratification in Aceh has created some ethnic prejudices and, in most of the cases, resulted in an internal antagonism and hostility between one ethnic group and others. In such a situation, the ethno-social structure of GAM membership is fluidly made. The minority ethnic groups in Aceh, particularly Gayo, Singkil and Alas people, have been socio-politically discriminated against by Acehese ethnic group, making them oppose to GAM. Najmuddin, for instance, an ethnic leader of Alas who had experienced such discrimination, shared his experience as follows:

Acehese people often treated us like we were not part of Aceh province. They often looked down and disvalued the non-Acehese people by various ways. For example, they often sarcastically said, “what the sort of Alas/Kutacene people are”. When we were in Banda Aceh, the province’s capital, we felt that we were not Acehese because of their discriminations. Other Alas people also felt the same thing when they were in Banda Aceh. When I was a child, I was often told by my parents that we are not Acehese. If there were Acehese here, they would be isolated. The same thing happened in Pidie. Some Alas people were isolated there. Moreover, Acehese often made contemptuous fun of our language. We were always frustrated if we had some administrative duties to do in Banda Aceh. We were just ignored and inappropriately welcome there if we could not speak Acehese. The officers there would not serve us if we used Indonesian *bahasa*. My Alas friends often asked my help if they had some affairs to do in Banda Aceh as I could speak a little bit Acehese.¹²⁰

Ethnic stratification, particularly taking the form of majority-minority issue, is clearly an overt phenomenon in Aceh. The ethnic distinction, especially between Acehese and non-Acehese, has been essentially dogmatized and preached over generations. Alas children are probably often taught by their parents that they are different from Acehese since their childhood. The ethnic distinction is then enhanced by the variously expressive forms of discriminations, either socially, culturally and politically. The fact that Alas people are not appropriately treated in Banda Aceh because they cannot speak Acehese is only one

example of how ethnicity in Aceh matters in everyday life. People are served or not served, -“count” or “don’t count” in Liechty’s words-, often along ethnic lines, rather than social class. Such an ethnicity situation, more or less, has made some important parts in the making of Aceh as an ethnically divided region.

The strong ethnic distinction further contributes to the minimal support for GAM among Alas people. As Hamidi, an Alas scholar, said:

Only about 20 Alas people joined the movement. After the Helsinki Peace Agreement, they came back home. They did not join the movement here. They mostly joined the movement particularly when they left Southeast Aceh to Pidie and South Aceh for making money there. They further became the combatants in the regencies. The same thing also happened in Subulussalam, Singkil and Central Aceh. In many cases, some of them were forced by GAM combatants to join the movement, or they would be killed. When GAM was increasingly powerful, a few of them joined the movement. By joining the movement, they thought that they would get some rewards in the future, such as money, jobs, and positions. No Alas people are identified as the members of *Komite Peralihan Aceh* (Aceh Transition Committee). The leader of BRA here ((Aceh Peace-Reintegration Board) is not an Alas, but somebody coming from Central Aceh.¹²¹

The ethnic salience of Alas is obviously strengthened by their rejection of joining GAM. Thus, their oppositions to GAM should be defined not only as the logical consequence of the ethnic discriminations they experience but also as the symbolic feature of their ethnic distinctiveness.

A few Alas people joining GAM have to be seen as anomalies since they did it involuntarily or for some materially self-interested goals, which do not really represent the ethnic ideals of Alas. The situation also applies in Subulussalam and Aceh Singkil Regencies, where only a few people also joined GAM. As Ismail, a religious leader of Subulussalam, asserted:

The people here were not much interested in joining such a politically nuanced movement (say: GAM). Perhaps only new residents coming from the outside of the regency joined the rebel movement. They particularly joined the movement because they were afraid of the GAM combatants or being forced by them. Many of them were also motivated to gain some monies, properties or positions. The heterogeneity of the people here substantially contributed to the absent local people’s support for the movement.¹²²

Ethnic discrimination in Aceh appears not only socially but also politically. The political under-representation of non-Acehnese ethnic groups in Aceh often takes various forms, overtly including the restriction of local budget, the assignment of Acehnese as the district heads and mayors in the regencies whose residents are non-Acehnese, the confinement of strategic opportunities for the non-Acehnese ethnic groups and the under-development of their physical infrastructures.¹²³ Unfortunately, the naked ethnic discrimination in Aceh, this study has broadly revealed, is poorly covered by the press and scholarly research. The gigantic media coverage of the Aceh conflict has seemed to be clothing the value and substance of the issue.

Concluding Remarks

The Acehnese prototypical ethnic commonality, sharing common Islamic belief and historical collective memory of Acehnese Sultanate, has clearly facilitated the emergence of powerful resistance and strong militancy in Aceh through a form of large scale of collective action. The Acehnese Islamic belief has been intertwined with the historical collective memory of Aceh Sultanate in constructing the sense of ethnic distinctiveness that is often enhanced through the various expressive forms of cultural expressions and attributive characteristics. The produced Acehnese ethnic distinctiveness has significantly invested some important effects on manufacturing their strong militancy and powerful resistances against the Government of Indonesia. It particularly helps explain the absence of similar resistance in other exploited resources-rich provinces, such as Riau and East Kalimantan, and Papua's relatively fragmented and fragile resistance.

The ethnic identity is indeed a collective by-product or meaning offering a collective effect on why and what Acehnese fight for and go about. However, the ethnic identity doesn't directly and automatically produce the resistance and militancy or mechanically constrain Acehnese people to join GAM, but in entangle with other structural factors, micro-individual motivations and, more importantly, with the GAM elites' eloquent discursive construction of the ethnic identity. As a result, the GAM rank-and-file members' motivational forces of joining GAM are not always generic; rather, they are actually flavored by the elites' tastes.

Moreover, the Acehnese ethnic cohesiveness is particularly fostered

through the social process of ethnic relations and stratification. The formation of the ethnic territorial and non-ethnic territorial areas of the conflict, portraying the ethno-social structure of the conflict, is often related to these ethnic relations and stratifications. While the ethnic territorial area is where Acehnese ethnic group is concentrated, the non-ethnic territorial ones, which are commonly labeled as “white zones”, are usually the regencies whose residents are more heterogonous and/or non-Acehnese. Again, at one point, the internal ethnic relations in Aceh often significantly enhance the construction of pro and contra of GAM, at another point, ethnic stratification, producing some ethnic prejudices, socio-political discriminations and internal antagonism between one ethnic group and others, helps fluidly produce the ethno-social structure of GAM membership.

Endnotes

1. A body of works have largely discussed the nature, trajectory and the root cause of the conflicts, including Edward Aspinall, *Islam and Nation: Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press); and the historical and political background to the Aceh conflict in Askandar, K. & Chee, A.M. (eds.), *Building Peace in Aceh: Problems, Strategies, and Lessons from Sri Lanka, and Northern Ireland*, Proceedings of the International Symposium, (Bangkok: Mahidol University, 2004), p. 31-42.; Kamarulzaman Askandar, "The Aceh conflict: phases of conflict and hopes for peace" in Tan, A.T.H. (ed.), *A Handbook of Terrorism and Insurgency in Southeast Asia*, (Massachusetts: Edward Eigel Publishing Limited, 2007), p. 249-265; Kirsten E. Schulze, "The Free Aceh Movement (GAM): Anatomy of a Separatist Organization", in *Policy Studies 2*, (Washington: East West Center, 2004); Michael L. Ross "Resources and Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia" in Collier, P. & Sambanis, N. (eds.), *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis*, (Washington: The World Bank, 2005), p. 35-58; Michelle Ann Miller, *Rebellion and Reform in Indonesia: Jakarta's Security and Autonomy Policies in Aceh*, (New York: Routledge, 2009); C. van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam Indonesia*, (Leiden: Koninklijk Instituut Voor Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde, 1981) and many others.
2. Hamid Awaluddin, *Peace in Aceh: Notes on the Peace Process between the Republic of Indonesia and the Aceh Freedom Movement (GAM) in Helsinki*, (Jakarta, CSIS, 2009), p. 23.
3. See, for example, Anthony Reid, *Verandah of Violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem*, (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006); and Nazaruiddin Sjamsuddin, *The Republican Revolt: A Study of the Acehnese Rebellion*, (Singapore: Singapore National Printers, 1985).
4. See Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and Elizabeth F. Drexler, *Aceh, Indonesia: Securing the Insecure State*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).
5. See Kumar Ramakrishna, "Countering Radical Islam in Southeast Asia" in Smith, P.J. (ed.), *Terrorism and Violence in Southeast Asia: Transnational Challenges to States and Regional Stability*, (London: An East Gate Book, 2005), p. 145-168; David Martin Jones and Mike Lawrence Smith, *Southeast Asia and the war against terrorism: The rise of Islamism and the challenge to the surveillance state*, In Johannen U., Smith, A., and Gomez, J. (eds.), *September 11 & Political Freedom: Asian Perspectives*, (Singapore: Select Publishing, 2003), p. 142-173; and Edward Aspinall, *Islam and Nation: Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).
6. See Edward Aspinall, "The Construction of Grievance: Natural Resources and Identity in a Separatist Conflict", in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, (Vol. 51, No. 6, 2007), p. 950-972; Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion 1989-1992*, (New York: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1995); Geoffrey Robinson, "Rawan is as Rawan Does: the Origins of Disorder in New Order Aceh" in Anderson, B.R. (ed.), *Violence and State in Suharto's Indonesia*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 213-241; in Kaldor, W. et al. (eds.), *Oil Wars*, (Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2007), p. 183-224.
7. James D. Fearon, "Ethnic Mobilization and Ethnic Violence" in Weingast, B.R. & Wittman, D. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2006).
8. Free Aceh Movement is often abbreviated in Indonesian *Bahasa* as GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka) that has gone by different name in different periods. In its earlier existence in 1976, it was widely known as Aceh Merdeka (AM) in Aceh, or ASNLF (Acheh-Sumatra National Liberation Front) particularly in its international publications for gaining wider international support.
9. H. Eckstein. "On the Etiology of Internal Wars" in Gurr, T.R. et al. (eds.). *Anger*,

- Violence, and Politics: Theories and Research*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., p. 18-19.
10. Michael Hechter, "Rational Choice Theory and the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations" in Rex, J. & Mason, D. (eds.) (1986). *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations*. New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 271.
 11. See Carol M. Mueller, "Conflict Networks and the Origins of Women's Liberation" in McAdam, D. & Snow, D.A. (eds.). "Social Movement: Reading on Their Emergence, Mobilization and Dynamic". (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 1997), p. 158-157.
 12. See Manuel Castells, *the Power of Identity*, (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., Vol.II, 1997), p. 7. Castells generally define identity as a source of meaning that is mainly built from several elements, including history, geography, biology, collective memory, productive institutions, religious revelations, and personal fantasies.
 13. Melucci referred the submerged network as hidden network that relates the "latency and visibility poles of collective action". See Mueller, *ibid.* p. 160.
 14. Regarding this, see Roger Dale Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred and Resentment in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 34-35; John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, (Washington DC: United State Institute of Peace Press, 1997), p. 38.
 15. See Michael Banton, "Ethnic Conflict" in *Sociology*, (Vol. 34, No. 3, 2000), p. 481-498.
 16. Ethnic identity could significantly contribute to the construction of ethno-nationalism framing strategy that functions not only to mobilize people, but also importantly legitimate the movement. Regarding this, see David A. Snow, et.al., "Frame Alignment Processes, Micro-mobilization, and Movement Participation" in Doug McAdam & David A. Snow (eds.), *Social Movement: Readings on Their Emergence, Mobilization and Dynamics*, (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 1997), p. 235-267.
 17. Damien Kingsbury & Clinton Fernandez, "Indonesia" in Fernandes, C. (ed.). *Hot Spot: Asia and Oceania*, (Connecticut: Green Wood Press, 2008), p. 93.
 18. See Christopher R. Mitchell & Pushpa Iyer, "The Collapse of Peace Zones in Aceh" in Hancock, L.E. & Mitchell, C. (eds.). *Zones of Peace*, (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 2007), p. 139; and "MP Gerakan Aceh Merdeka", *Why Aceh Wants Independence from Colonialism of the Republic of Indonesia*, A document prepared by the Executive Council of the Free Aceh Movement (1999).
 19. Damien Kingsbury & Clinton Fernandez, *ibid.*, p. 93; and see also Iwan Gayo, *Atlas Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Grasindo, 2008).
 20. *Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of Aceh* (<http://aceh.bps.go.id/>); And the Department of Culture and Tourism of Aceh Province, 2009, (<http://acehprov.go.id/>).
 21. Damien Kingsbury & Clinton Fernandez, "Indonesia" in Fernandes, C. (ed.). *Hot Spot: Asia and Oceania*, (Connecticut: Green Wood Press, 2008), p. 91; See also World Bank report (2006) (www.worldbank.org/id/tsunami).
 22. Damien Kingsbury, Development and the military: the TNI in Aceh. In Clarke, M. (ed.), *Aid in Conflict*, (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2006), p. 35-50; See also Berita Sore, June 2, 2010.
 23. The fairly satisfying description of the culture, people, geography, and resources of the regencies is easily found on many scholarships, such as Michael L. Ross, "Resources and Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia" in Collier, P. & Sambanis, N. (eds.). *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis*, (Washington: the World Bank, 2005); Michelle Ann Miller, *Rebellion and Reform in Indonesia: Jakarta's Security and Autonomy Policies in Aceh*, (New York: Routledge, 2009); *Department of Culture and Tourism of Aceh*, 2009; and many others.
 24. See Iwan Gayo, *Atlas Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Grasindo, 2008).

25. T.M. Juned, "Adat dalam Perspektif Perdebatan dan Praktek Hukum" in Munir, L. (ed.), *Hukom dan Adat Aceh: Menuju Revitalisasi*, (Banda Aceh: Yayasan Rumpun Bambu, 2004), p. 35-44.
26. See Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); and Osman Raliby, "Aceh, Sejarah dan Kebudayaanya" in Sunny, I. (ed.). *Bunga Rampai tentang Aceh*, (Jakarta: Bharatara Karya Aksara, 1980), p. 44.
27. Raliby, *ibid.*, p. 43; Muhammad Umar, *Darah dan Jiwa Aceh: Mengungkap Falsafah Hidup Masyarakat Aceh*, (Banda Aceh: Baebon Jaya, 2008); and T. Syamsuddin, "Pasang Surut Kebudayaan Aceh" in Sunny, I. (ed.). *Bunga Rampai tentang Aceh*, (Jakarta: Bharatara Karya Aksara, 1980), p. 122-123.
28. Yusni Saby, "Islam and Social Change: the Role of the Ulama in Acehnese Society", (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2005).
29. Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).
30. Anthony Reid, "The Historical Background: Sources of the Aceh Conflict and Its Resolution" in Saleem, A.M. (ed.). *The Story of Aceh: Insights*, (Sri Lanka: Tharanjee Prints, 2008), p. 58.
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32. See C. Wright Mills, *the Sociological Imagination*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 144 & 149.
33. The line of scholarship focusing on this issue includes, for instance, Yusni Saby, *Islam and Social Change: the Role of the Ulama in Acehnese Society*, (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2005); and C.S. Yeoh, *Umaru-Uluma-Ummah Relations and Pesantrens in Aceh Province, Indonesia: A Study of the Challenges to the Authority of a Traditional Kiyai*, (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Washington, 1994).
34. See James Siegel, *Shadow and Sound: the Historical Thought of a Sumatran People*, (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1979).
35. See Eric Eugene Morris, *Islam and Politics in Aceh: A Study of Center-Periphery Relations in Indonesia*, (Unpublished PhD thesis, Cornell University, 1983).
36. A body of works related to this issue covers H.M. Zainuddin, *Singa Atjeh: Biographi Seri Sulthan Iskandar Muda*, (Medan, Pustaka Iskandar Muda, 1957; Dennys Lombard, *Kerajaan Aceh: Jaman Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607-1636)*, (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1986); Leonard Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka*, (Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press, 2008); Amirul Hadi, *Islam and State in Sumatra: A Study of Seventeenth-Century Aceh, Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts 48*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill Press, 2004); Ito Takeshi, *The world of the Adat Aceh : a Historical Study of the Sultanate of Aceh*, (Unpublished PhD thesis, the Australian National University, 1984); Zakaria Ahmad, *Atjeh dalam Tabun Sekitar Keradjaan 1520-1675*, (Medan: Manora Press, 1972).
37. Several prominent historians largely discussed Aceh's resistance against colonialists, including Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); Anthony Reid, *Imperial Alchemy: Nationalism and Political Identity in Southeast Asia*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010; Teuku Ibrahim Alfian, *Perang di Jalan Allah: Perang Aceh 1873-1912*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1987); Teuku Ibrahim Alfian, *Wajah Aceh dalam Lintasan Sejarah*, (Banda Aceh: Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Aceh, 1999).
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39. See Osman Raliby, "Aceh, Sejarah dan Kebudayaanya" in Sunny, I. (ed.). *Bunga*

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40. Amirul Hadi, *ibid.*
 41. Abu Bakar Atjeh, *ibid.*, p. 44; T. Syamsuddin, *ibid.*, p. 116.
 42. Leonard Andaya, *ibid.*, p.108-109.
 43. H.M. Zainuddin, *ibid.*, p. 46-49; or see also Sanusi M. Syarif, Ranib Sigapu, In Munir, L. (ed.), *Hukom dan Adat Aceh: Menuju Revitalisasi*, (Banda Aceh: Yayasan Rumpun Bambu, 2004), p. vi.
 44. Ismuha, "Adat dan Agama di Aceh" in *Berita Antropologi*, (Year: VII, No. 24, 1975), p. 35.
 45. Musthofa Ahmad, "Keistimewaan Aceh dalam Peradatan" in Munir, L. (ed.), *Hukom dan Adat Aceh: Menuju Revitalisasi*, (Banda Aceh: Yayasan Rumpun Bambu, 2004), p. 45-55.
 46. Muhammad Umar, *ibid.*, p. 14-45.
 47. Ismuha, *ibid.*, p. 36.
 48. See T. Syamsuddin, *ibid.*, p. 122-123; Ali Hasmy, "Banda Aceh Darussalam Pusat Kegiatan Islam dan Kebudayaan" in Sunny, I. (ed.). *Bunga Rampai tentang Aceh*, (Jakarta: Bharatara Karya Aksara, 1980), p. 211; and S.M. Amin, "Sejenak Meninjau Aceh Serambi Mekah" in Sunny, I. (ed.). *Bunga Rampai tentang Aceh*, (Jakarta: Bharatara Karya Aksara, 1980), p. 41.
 49. T. Syamsuddin, *ibid.*, p. 22.
 50. Ali Hasmy, *ibid.*, p. 213.
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 53. Muhammad Umar, *ibid.*, p. 78-79.
 54. Anthony Reid (2008), *ibid.*, p. 57-58.
 55. Kistrten E. Schulze, *ibid.*, p. 7.
 56. See Damien Kingsbury, *Peace in Aceh: a Personal Account of the Helsinki Peace Process*, (Singapore: Uquinox Publishing, 2005), p. 1-35. Kingsbury is an Australian academic that served as a political advisor of GAM.
 57. Alyasa' Abubakar, interview, Banda Aceh, October 29, 2009; See also Hasjim Djala & Dini Sari Djalal, *Seeking Lasting Peace in Aceh*, (Jakarta: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2006), p. 30.
 58. Confidential interview, Pidie, October 23, 2009.
 59. Kistrten E. Schulze, *ibid.*, p. 7.
 60. Alyasa' Abubakar, interview, Banda Aceh, October 29, 2009.
 61. Interview, Subulussalam, Novemver 11, 2009.
 62. See Leonard Andaya, *ibid.*, p. 108; and Reid (2008), *ibid.*, 57.
 63. Leonard Andaya, *ibid.*, p. 108; DGE Hall, Hall, D.G.E. (1981). *A History of Southeast Asia*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), p. 221; Kamarulzaman Askandar, *ibid.*, 249; Osman Raliby, *ibid.*, p. 28.
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 67. See Badri Yatim, "Sejarah Peradaban Islam", (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 9th edition, 1999), p. 208.
 68. Leonard Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka*, (Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press, 2008); Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, second edition, 1994); Denys Lombard, *Kerajaan Aceh: Jaman Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607-1636)*, (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1986); Edi Suhardi Ekajati, *Penyebaran Agama Islam di Pulau Sumatra*, (Jakarta: Sanggabuana, 1975); Zakaria Ahmad, *Sekitar keradjaan Atjeh dalam tahun 1520-1675*, (Medan: Monora Press, 1972).

69. See Alamsyah, *et.al.* (2008). *Ensiklopedi Aceh: Bahasa, Geografi, Kesenian, Sejarah*, (Banda Aceh: Pejabat Pembuat Komitmen dan Pengembangan Bidang Agama, sosial dan budaya, 2008), p. 172.
70. Leonard Andaya, *ibid.*, p. 109.
71. Denys Lombard, *ibid.*, p. 150-165; H.M. Zainuddin, *ibid.*, (1961); Anthony Reid, *ibid.*, (1979).
72. Leonard Andaya, *ibid.*, p. 119.
73. See Leonard Andaya, *Aceh's Contribution to the Standards of Malayness*, (Paris: Archipel, Vol. 16, 2001).
74. See Leonard Andaya, *ibid.*, (2008).
75. Geoffrey Robinson, *ibid.*, p. 218.
76. Anthony Reid, *ibid.*, (2010), p. 186.
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78. See Kirsten E. Schulze, *ibid.*, (2007); Geoffrey Robinson, *ibid.*; Tim Kell, *ibid.*
79. Edward Aspinall, "Sovereignty, the Successor State, and Universal Rights: History and the International Structuring of Acehnese Nationalism" in *Indonesia*, Vol 73, 2002), p. 2-3.
80. Kell, *ibid.* p. 63.
81. Ashutosh Varshney, "Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality" in *Perspectives on Politics*, (Vol. 1, 2003) p. 86.
82. Confidential interview, Banda Aceh, October 2009.
83. See Edward Aspinall, *ibid.*, (2004), p. 31-35.
84. James Siegel, *ibid.*, p. 229-265; Teuku Ibrahim Alfian, *ibid.*, p. 167-190; H.M. Zainuddin, *ibid.*, 103-113.
85. See C. van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam Indonesia*, (Leiden: Koninklijk Instituut Voor Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde, 1981).
86. Edward Aspinall, *ibid.*, p. 33.
87. Hasan Tiro, *The Price of Freedom: Unfinished Diary*, (National Liberation Front of Aceh Sumatra, 1984).
88. Interview, Banda Aceh, October 10, 2009.
89. See Anthony Reid, *ibid.*, (2008), p. 58.
90. Numerous scholars have been studying the issue and its potential for ethnic collective mobilization, including Daniel Bar-Tal, "Collective Memory of Physical Violence: Its Contribution to the Culture of Violence" in Cairns, E. & Roe, M.D. (eds.). *The Role of Memory in Ethnic Conflict*, (New Jersey: Plagrave Mcmillan, 2003); Oliver Schmidtke, "Re-modeling the Boundaries in the New Europe: Historical Memories and Contemporary Identities n German-Polish Relation" in Eder.K. & Sphon, W. (eds.). *Collective Memory and European Identity: the Effects of Integration and Enlargement*, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005); Ed Cairns & Micheal D. Roe (eds.), *The Role of Memory in Ethnic Conflict*, (New Jersey: Plagrave Mcmillan, 2003); and many others.
91. Edward Aspinall, *Islam and Nation: Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 4.
92. Michelle Ann Miller, *ibid.*, p. 142.
93. Kirsten E. Schulze, *ibid.*, (2004), p. 7.
94. See Kanchan Chandra, "What is Ethnic Identity and Does It Matter?" in *Annual Review of Political Science*, (Vol. 9, 2006), p. 400.
95. Leonard Andaya, *ibid.*, (2008), p. 116.
96. H.M. Zainuddin, *ibid.*, p. 23.
97. Lee Kam Hing, *The Sultanate of Aceh: Relations with the British 1760-1824*, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 162-189.
98. William Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 398.
99. Denys Lombard, *ibid.*, p. 135-165.

100. See *Department of Culture and Tourism of Aceh*, 2009, (<http://acehprov.go.id/>).
101. Ibid.
102. Judith Large & Aguswandi, "Penempatan Identitas, Keniscayaan Suara Politik, dan Hak Asasi Manusia" in Aguswandi & Large, J. (ed.). *Accord: Rekonfigurasi Politik Proses Damai Aceh*, (London: Conciliation Resources Publication, Issue 20), p. 6-7.
103. Michael L. Ross, *ibid.*, p. 38; Michelle Ann Miller, *ibid.*, (2009), p. 3.
104. Iwan Gayo, *ibid.* p. 34.
105. See *Department of Culture and Tourism of Aceh*, 2009, (<http://acehprov.go.id/>)
106. The scholars of this school mainly covers Clifford Geertz, *Old Societies and New States*, (New York: the Free Press, 1963); Pierre L. Van den Berghe, *The Ethnic Phenomenon*, (New York: Elsevier, 1981); Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).
107. A number of scholars have largely engaged with this school of thought, including Fredrick Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: the Social Organization of Culture Difference*, (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969); Robin M. William, Jr., "The Sociology of Ethnic Conflict: Comparative International Perspectives" in *American Sociological Review*, (Vol. 20, 1994), p. 49-79; Karen A. Cerulo, "Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions" in *Annual Review of Sociology* (Vol. 23, 1997), p. 385-409.
108. Sun-Ki Chai, "Predicting Ethnic Boundaries" in *European Sociological Review*, (Vol. 21, No. 4, 2005), p. 376.
109. See Robin M. William Jr., *ibid.*, p. 57.
110. Edward A. Tiryakin, *Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflict, Peace Processes: Comparative Perspectives*, (Whitby: De Sitter Publications, 2004), p. 130; Sun-Ki Chai, *ibid.*, p. 376.
111. Sun-Ki Chai, *ibid.*, p. 376-377.
112. Michael S. Malley, "Political Centralization and Social Conflict in Indonesia" in Giannakos, S.A. (ed.). *Ethnic Conflict: Religion, Identity, and Politics*, (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2002), p. 172.
113. See *Department of Culture and Tourism of Aceh*, 2009, (<http://acehprov.go.id/>)
114. See Mark Liechty, *Suitably Modern: Making Middle Class Culture in a New Consumer Society*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 140.
115. Edward Aspinall, "Pemilihan Umum: Konsolidasi Perdamaian" in Aguswandi & Large, J. (eds.). *Accord: Rekonfigurasi Politik Proses Damai Aceh*, (London: Conciliation Resources Publication, issue 20, 2008), p. 51-52.
116. The table is mainly adjusted from "*Department of Culture and Tourism of Aceh*, 2009, (<http://acehprov.go.id/>)" with an added column of "Ethnic Territorial Area".
117. Annual Report of *Badan Reintegrasi Damai Aceh* (Aceh Peace-Reintegration Board) (2009)
118. Ibid.
119. Scholars of ethnicity have largely discussed about the ethnic stratification issue, including J.M. Yinger, *Ethnicity: Source of Strength? Source of Conflict?* (Albani: State University of New York Press, 1994); Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, (London: Pluto Press, 2002). In addition, many of them have been specifically concerned with minority-majority issues, such as E.P. Kaufmann, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Majority Groups and Dominant Minorities*, (New York: Routledge, 2004); and Stephen May, et al. (eds.), *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Minority Rights*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
120. Interview, Aceh Tenggara, November 21, 2009.
121. Interview, Aceh Tenggara, November 25, 2009.
122. Interview, Subulussalam, November 29, 2009.
123. Interview, Ridwan Nurdin, a Gayonese scholar living in Banda Aceh, Banda Aceh, December 12, 2009. Noticing this, Miller (2009, p. 142) also highlighted that "one under-reported dimension of the contemporary conflict in Aceh has been the sometimes strained relationship between Aceh's ethnic minority groups and the ethnic Acehnese majority".

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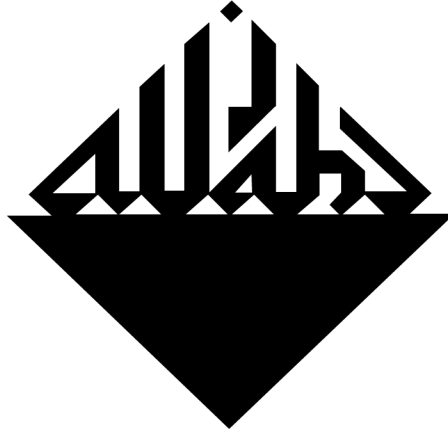
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تون سري لانانج في مسار التاريخ
وعلاقته بانتشار الاسلام في آتشي

محمد دين ماجد

الشيخ أحمد الرفاعي وسياقية الشريعة الإسلامية:

دراسة على كتابه تغيرة

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