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Center for Research and Development of Religious Literature and Heritage
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Editorial Notes

This Journal is concerned with issues on religious literatures and heritages in Indonesia or Nusantara. The purpose of the publication of this journal then is to promote the religiously based heritages of Nusantara (historical term of the past Indonesia) in particular and the world in general. In another world, the journal is certainly to develop ideas relating to the development of the Nusantara religious heritages in order to be widely known, read and reviewed by the academic community at large. For this purpose, Center of Research and Development for Religious Literature and Heritage, of the Office of Research and Development and Training, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, in this regard, considers it important to publish a journal of religious heritages. This is because of such heritages have not socio-politically received adequate attentions yet in the discourse of the cultural development in Indonesia and in the world-wide.

Indonesia -- as the plural country with more than 80 % Islam, and Catholicism, Protestant, Hinduism, Buddhism, Khonghucu, and local faiths for the rest -- is the very rich country of cultural legacies. The golden age of some Nusantara Buddhist and Hinduist kingdoms, for instance, had culturally enriched the nation's legacies. Further, the religious life of Nusantara in the past, in fact, not only the products of the *sui generis* of the genuine religion itself, but most of them were the acculturative and hybridal forms adapted to the local tradition or culture. As an illustration here, Islam as a revealed religion has special characteristics of Indonesia. Islam has culturally adapted cultures and social life and thoughts of Indonesian society. It does not mean that Islam in Indonesia is not rooted in Islamic teachings from the early period of the Prophet Muhammad pbh.

Moreover, it can be said that the continuity of thought of Islamic scholars (ulama) of Indonesia from the early advent of Islam in Indonesia to the present has its deep roots in Islamic teachings. Nevertheless, Indonesia's Islamic style of course, is different from the style of Islam in other countries, such as the Middle East. This does not mean that Islam in Indonesia is not genuine, but, more than that it shows that Islam in Indonesia has its long history to adapt to local cultures in order to be more easily accepted by the local people. It should be noted, the process of adaptation is not entirely eliminates the essence of Islam which is monotheistic one. In relations to this, history of Islamic scholars and their thoughts, as well as their Islamic discourses being recorded in archaeological sites, manuscripts, and heritage need to be promoted and raised in a more serious study. For this reason, this journal is an effort to achieve this goal.

Studies on the first edition of this journal include a few posts related to Qur'anic archeology, history of Sheikh Yusuf al Makassary as an Islamic scholar and a hero of humanism, the discourse on secularism and Islam in the conflict in Aceh, the strengthening of Islamic jurisprudence schools (Fiqh) and Sufism in Islamic historiography, and about Sufis Jihad in Aceh at the end 19th century and early 20th century.

The first article is Ali Akbar on Qur'anic archeology. This study offers the Quranic archeology as one of the branches of archeology. This study offers an illustration of the idea that peoples or early nations enunciated by the Qur'an to be the initial source for the development of Islamic archeology. Akbar argues that the verses of the Qur'an that explains the history of the followers of the previous archaeological truth can be traced from the Qur'anic verses that explain it. Based on that, the Qur'an archeology substantially meets the criteria to be a branch of archeology such as to have historical reconstruction of the culture, to have the reconstruction of the thought of the actor in history, to have a

description of the event and to have the cultural reconstruction of the birth and disappearance of a civilization.

Al Qur'an is the Muslims' way of life. As the first and primary sources, it contains of values, norms, and other teachings system which have to be consistently applied in the daily life of the Muslim world. Related to this importance, the second article of Choirul Fuad Yusuf attempts to unpack and elaborate of how far al Qur'an has an aplicable teachings on tolerance and peace needed by the world-wide for the sake of building the world security and peace culture.

Further study is written by Erman Erwiza which focuses on the role of Islamic scholar and a hero in the history of Islam in particular Indonesia and Indonesia during the Dutch colonial history in general, Sheikh Yusuf al Maqassary. Sheikh Yusuf al Maqassary is a hero of humanity, because he opposed the tyranny and oppression of the Dutch. Erman rightly argues that the award given to Sheikh Yusuf al Makassary as an Indonesian and South African hero becomes very important to be realized in a concrete way. According to Erman, it can be made by giving him a title of national hero, building a museum and education that could promote the teachings of Sheikh Yusuf. In addition to that, it is also important to create the programs to establish cooperation between both countries, Indonesia and South Africa as an important part of the history of Sheikh Yusuf struggle.

The third article is written by Mohammad Hasan Ansori entitled "Secularism and the Issue of Islam in the Aceh conflict: A Framing Process Approach" which provides an overview and analysis of the conflicts that occurred between GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka/Free Aceh Movement) in Aceh and the government of Indonesia. According Ansori, the theme of the struggle which GAM carried is not Islamic values, but rather secular values such as independence (self determination, and human rights). Further Ansori argues that the connotation made by the government of

Indonesia addressed is an attempt to discredit GAM as part of the global terrorism using the name of Islam.

Further article is by Ajid Thohir which highlights the importance of persona studies in the historiography of Islam in the formation of schools of thought in the Islamic world, both in the field of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence and Sufism). Therefore, to understand the significance of the studies in the historiography of Islam means to understand the Islamic community which is in fact is divided into separate communities. Each community embraces and follows the teachings of Islam through the character of the leader as the role model. The phenomenon is very crucial and useful to understand the psychological conditions and religiosity of the diverse Muslim community.

Further article written by Hamdar Arraiyyah is about the role of Daud Ismail in the preaching of Islam in South Sulawesi and his effort to write the Qur'anic interpretation in Buginese language. This article explains the effort done by Ismail is very important and precious to give guidance to the Buginese Muslims who do not understand the Qur'an in Arabic language by the reading the meaning of the Qur'an in Buginese language. This effort is certainly help the Buginese Muslims to understand easily the Qur'an.

The next article is written by Fakhriati which discusses Sufis action in the form of Jihad in Aceh in the early 19th and 20th centuries. This study suggests that the Sufis and the religious leaders in Aceh played an important role in the formation of thought of the Muslim community in Aceh. The establishment of the Islamic community in Aceh which is very religious has very strong roots in the teachings of the scholars, teachers and their religious leaders. It is because the religious leaders in Aceh taught the religion as the whole concept of life. It is not just relating to God and worship rituals but also to justice, and the struggle against the oppression. This can be seen in the case of Sufis in Aceh who do the struggle against the Dutch colonialism. Several studies

above are expected to provide a preliminary description to understand the importance of Islam in Indonesia in the perspective of history, archeology and the manuscripts left by the Islamic scholars. Apart from that, it is hoped these studies may encourage the emergence of other studies in the development of Islamic or other religious thoughts in Indonesia based on the historical or archeological data in the Nusantara and the worldwide.

SECULARISM AND THE ISSUE OF ISLAM IN THE ACEH CONFLICT: A FRAMING PROCESS APPROACH

Mohammad Hasan Ansori

Abstract

Aceh conflict is widely recognized as one of the most protracted and violent conflicts not only in Southeast Asia, but also in the globe. This study intends to look at the secessionist conflict from the social movement perspective, and specifically from the theoretical instrument of framing process. This study goes a little further by getting engaged with the strategic issue of Islam in the region. In lieu of commonly adopted macro and structural analysis of the conflict, this study methodologically instead applies micro and dynamic analysis of the conflict. In general, this study primarily argues that the framing strategy adopted by Free Aceh Movement (GAM) is clearly secular in nature, and/or far away from the Islam-nuanced religiosity and spirit. However, Islam is often exploited particularly for mass mobilization. The movement's framing strategy mainly includes natural resources exploitation, ethnic-nationalist vision, universal value of self-determination, the history of Aceh Kingdom and human right violation.

Keywords: Secularism, Conflict, Framing, and Politicization

Introduction

Burgeoning prominent analysts and scholars of conflict have uniformly underscored the salience and the necessity of studies on the conflict. The phenomenon of conflict and violence has been obviously around for centuries and increasingly becomes

a global phenomenon (e.g. Connor 2004; Bakwesegha 2004; Hechter 2004; Hale 2008; Horowitz 1985). Ethnic conflict has been largely grabbing the global attention and increasingly becoming one of the crucial international agenda, particularly in the post-colonization and Cold War. Mapping the critical period of the conflict/war in the world, Rex argued that the study of ethnic conflict occurs within the context of four world wars; the war of 1914-18, the war of 1939-45 (Second World War), the Cold War, and the war against terrorism.¹

Indonesia is, of course, no exception. Numerous conflicts of varying intensities have occurred around the nation of archipelago since it was established in 1945. The collapse of the New Order regime marked by the fall of Soeharto in 1998 signaled the “critical juncture” of the dramatic increase of violent conflicts in Indonesia.² General Soeharto, who is widely known as one of the longest-reigning dictators of the 20th century, led the vast and culturally diverse archipelago of Indonesia for more than 30 years until he was forced out during a series of pro-democracy demonstrations in 1998. Almost all the Indonesia’s conflicts deescalated, if not significantly settled, by the end of 2002 except for Aceh conflict, which is generally framed as a fight between the Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka/GAM*) and the Government of Indonesia.

A large number of studies have been done on the Aceh conflict, focusing on the historical-political aspect of the conflict (Sjamsuddin 1985), the cultural differences involving the Islamic tradition (e.g. Ramakrishna 2005; Abuza 2003; Jones & Smith 2003), the general bibliography of the movement (e.g. Sulaiman 2000; Al-Chaidar 2000; Jihad 2000). Many others combine one

¹ J. Rex, 2004, Empire, race and ethnicity. In Tiryakin, E.A. (ed.). *Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflict, Peace Process: Comparative Perspective*. Canada: de Sitter Publications, p. 18.

² Jacques Bertrand, 2004, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

aspect of the conflict with the others, usually the economic aspect with the political and primordial ones, leading to view the Aceh conflict as a multi-dimensional one (e.g. July and Jereski 2000; Kell 1995). Up to this point, it is obvious that most of the approaches put more weight on the explication of the root causes of the conflict. The most recent approach to the conflict is conflict settlement, peace building process and the application of *Syariah* Law (e.g. Sukma 2005; Kay 2003; Weatherbee 2002; International Crisis Group 2006; Jemadu 2006). Even in many ways, the current application of *Syariah* law in the post Aceh conflict echoes the Islamic rhythm of the conflict. But much less attention has been paid to theoretically examining the biographical trajectory of the movement.

Many might have recognized the necessity of studying the rebel movement in the context of macro understanding of the Aceh conflict (e.g. Sulaiman 2000; Al-Chaidar 2000). Unfortunately, these studies much offer the historical documentation of past events, rather than a systematically theoretical study and analysis of the movement. Furthermore, recent studies and public discourse on rebellion have concentrated on causes and emergence of a rebellion (e.g. Andrews 2006; Gomez 2000; Beitler 2004; Beer 1982; D'Antonio 2004), and theoretical issue of rebellion, such as rational choice theory (Weede & Muller 1998) and Marx's theory (Boswell & Dixon 1993). However, less attention has been given to examine how the rebellious movements frame their strategies to mobilize supports and participations.

The intriguing question then becomes what efforts or strategies are adopted by the movement to mobilize potential adherents and constituents and to what extent the movement's framing strategies are considered secular. In this paper, I first discuss the theory of framing process. Then, I deal with the historical and cultural background of the movement. Finally, I provide the analytical examination of the movement's framing process. The data presented here are mainly drawn from a couple of

structured but open-ended interviews the GAM members and from other secondary resources, including the documental records of the movement and the local government as well as other published academic studies and mass media. This sort of study offers double merits. One merit will be a welcome effort to fill in some of that empty space of micro-approach to the studies of ethnic conflict in Indonesia. The second merit will be the scientifically empirical examination of the theory into a different context.

Defining Framing Process

The concept of framing process has much been used recently for studying various sorts of movement organizations. The literature of framing process approach mostly originates from the social movement field which is indebted greatly to David Snow. However, this theory can be beneficially applied to all other studies of any movements or groups of people. In this regards, I find it adequate and helpful in examining how the Free Aceh Movement is framed by its leaders to mobilize participants and adherents and to gain internal and international supports.

The term of *framing process* is primarily coined by Snow and his colleagues. It is originally developed and modified from Erving Goffman's term to the study of social movements. Snow and his colleagues develop this theory as part of their discontent with theory of resource mobilization. As McAdam, *et.al.*³ emphasized that Snow coined this term mainly "to crystallize and articulate a growing discontent among movement scholars over how little significance proponents of resource mobilization perspective attached to ideas and sentiments". However, they criticized Snow and his colleagues as pointing out that "Snow and

³ McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., & Zald, M.N., Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Process-toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements. In McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., & Zald, M.N., eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structure, and Cultural Framings*, p. 4.

his colleagues drew not only on Goffman's work, but ironically on the collective behavior tradition which resource mobilization had sought to supplant as the dominant paradigm in the field".⁴ Sensed in this way, the concept of framing process is coined by Snow and his colleagues in 1908s as both a modification of Goffman's work and their responses to increasing discontent of resource mobilization and political process perspectives.

The concept of framing process is referred to, in Snow's original conception, "the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action".⁵ In a similar fashion, framing acts as a schema and method for a movement to attach and assign certain meanings, symbols, signs, features, etc. for their surrounding world and themselves. The main purpose of this framing is mainly to mobilize participants and adherents and gain supports. As Snow & Benford (1988) clearly pointed out, "they frame or assign meaning to and interpret, relevant events and conditions in ways that they are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists".⁶

Snow, Hunt and Benford had surveyed the literatures on the application of framing process, including Gamson, *et.al.* (1982); Snow, *et.al.* (1986); Snow & Benford (1988 & 1992); Johnston (1991); Gerhads & Rucht (1992); Tarrow (1992); and Benford (1993a, and 1993b). They mostly argued that framing processes affect the interpretive schema of movement participants as they make sense of their social worlds.⁷ According to Snow and Benford (in Snow, Hunt and Benford 1994), a frame, which is adapted from

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 5.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 5.

⁶ Snow, A. & Benford, R.D., Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participation Mobilization, in *International Social Movement Research*, Vol. 1, p. 197.

⁷ Snow, D.A., Hunt, S.C., & Benford, R.D., Identity Fields: Framing Process and the Social Construction of Movement Identities, in Gusfield, ed., *New Social Movements: from Ideology to Identity*, P. 185.

Goffman's (1974), is referred to as "an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, sequences of actions within one's present or past environments".⁸ Put in another way, framing process functions as well as a worldview of a movement to themselves and their surrounding social world.

This theory is adopted to see how Free Aceh Movement frame themselves, particularly how the elites of the rebel movement construct their framing strategies to mobilize the adherents and constituents, garner support from the people of Aceh and other countries and demobilize their enemy of Indonesian National Armed Forces. Their framing strategy will primarily serve as their 'interpretive schemata' to fashion their shared understanding of their social world and nature of their struggle or rebellious efforts. That is, they construct their framing strategy to legitimate their struggle for independence and garner most support and sympathy from the people of Aceh. Then, the question becomes what is the nature of the framing process of rebel movement; is it a secular (more emphasizing the economic exploitation, ethnic nationalism, human right violation, etc.) or religious one (mainly relying on Islamic tenets and doctrines); and to what extent is it secular or religious.

According to Hunt, *et.al.*,⁹ the central aspect of framing process lies in the "avowal and imputation of characteristics to relevant sets of actors within a movement's orbit of operation". This could take two kinds: "they assert something about a group's consciousness or they make claims about aspects of group's character...in the case of the former, levels or kinds of knowledge or awareness are attributed to, values are highlighted, and changes in consciousness are noted and encouraged...in the case of

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 190.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 192.

character attributions, specific claims are made about a group's strategic, moral and/or relational character. Adversaries, for example, are often personified as irrational, immoral, and devoid of compassion and feeling". The discussion about the two aspects of framing process has further brought about three kinds of identity fields, protagonists, antagonists and audiences.

The protagonist identity field is mainly referred to as "constellation of identity attributions about individuals and collectivities taken to be advocates of movement causes. They also involve a variety of personal identity attributions, such as movement heroes and heroines, paid and unpaid staffers, leaders, rank and file followers".¹⁰ Viewed in this sense, individuals who support and advocate the movement are identified as the protagonists or included in the constellation of protagonist identity field. In contrast to this protagonist identity field, antagonist identity fields are often referred to as "constellations of identity attributions about individuals and collectivities imputed to be opponents of movement causes".¹¹ In other words, individuals or collectivities who oppose to the movement causes are considered to be in this identity fields. The last identity field is audience which is primarily referred to as "constellations of identity attributions about individuals and collectivities imputed to be neutral or uncommitted observers who may react to or report on movement activities".¹² They can be media, powerful elites, marginal supporters, sympathizers, etc.

This study also makes an effort of examining the frame alignment process of the rebel movement. The question becomes what is the type of the movement's framing alignment process. Snow, *et.al.*¹³ theoretically argued that there are four types of frame

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 193.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 197.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 199.

¹³ Snow, D.A., Rochford, E.B., Worden, S.K. & Benford, R.D., Frame Alignment Processes. Micromobilization, and Movement Participation, in

alignment processes, frame bridging, frame amplification, frame transformation and frame extension. However, this study puts more focus on the frame amplification process of the movement, especially on value amplification. Frame amplification is mainly referred to as “the clarification and invigoration of an interpretive frame that bears on a particular issue, problem or set of events”. In addition, they argue that values can be construed as modes of conduct or states of existence that are thought to be worthy of protection and promotion.¹⁴ What is referred to as value amplification in this study will be the identification, idealization and elevation of one or more values presumed basic to prospective constituents. The values may have been taken for granted, unchallenged or constructed for their relevance to a particular problem.

The Historical and Cultural Contexts

From reviewing the historical research and literatures on Aceh, several important conclusions can be drawn. First, the history of Aceh is closely tied to the emergence of Islam in this area. Second, the tradition of resistance in Aceh against outside control dominates the historical aspect of life in Aceh. Lastly and most importantly, Aceh and its history can not be separated from the Republic of Indonesia.

Historians generally agree that Islam arrived in Indonesia through Aceh, largely because of the region’s location in relation to India, Arabia, Europe, Indochina, and China. Aceh was historically a magnet for the traders from many different areas; Islam reached Indonesia through Arabs plying these trade routes. As a result,

McAdam, D. & Snow, D.A., eds., *Social Movements: Readings on Their Emergence, Mobilization and Dynamics*.

¹⁴ Snow, D.A., Rochford, E.B., Worden, S.K. & Benford, R.D., Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation, in McAdam, D. & Snow, D.A., eds., *Social Movements: Readings on Their Emergence, Mobilization and Dynamics*, p. 237.

Aceh is often referred to as “one of the most Islamic if not the Islamic province of Indonesia”¹⁵ and generally dubbed *Serambi Mekkah* or the “Verandah of Mecca.” Most of the historians believe that the first Moslems to visit Indonesia were Arab traders who stopped on their way to China during the seventh century. Likewise, Marco Polo noted, in his famous 13th Century book, that Asians who lived in seaports were especially likely to convert to “the religion of Mohammed [sic]”.¹⁶

The people of Aceh also have a long tradition of resistance and militancy against alien rulers. Overall, this historical account can be divided into three periods. During the first period, the Acehnese resisted Dutch colonialists over 350 years until the outbreak of World War II. Although never successful, resistance in Aceh was marked by remarkable braveness and persistence by the people of Aceh. The second period encompasses the fierce, although brief resistance against Japanese occupiers from 1942. According to Reid,¹⁷ the Japanese government was shocked by the depth of resistance faced by the Imperial Army in its bloody confrontation with Moslem leaders in Aceh. The last period comprises resistance against the Republic of Indonesia, widely known as the *Darul Islam* rebellion. In comparison to Aceh’s anti-colonial periods, the struggle by Islamist rebels makes Aceh unique within Indonesia. Although the *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 *Syariah Islam*, or Islamic Law.

The *Darul Islam* rebellion began in September 1953 in response to dissatisfaction with Indonesian President Soekarno. Teungku Muhammad Daud Beureueh, one of the charismatic

¹⁵ *Indonesia Publications*, p. 8.

¹⁶ Amin, S.M., *Sejenak Meninjau Aceh Serambi Mekah*, in Sunny, I., *Bunga Rampai tentang Aceh*, p. 47.

¹⁷ Al-Chaidar, *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka: Jihad Rakyat Aceh Mewujudkan Negara Islam*, p. 45.

Moslem 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.¹⁸ Although this event ended the *Darul Islam* rebellion, this anti-Jakarta insurgency would be the foundation of the subsequent Aceh Free Movement with their framing strategy of discontinued Islamic vision. To this point, this study mainly argues that the framing process of *Darul Islam* rebellion is strictly based on Islamic tenets and tradition, making this Movement different from Aceh Free Movement. Hence, the differences between them lie mainly in their framing strategies.

No rebellion, especially a guerilla insurgency, exists in a vacuum. The province of Aceh is located in northern tip of Sumatra Island. The name of Aceh is mainly derived from the word *Aca* (daughter), although the name may also refer to the *Ba'si-aceh-aceh*, a large and leafy banyan tree.¹⁹ Overall, Aceh is populated by indigenous Acehnese, with some subsequent migration from Western Sumatra to southern Aceh. However, the Acehnese are actually a mixture of indigenous Acehnese and Arabic, Persian, Indian, and Chinese people, along with people from other ethnic groups in Indonesia, such as Tamiang, Aneuk Jame, Gayo, Alas, Klut, and Simelu. Ethnic Chinese are also a distinct minority in Aceh.

The presence of the migrant people in Aceh brings about some changes in the communal aspects of Acehnese. What so-called Acehnese currently are very mixed-up people and altogether identified as Acehnese, which is different from the "old" Acehnese. No other identifications such as Indian Acehnese, Arab Acehnese, Persian Acehnese, or many others are widely found. In addition to the Acehnese language, some migrant ethnic groups still preserve their traditional languages, such as Tamiang, Gayo, Alas, etc. Thus,

¹⁸ Putra, *Perjalanan Panjang Aceh menuju Islam kaffah*, p. 34.

¹⁹ Amin, S.M., *Sejenak Meninjau Aceh Serambi Mekah*, in Sunny, I., *Bunga Rampai tentang Aceh*, p. 48.

the primordial ancestry of Acehnese serves as a precondition, but some changes in its nature and salience are best explained by environmental circumstances and external factors, particularly the huge migration.

Besides the ethnic makeup of the people in Aceh, their culture is distinctly different from other provinces in Indonesia, largely due to the prominence of Islam. According to Alfian,²⁰ the people of Aceh base their traditions on Sultan Iskandar Muda and their religion on Syah Kuala Syaikh Abdurrauf As-Singkili. Therefore, their *weltanschauung* unifies political and religious history. Islam has played a dominant role in constructing and shaping the culture of Aceh. The making of Islamic nature of Acehnese is greatly indebted to the migration of Arabic traders in the area. The emergence of Islam, brought by the Arab migrants, makes very significant changes of the general aspects of Acehnese. As a result, their ancestral and indigenous commonality almost fades. Members of prototypical ethnic group share a common language, religion, customs, sense of homeland, and relatively dense social networks. However, any or all of these may be missing.

One illustration of how Islam shapes Aceh culture is the institution of *Mueunasah*, which is widely known as a public forum that can be found in every *Gampong* (settlement). In *Meunasah*, people discuss their problems and daily activities. In addition, guests coming from other far areas can spend the night in *Meunasah*. Above all, *Meunasah* is a center for all Islamic activities, including studying the Koran and performing *Shalat* (the ritual prayers).²¹ Through institutions like *Meunasah*, religious leaders (*ulama'*) maintain their influence over life in the community, and given how Islam is perceived in Aceh, insurgencies are often seen in religious terms.

²⁰ Alfian, *Rakyat Aceh Tetap Cinta Republic*, in Widjanarko and Sambodja, eds., *Aceh Merdeka dalam Perdebatan*, p. 62.

²¹ See Amin, *Sejenak Meninjau Aceh Serambi Mekkah*, in Sunny, I., *Bunga rampai tentang Aceh*, p. 49.

The existence of Free Aceh Movement might be closely tied to the Islam-based culture of the people of Aceh. It is also absolutely reasonable for the rebel movement to frame themselves as a religious movement to mobilize adherents and constituents and garner support from the people of Aceh. However, this study will show that the construction of their framing strategies, activities or efforts is strongly based on the secular issues, rather than the Islamic ones. However, again, Islam is often politicized mainly for the purpose of mass mobilization.

Free Aceh Movement (GAM), the Secular Framing Process and the Politicization of Islam

The ethno-nationalist perspective of framing process is generally connected with the secular vision of a movement. The word ‘secular’, or secularism, generally pertains to worldly things or to things that are not regarded as religious, spiritual, or sacred. Rather, it is preoccupied with material purposes and civil legitimacy. This civic perspective of framing process conceptually includes economic exploitation or unequal economic development, ethnic nationalism, theory of international law, the value of self-determination, the history of Aceh Kingdom and human right violation.

Secular Ethno-Nationalist vs. Islamic Framing Process

	Ethno-Nationalist Framing Process	<i>Islamic Framing Process</i>
1.	Self-Determination Value	<i>Islamic Texts or Rhetoric</i>
2.	Natural Resources Exploitation	<i>Islamic Teachings or Tenets</i>
3.	Ethnic Nationalism	<i>Islamic Traditions or Cultures</i>
4.	Theory of International Law	<i>Islamic Myths</i>
5.	<i>Human Right Violation</i>	

6.	<i>The History of Aceh Kingdom</i>	
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Free Aceh Movement (GAM), also generally known as ASNLF (Aceh Sumatra National Liberation Front), came into being on December 4, 1976, following the issuance of their Declaration of Independence of Aceh-Sumatra. Husaini Hasan, one of the prominent actors of the movement, argued that ASNLF is the only GAM's English name, which is frequently used for their international utility.²² The name of ASNLF is intentionally employed as their framing strategy to extend their existence, covering the entire Sumatra Island, and to specifically gain a broader support from the people of the island.

Value frame amplification is one of the types of framing alignment process that is constructed by GAM to serve as their modes of conduct and state of their existence. The rebel movement's value amplification, which is theoretically referred to as "the identification, idealization and elevation of one or more values presumed basic to perspective constituents", is the value of self-determination. That is, they employ the right of self-determination to legitimate their existence and construct their modes of conduct. They frame themselves as the people who deserve the right to manage and administer the land or region of Aceh independently from the colonization of Javanese-Indonesia. In another hand, Indonesia is perceived as a colonialist who illegally conquered their land.

The amplification of this right of self-determination is clearly stated on their Declaration of Independence (December 4, 1976) and frequently on Tiro's speech (the head of GAM) at the UNPO General Assembly (January 20, 1995). For example, on their Declaration of Independence, it is obviously stated, "we, the

²² See Nurhasim, Patji, Alihar, and Lamijo, *Konflik Aceh: Analisis atas Sebab-Sebab Konflik, Actor Konflik, Kepentingan dan Upaya Penyelesaian*, p. 34.

people of Aceh, Sumatra, exercising our right of self-determination and protecting our historic right of eminent domain to our fatherland, do hereby declare ourselves free and independent from all political control of the foreign regime of Jakarta and the alien people of the island of Java".²³ This amplification of self-determination is much elaborated by Tiro on his speech at UNPO General Assembly entitled *The New Colonialism: Denominated Indonesians*,

"The very concept of Indonesia is based, and predicted, on the denials of the Right of Self-Determination to the majority of the non-Javanese people of the Malay Archipelago...But today's discussion about human rights in Indonesia the right to self-determination has been totally ignored, thereby justifying Javanese colonialism even more. Indonesia must be derecognized first, confined only to the island of Java that is to 7% of the territory of the former Dutch East Indies. The right of self-determination must be restored to the people of the rest of 93% of the territory".²⁴

The movement leadership is definitely comprised of relatively privileged elites, having been founded by people like Dr. Teungku Hasan di Tiro (head of the movement), Dr. Mukhtar J. Hasbi, Dr. Husaini M. Hasan, and Dr. Zaini Abdullah. The movement's revolt was actually sparked by Tiro's personal discontent with president Soeharto's decision to exclude him from involvement in oil exploration in the northern part of Aceh during the 1970s. Besides petroleum, a major likely motivating factor for the movement leadership is the discovery of natural gas in southern Aceh.²⁵

²³ Declaration of Independence of Aceh-Sumatra (*Aceh-Sumatra, December 4, 1976*). Available at: <http://acehnet.tripod.com/declare.htm>

²⁴ See Tiro, *The New Colonialism: Denominated Indonesians. A speech presented at UNPO General Assembly*. Available at: <http://acehnet.tripod.com/colonial.htm>

²⁵ See Al-Chaidar, *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka: Jihad Rakyat Aceh Mewujudkan Negara Islam*.

Discontent with the division of benefits from these energy resources between Aceh province and the national government (the chief mechanism for sharing this rich bounty across the archipelago) has served to inspire the GAM insurgency.²⁶ This growing discontent and the worsening economic condition of the people of Aceh give a great effect on the construction of the movement's framing strategy. Framing the issue of the huge exploitation of natural resources of Aceh becomes their strategic scheme to mobilize their adherents and participants and to legitimate their activities and existence.

The strategic role of the economic exploitation framing process can be broadly explicated by closely reviewing the ex rank-and-file combatants' personal accounts on the grievance. Rahman, for instance, pinpointed economic exploitation as influentially shaping his motivation of being engaged in the movement:

Everybody knows that Aceh is a rich province. We are rich in natural resources, especially the oil and natural gas. I just wondered, if it is, then why the people of Aceh were and are still poor. The people of Aceh never enjoyed the resources, which were largely extracted by the government to develop Jakarta, Java and other provinces. We were left poorly here with nothing to eat. Most of the state's money was actually made from Aceh. The people of Aceh would be rich if we were granted our own right of managing the resources. We would be living prosperously and abundantly if the resources were not exploited by the government. I did not like to say that they exploited the resources, but robbed and stole them from the hands of Acehnese with power. The people of Aceh should live most prosperously in Indonesia; however, the fact is always contradictory.²⁷

Tiro's arrival from the United States contributed to both the decline of Darul Islam rebellion and the rise of the GAM, which

²⁶ See Pane, *Sejarah Dan Kekuatan Gerakan Aceh Merdeka: Solusi, Harapan Dan Impian*, p. 23.

²⁷ Confidential interview, Aceh Besar, December 13, 2009.

actually represented a rejection of the older movement's religious framing process, mainly relying on Islamic tenets and doctrines. Although the apparent goal of the GAM is also to make Aceh an independent Islamic state, the rhetoric of the GAM focuses much more on the economic condition of the Acehnese, and the great wealth being extracted from the province and its coastal waters. Therefore, in contrast to the Darul Islam rebellion that frame themselves as a religious rebellion—or Jama'ah Islamiyah and Al-Qaeda—the predominant framing activities and efforts of the GAM are much more economic- the exploitation of natural resources of Aceh.

The appointment of Tiro as the leader of this movement brings about a lot of changes in their framing strategy. Tiro disregards his seniors' Islamic vision and proceeds to his secular ethno-nationalist vision. The economic issue predominantly motivates the movement to rebel although they apparently intend to establish an independent Islamic state. This secular framing strategy of economic exploitation is clearly stated on their primary document entitled *Why Aceh Wants Independence from the Colonialism of the Republic of Indonesia?*, which is prepared by the executive council of Free Aceh Movement- MP GAM-, August 1999 and on their Declaration of Independence (1976). On this document, it is stated clearly, "Aceh is also abundantly rich in natural resources: oil, 1.5 millions barrel per day; gas, 38% of world production-number one in the world; other product of Aceh include: gold, platinum, molybdenum, iron ore, tin, rubber, coffee, tea, and timber. All of the resources of Aceh are taken away to Jakarta and the people of Aceh are left with nothing".²⁸ This economic exploitation framing strategy is basically has long been issued and constructed by the Movement in their earlier coming

²⁸ 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. Available at: <http://acehnet.tripod.com/why.htm>

into being in 1976 on their Declaration of Independence. It is clearly stated on the text:

“during these last thirty years the people of Aceh, Sumatra, have witnessed how our fatherland has been exploited and driven into ruinous conditions by the Javanese Neo-Colonialist; they have stolen our properties; they have robbed us from our livelihood; they have abused the education of our children; they have exiled our leaders; they have put our people in chains of tyranny, poverty”.²⁹

It is widely recognized that Tiro endlessly and strongly exposes this framing strategy at any international forums and occasions or before the international communities. For example, in a lecture that Tiro gave at City University in London in 1984, he pointed out that, under the guise of development, the Javanese has exploited the resources of Aceh for the benefit of Java, which uses military force to maintain control of the outer island.³⁰ This framing effort or activity is intentionally conducted in order for mobilizing and garnering the international supports for the Movement’s rebellious struggle, especially from Western countries, rather than from the Moslem ones.

Moreover, Tiro went to school at the Perguruan Normal Islam. After Indonesian independence was proclaimed in 1949, Tiro studied law at the Universitas Islam Indonesia in Yogyakarta on the island of Java. Tiro completed his education by receiving a scholarship to Columbia University in 1950.³¹ Tiro’s education clearly establishes that he has only a sparse religious background, which might shape and influence his way of constructing his movement’s framing strategy, although he grew up in a typically-Islamic Aceh family. By contrast, Teungku Daud Beureuh, the leader of Darul Islam rebellion, was deeply immersed in the

²⁹ *Declaration of Independence of Aceh-Sumatra* (Aceh-Sumatra, December 4, 1976). Available at: <http://acehnet.tripod.com/declare.htm>

³⁰ Kell, *the Roots of Acehnese Rebellion 1989-1992*, p. 62.

³¹ See Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: the Darul Islam Indonesia*.

religious knowledge of Pesantren (Islamic traditional boarding schools), marking him as a charismatic religious leader. Therefore, Tiro spent most of his life considering secular ideas, rather than Islamic subjects.

Tiro's education, particularly concerning international law, contributes greatly to his thoughts about Aceh and justifications for its independence and/or self-determination, albeit relying on a static (and fallacious) concept of historical ethnic nationalism of Aceh. For example, Tiro insists that "there are no historical links whatever between Java and... outlying regions and [that] the different parts of Indonesia lack a sense of common destiny, even though the Dutch ruled much of the archipelago as a single colony". Principally on that basis, Tiro argues that the Indonesian union is illegitimate and that Acehnese and other regions, including Sunda, Sumatra, Papua, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi have a right to independence and/or self-determination. Moreover, Tiro claims that "Indonesia is... an unliquidated colonial empire, in which Java men substituted themselves for Dutch colonialists".³²

In Indonesian Nationalism, Tiro insists that the fundamental illegitimacy of the political entity known as the Netherlands East Indies was not ended simply by expelling the Dutch and naming the new state of Indonesia. Therefore, Tiro argues that Indonesia is neither an ethnological and anthropological unity, but a mere geographical expression. He further argues that the Dutch decision to handover their empire to the Javanese-Indonesia was a mere conspiracy between the Dutch and the Javanese. Consequently, Tiro believes that the islands of Kalimantan, Bali, Java, Aceh, Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Papua have a right to, and should, establish themselves as independent states.³³ Tiro's static view of Aceh history, described by Finngeir Hiorth as "romantic but somewhat

³² Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion 1989-1992*, p. 62.

³³ See Sulaiman, *Aceh Merdeka: Ideologi, Kepemimpinan dan Gerakan*.

distorted”,³⁴ is the basic framing strategy—as opposed to any concept of Islam—for GAM rebellion.

The focus of GAM’s appeal is indicated by its Declaration of Independence of Aceh-Sumatra, December 4, 1976. Overall, this text made no mention of the Islamic issues, nor did it open with Bismillah (in the name of God) or close with Takbir (God is the Greatest). It obviously illustrates the GAM’s civic-materialistic intentions and their framing strategy. According to Tiro, the primary reason the Declaration does not mention Islam, nor does the organization’s platform, is that GAM is a modern and secular movement, and not a terrorist (radical-extremist) one.³⁵

Not only does GAM focus its framing process—and its members—on secular issues, the organization has often been emphasizing the positively anti-religious framing activities and efforts. Tiro frequently insists that the GAM is not a God-based movement, but is purely for the freedom of Aceh; as the soil of Aceh, says Tiro, belongs to the people of Aceh, not God, only the people of Aceh can determine their fates. In support of his opposition to Islam, Tiro has used as models for the future of Aceh such developed and relatively secular countries as the U.S.S.R., United States, United Kingdom, and Germany.³⁶ Furthermore, as an avowedly nationalist movement, GAM has become allied with several Christian separatist movements, including Republik Maluku Selatan (Republic of South Maluku), led by Johannes Alvarez Manusama, and the Fretelin group in East Timor.³⁷

However, the Aceh’s strong Islamic tradition and culture often put GAM in a big dilemma and make its leaders practically

³⁴ Kell, *The Roots of Acehese rebellion 1989-1992*, p. 63.

³⁵ See Sulaiman, *Aceh Merdeka: Ideologi, Kepemimpinan dan Gerakan* and Pane, *Sejarah Dan Kekuatan Gerakan Aceh Merdeka: Solusi, Harapan Dan Impian*, p. 23.

³⁶ *Jihad, Pemikiran-Pemikiran Politik Hasan Tiro Dalam Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, p. 40.

³⁷ See Al-Chaidar, *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka: Jihad Rakyat Aceh Mewujudkan Negara Islam*.

ambiguous and double-standard in dealing with Islam on the ground. As Schulze argued, “Islam has always been in integral part of GAM’s ideology, but merely as a reflection of Acehese identity and culture rather than Islamist political aspirations. It must be pointed out, however, that GAM has allowed for different emphases on Islam within its ranks. In the 1970s, 1980 and to lesser extent the 1990s, GAM’s vision for an independent Aceh was articulated as the revival of the Sultanate of Aceh, re-establishing the historic Islamic State. With the Stavanger Declaration of July 2002, this was changed to a democratic system...GAM’s ambiguity on Islam is partially explained by the way in which Islam as religion and culture inextricably intertwined with Acehese identity and heritage”.³⁸

GAM leaders often publicly declare that their struggle is not about and for Islam; however, Islam is extensively exploited as a strategic means for mobilizing Acehese since it strongly reflects the Acehese’s culture and identity. In this regards, Jusuf Kalla, the former vice president of Indonesia and the major initiator of the Helsinki peace talks, asserted that “GAM ideology was not based on Islam. The use of Islam flag was simply a tactic of the rebellion, not the ideology of the rebellion”.³⁹ GAM then adopts the cultural Islam, but eliminates the political one. The GAM’s ambiguity is often expressed in the gap between the GAM elites’ and rank-and-file combatants’ motivations for joining the movement, which will be deeply discussed in the following chapters of the dissertation.

³⁸ See Kirsten E. Schulze, 2004, *The Free Aceh Movement (GAM): Anatomy of a Separatist Organization*. In *Policy Studies 2*, East West Center, Washington. Retrieved from: <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/PS002.pdf>, on July 06, 2010. See also Michelle L. Ross, 2005, *Resources and Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia*. In Collier, P. & Sambanis, N. (eds.). *Understanding Civil War: Evidence And Analysis* (pp. 35-58). Washington: The World Bank.

³⁹ Hamid Awaluddin, 2009, *Peace in Aceh: Notes on The Peace Process between the Republic of Indonesia and the Aceh Freedom Movement (GAM) in Helsinki*. Jakarta: CSIS, p. 141.

The central government often insists that the conflict can be resolved by granting Aceh “special autonomy,” a program comprised of imposing Syariah Islam (Islamic Law) on the province, and thereby helping to quell the regional dissatisfaction. However, such a government’s claim is often publicly refuted by GAM leaders, insisting that GAM opposes the imposition of Syariah Islam on Aceh,⁴⁰ and favors instead a modern legal system that is explicitly not based on Syariah Islam. As Malik Mahmud,⁴¹ one of the GAM top leaders and Helsinki peace talks negotiators, said that the current application of Syariah Islam is not the main priority of GAM for its struggle is not based on religion. It is the central government’s political gift. Another GAM negotiator, Nur Djuli, also argued during the Helsinki peace talks in 2005 that “the existing legislation does in no way reflect the aspirations of the Acehnese people. Syariah Law is not our aspirations”.⁴²

However, on the ground and mass-level, the GAM leaders through their sophisticated rhetoric endlessly framed the Islamic Syariah as one of their major goals. The effect of this ambiguous framing strategy on the mobilization of Acehnese people is relatively tremendous. For instance, Muntasir, an ex rank-and-file combatant residing in Biereun Regency, for instance, did not deny that Islam was one of his important motivations of his engagement in GAM. As he broadly shared:

The application of Syariah Islam in Aceh was one of our primary goals of struggling. You know that Acehnese are religious people and the Ulama’ (religious leaders) have been playing some important roles in the society. So, how was our struggle if not for Islam? Islam is deeply imprinted in the hearts of Acehnese and strongly tied to our culture and tradition. Aceh was also an Islamic kingdom. During the conflict, I often wished that the

⁴⁰ Damien Kingsbury, 2007, *The Free Aceh Movement: Islam and democratization*. In *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 37, No. pp. 166-189.

⁴¹ See detiknews.com, August 14, 2006.

⁴² Hamid Awaluddin, *ibid.*, p. 154.

Syariah Law would be properly applied in Aceh, through which the people of Aceh would regain their historical victories and prosperity.⁴³

The effect of Islam on the combatants' motivations for joining the movement is easily identified by reviewing Muntasir's narrative. The motivations were largely expressed in the form of imposing Syariah Law in Aceh, which was often seen as a concrete manifestation of Islamic religiosity. For Muntasir and other ex rank-and-file combatants, the application of Syariah Law was not only meant as the nostalgic memory of the Aceh Kingdom, but also importantly believed as a bottom line for building a victorious and prosperous Aceh.

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.⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶

More importantly, while keeping the basic framing strategy above alive, GAM constructs a new framing strategy of human right violation in late 1990s following the dynamic of the internal conflict and the external global political change. As Jusuf Kalla said, GAM "changed their revolutionary ideology from an ideology

⁴³ Confidential interview, Biereun, November 12, 2009.

⁴⁴ Kirsten E. Schulze, 2004, *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁵ Interview, Banda Aceh, October 9, 2009.

⁴⁶ Interview, Sinkil, November 27, 2009.

and orientation of liberation to democracy and human rights in the early 1990s. This was in line with the changes in global politics at the time when east European countries collapsed. The bipolar world fell apart".⁴⁷ The end of Cold War has been the critical factor of the internationalizing democratization and modernization issues. GAM then quickly responds the geopolitical change by primarily making some ideological adjustments, framing itself as a western oriented organization. Also in a response to the global change, GAM "had decided to distance itself from Libya over concern for being labeled as a terrorist organization".⁴⁸

It is widely known that the Government of Indonesia declared Aceh as a Military Operation Area (DOM) during 1989-1999. For the purpose of the military operation, the Indonesian regime immediately sent 15 000 Special Forces (Kopassus). This declaration of DOM obviously serves as the regime's strategy to abolish the movement. As reported by the movement's primary document entitled *Why Aceh Wants Independence from the Colonialism of the Republic of Indonesia?*, an estimated 25 000 innocent Acehnese lost their lives in military custody, in hidden mass graves, or in secret concentration camps. Responding to these political killings, disappearances and arrests by the Special Forces, the movement declares a new framing strategy of human right violation by the Special Forces. As it is clearly stated on the document (1999):

"Violence is certainly an important part of the short history of Indonesia. The Indonesian government has systematically violated fundamental human rights for over 20 years and

⁴⁷ Hamid Awaluddin, *ibid.*, p. 6; See also H. Djalal & D.S. Djalal, 2006, *Seeking lasting peace in Aceh. Jakarta: Center for Strategic and International Studies*, p. 30; E.F. Drexler, 2008, *Aceh, Indonesia: Securing The Insecure State*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 29; M.I. Sulaiman, 2000, *Aceh Merdeka: Ideology, Kepemimpinan, Dan Gerakan*. Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, p. 27.

⁴⁸ Damien Kingsbury, 2006, *Peace In Aceh: A Personal Account Of The Helsinki Peace Process*. Singapore: Equinox Publishing, p. 24.

continues to do so with impunity. Reports of human rights violations in Aceh began to appear intermittently in the national and international press during 1990 Amnesty International".⁴⁹

The movement's secular ethno-nationalist framing process has given a very significant effect of the composition and characteristic of their adherents and participants. Islam doesn't play a dominant role in motivating them to get involved in this movement. It is much more likely that social and economic conditions play more significant part in determining their involvement. It has seemed that most of the GAM's members are Acehnese who feel frustrated and deprived because they are not employed in the gas industry in northern Aceh.⁵⁰ For example, Kell stated that the "trial data shows that the GAM's operational group consisted of people from lower social strata, in the main with poor educational backgrounds, and the guerilla force itself was made up largely of unemployed young men, most of them from peasant families".⁵¹

On the other hand, the GAM's secular ethno-nationalist framing process—initially intended to win its broad support—has paradoxically proved nearly unproductive to the movement's membership extension since the influence of the Ulama' (religious leaders) of Aceh rivals or exceeds that of the government.⁵² In a comparison, the religious framing process of the Darul Islam rebellion, seeking to transform the entire Indonesian archipelago into an Islamic republic governed by Syariah Islam, or Islamic Law, strongly contributes to the mobilization of their adherents and participants and significant indigenous support in Aceh. However,

⁴⁹ MP Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, 1999, *Why Aceh Wants Independence From Colonialism of The Republic of Indonesia*. A document prepared by the Executive Council of the Free Aceh Movement. Available at: <http://acehnet.tripod.com/why.htm>

⁵⁰ See Nurhasim, M., Patji, A. R., Alihar, F., Lamijo, *Konflik Aceh: Analisis Atas Sebab-Sebab Konflik, Actor Konflik, Kepentingan dan Upaya Penyelesaian*.

⁵¹ Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion 1989-1992*, p. 69.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 62.

after a few years, the repressive strategy applied by the New Order regime to abolish the movement has been counterproductive. The violent way of terrorizing, intimidation and kidnapping of the people of Aceh who are charged of being sympathizers and adherents of the movement contributes to the significantly increasing support for the movement. Even worst, the repressive method has been the main cause of the increasing sense of anti-Jakarta among the people of Aceh.⁵³

The logical consequence of the secular framing strategy adopted by GAM has been also in the form of the conceptual change, not the method, of GAM's taxation that mainly serves as one of GAM's sources of revenue. In order to finance its activities, as Schulze highlighted, GAM often relies on three sources of revenue: first, taxation/extortion; second, foreign donations; and third, crime, drugs and kidnapping. Except the second, both the first and the third "directly targeted the oil industry, third party contractors, and the population adjacent to the Arun Field clusters. GAM levied an Aceh State tax or pajak nanggroe on all elements of society".⁵⁴ However, the concept of pajak nanggroe, rather than infaq, is applied in accordance with GAM's secular ethno-civic framing strategy. As senior GAM negotiator, Sofyan Ibrahim Tiba, argued:

Pajak nanggroe is not new. It has been collected since GAM was established by Tiro and it is based on Islam. In Islam if there is a struggle there is infaq. But now that Aceh is no longer struggling for an Islamic State, it is called pajak nanggroe. It was changed from infaq to pajak nanggroe. But it has only recently become an issue because the Indonesian Government has made it an issue.

⁵³ See Pane, *Sejarah dan kekuatan Gerakan Aceh Merdeka: solusi, harapan dan impian*, p. 23.

⁵⁴ Kirsten E. Schulze, 2007, *The conflict in Aceh: struggle over oil?* In Kaldor, W. et al. (eds.). *Oil wars*. Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, p. 208; see also Edward Aspinall, 2009, *Combatants To Contractors: The Political Economy of Peace In Aceh*. In *Journal of Indonesia*, Vol. 87, April 2009, pp. 1.-34. Cornell Southeast Asia Program, pp. 14-15.

The Indonesian Government has the right to tax and so does GAM. But the Acehnese do not object to our taxes while they do object to paying taxes to Indonesia, because that money is then used to send troops and kill them while we use the tax to defend them.⁵⁵

The concept of *infaq* is further transformed by GAM into another concept of *pajak nanggroe*, following the discontinued Islamic vision of GAM, since *infaq* is deemed as a typical Islamic concept of taxation.

Conclusion

The GAM's texts, discourses and actions represent its primary framing strategy that is chiefly characterized by the secular vision, rather than by the religious one. Such a framing strategy further functions as the GAM's "interpretive schemata" for making sense and interpreting its struggle for independence. The way GAM frames its self contributes to the formation of its character, civil legitimacy, existence and foundational structure, which is important for the production of its collective consciousness and action mobilization.

The long history of profound injustice and violence and disputes over the exploitation of natural resources and the transformation of a socially constructed religious fight into a secular ethno-nationalist one serve as the main elements of the GAM's framing process. Moreover, GAM also attaches and amplifies the universal civic values of self-determination and human right, rather than the Islamic values. One reason why the movement is frequently seen in religious terms might be that the Indonesian government intentionally and ceaselessly frames the war as a religious war and persistently takes actions that make the fighting appear to be Islamic. The Indonesian government's

⁵⁵ In Kirsten E. Schulze, 2007, *ibid.*, p. 208.

construction of framing strategy is seemingly intended to discredit GAM, especially following the global dynamic of terrorism.

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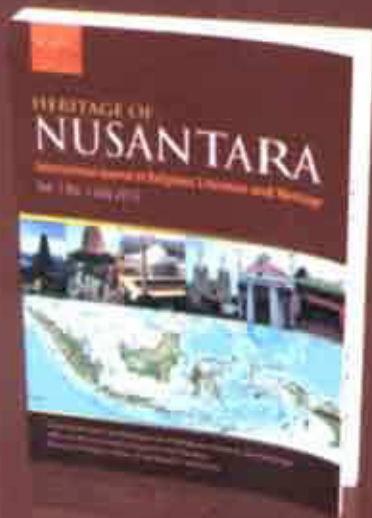
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