

Reproduction of Aceh Nationalism Ideology Post-GAM Cleavage in Aceh Elections Arena

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ABSTRACT

Post-conflict of Aceh, The Free Aceh Movement or known as GAM has transformed its ideology from the Aceh Nationalism-Self Determination Ideology to the Aceh Nationalism-Self Government Ideology. GAM was given the opportunity to fight in the local political arena in Aceh, starting from the 2006, 2012 to 2017 regional elections. The peak of fragmentation was in the 2017 elections marked by the presence of two local parties formed by GAM namely the *Partai Aceh (PA)* and the *Partai Nanggroe Aceh (PNA)*. Each faction builds affiliations with national parties to win the regional elections in Aceh with all its interests. After GAM continued to be divided into factions and affiliated with national parties, of course, this had an influence on the existence of GAM itself. This article aims to describe that why and how did GAM reproduct its ideology. To describe this research questions, the researcher uses Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony to explain how GAM reproduction its ideology again. This study uses qualitative research with data collection techniques are in-depth interviews and documentation. The informants were civil GAM figures and GAM combatants who were members of the *Partai Aceh* and the *Partai Nanggroe Aceh*. The results of the study indicate that GAM currently wants its existence to be recognized even though it is in factions, both within the *Partai Aceh* and *Partai Nanggroe Aceh*. Reproduction ideology becomes very important, considering that nowadays it is difficult to avoid affiliation with national parties. These local party cadres have also joined with national parties so that they can also compete in national legislative elections. The current ideological reconstruction is carried out with symbols, such as the Haul Hasan Tiro memorial, the Helsinki MoU commemoration, the GAM anniversary commemoration and discussing the issue of flags and symbols agasin.

Keywords: *GAM ideological reproduction, GAM cleavage, Aceh Election*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Free Aceh Movement or known as GAM was previously a banned group or organization in Indonesia that had built a resistance movement from 1976 to 2005. GAM is a separatist group that wants to break away from the Republic of Indonesia. GAM was founded in 1976, on December 4, by Hasan Tiro on Halimun Mountain in the interior of Pidie District, Aceh Province [1]. The goal of this research is to provide an overview of GAM's journey as a resistance group as its ideology shifted from Aceh Nationalism-Self Determination to post-peace Aceh Nationalism-Self Government, and then how GAM was when it was in the ideology of Aceh Nationalism-Self Government.

GAM is one of Indonesia's most tenacious resistance movements fighting for Aceh's independence. Aceh, according to GAM, is not an Indonesian territory;

however, Aceh has its own history and government, and the Dutch, as colonizers, handed over Aceh to Indonesia. According to GAM, the Aceh war between the Netherlands and Aceh has not ended, and the Netherlands has not revoked its war declaration against Aceh. GAM regarded Indonesia as a new colonizer after the Dutch based on this.

This ideology served as the foundation for Hasan Tiro's GAM struggle. GAM has created the Aceh Nationalism ideology in order to fight the Indonesian government. Aceh Nationalism seeks to distance itself from the Indonesian government, which was built through a history of struggle. Sulthan Iskandar Muda's era is history and an important symbol in the GAM struggle during the Aceh conflict. Sulthan Iskandar Muda is regarded as the ruler who brought Aceh to a glorious and sovereign era in the past.

Following the peace, GAM transitioned from a resistance movement to a political movement in Aceh's space of democracy and local politics. Following the peace, GAM's ideology shifted from Aceh Nationalism-Self Determination to Aceh Nationalism Self Government. After GAM was founded on the ideology of Aceh Nationalism Self Government, it created factions or variants and divisions within GAM, which has had an impact on the GAM ideology crisis.

This article investigates why and how GAM reproduced its ideology following the peace in Aceh. This research is intriguing to investigate because it maps how GAM's ideology shifts to how and why GAM reproduces its ideology after the peace. There have previously been numerous studies on GAM, as well as research on the Acehnese diaspora (GAM) abroad [2], [3], the post-peace transformation of GAM [4], [5], [6], [7], [8], [9], [10], the democratization process in Aceh [11]–[14], [15], [16], [17], debates and the process of the created of the Aceh Party (*Partai Aceh*) [18], [19], the emergence of ideological variants in post-peace Aceh [20], the emergence of factions within the GAM [21].

Previous research has provided a map of GAM's journey in post-peace Aceh, from conflict and politics to the formation of factions or variants within GAM. GAM's political journey has led to divisions, which have an impact on GAM's ideological shift. This study seeks to uncover how and why GAM reproduced its post-peace ideology, particularly after GAM experienced ideological divisions from the 2006 elections, 2012 to 2017, as well as the 2009 legislative elections, 2014, and 2019. Following a review of previous research, it appears that studies on the reproduction of GAM's ideology remain elusive, so the researcher wishes to reveal how and why GAM reproduces its ideology in the space of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Observing the journey of GAM is important, as a resistance group that was able to survive almost 30 years against the Indonesian government, then chose to make peace with the Indonesian government on August 15, 2005.

2. METHOD

This study employs qualitative research techniques for data collection, such as in-depth interviews and documentation [22]. The informants are civil GAM figures as well as GAM combatants from the Aceh Party (*Partai Aceh/PA*) and Aceh Nanggroe Party (*Partai Nanggroe Aceh/PNA*). The criteria for informants were chosen because both the Aceh Party (*Partai Aceh*) and the Aceh Nanggroe Party (*Partai Nanggroe Aceh/PNA*) are strong and continue to fight in

Aceh's regional and legislative elections, as well as each of these local parties having a strong base of supporters.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. GAM Internal Dynamics

GAM was allowed to fight in Aceh local politics after the peace agreement, known as the Helsinki MoU, was signed on August 15, 2005. GAM evolved from a resistance movement against the Indonesian government into a political movement in space as a result of the implications of the peace agreement. The Republic of Indonesia is a unitary state. GAM, which previously held the Aceh Nationalism-Self Determination ideology, now holds the Aceh Nationalism-Self Government ideology.

The first GAM contestation was in the 2006 regional elections. GAM did not yet have a local political party at the time, so it was allowed to fight through independent channels under the Helsinki peace treaty. The 2006 regional elections harmed GAM on one side, and this group was divided into factions. The factions in the 2006 regional elections had not yet formed a local party, and the group was divided by ideological differences. The dynamics of the 2006 local elections resulted in the formation of two groups: the young GAM group and the old GAM group. Young GAM groups have differing opinions on who should be the governor and deputy governor of Aceh, and they do not agree with the older GAM groups' unilateral decision. Young GAM groups want deliberation in determining governor and deputy governor candidates; decisions on governor and deputy governor candidates should not be made in an authoritarian manner. The young GAM group could not agree on Humam Hamid's nomination, which was paired with Hasbi Abdullah, let alone being affiliated with the national party, the United Development Party. Humam Hamid was not from the GAM circle for the young GAM group, whereas Hasbi Abdullah was affiliated with GAM but was not well known among GAM. The nominations for governor and deputy governor were thought to have been discussed by the old GAM group while they were in Stockholm, Sweden. Similarly, with the young GAM group, the selection of candidates has been discussed in Stockholm, Sweden, with the requirement that the nomination come from GAM itself.

At the conclusion of this internal dynamic, young GAM and old GAM convened to select a candidate for the 2006 regional election. Despite the fact that he was not present at the meeting, the candidate, Nashiruddin bin Ahmad, was promoted as a result of this meeting. However, because Nashiruddin was unwilling to be nominated for governor, he chose to resign and concentrate on the business sector in Bireuen

Regency, Aceh. In this case, the young GAM requested a re-meeting, but the old GAM refused and reverted to the original plan of nominating Humam Hamid as a partner with Hasbi Abdullah.

GAM was in a difficult position at the time, and the highest GAM leader, Malik Mahmud, agreed to hold a re-meeting, but the old GAM disagreed. At the end of this dynamic, the highest GAM leadership made the decision that the highest GAM leadership did not support any group, and that each group is welcome to compete in the 2006 regional election. Muzakkir Manaf's position as GAM (KPA) commander stated that he was neutral in the 2006 regional election, despite supporting the old GAM to win Humam Hamid.

At the end of this dynamic, the young GAM group, namely Irwandi Yusuf and Muhammad Nazar, chose to run independently without the support of a political party. Muhammad Nazar is a SIRA (Aceh Referendum Information Center) figure who spoke at the Aceh referendum in 1999, so he is well-known in Aceh's grassroots community. Irwandi Yusuf and Muhammad Nazar won the 2006 regional elections with 38.20 percent of the vote, while Humam Hamid and Hasbi Abdullah received 16.62 percent of the vote.

The battle between the young GAM groups and the older GAM groups is intensifying in the 2012 election. Before the 2012 elections, the old GAM and young GAM groups united to form a local party, the *Partai Aceh*, to prepare for the 2009 legislative elections. However, during the nominations for governor and deputy governor in the 2012 regional elections, old GAM and young GAM experienced divisions once again. The *Partai Aceh* did the same thing, deciding the candidates for governor and deputy governor unilaterally, and Irwandi Yusuf, the incumbent, was not nominated (*Partai Aceh*). The old GAM group nominated Zaini Abdullah and Muzakkir Manaf as governor and deputy governor, respectively. At the end of this dynamic, Irwandi Yusuf, a young GAM, was re-elected to run for governor and chose to work with Muhyan Yunan. Muhammad Nazar, who had previously served as Irwandi Yusuf's deputy in 2006, has split to run for governor.

Muhyan Yunan was chosen as a candidate for deputy governor in the 2012 regional elections by Irwandi Yusuf as part of a political strategy to attract voters from Central Aceh District, Bener Meriah District, Gayo Lues District, and Southeast Aceh District. Muhyan Yunan is a Gayo community leader who is not affiliated with GAM. Gayo is an ethnic minority in Aceh with a distinct culture and language from the Acehnese people as a whole. The old GAM group won the 2012 regional head election with 55.75

percent of the vote, while the incumbent, Irwandi Yusuf, received 29.18 percent of the vote. Irwandi Yusuf's position is considered a group that betrayed GAM. Irwandi Yusuf was disobedient and submissive to the orders of the *Wali Neugara*, so that his supporters actually maneuvered to the old GAM group in the previous 2006 election period. The old GAM group's victory in the 2012 election period was due to GAM power at the grassroots or combatant level being controlled by the old GAM. GAM at the grassroots level, of course, reports to Muzakkir Manaf, the GAM commander and also the *Partai Aceh* chairman. Muzakkir Manaf is an Aceh deputy governor candidate who is running alongside Zaini Abdullah for Aceh governor in the 2012 regional election.

The 2017 election was the culmination of Aceh's fragmented local political battles, particularly nominations for governor and deputy governor. If it is observed that GAM continues to experience divisions in the 2017 elections, the presence of an independent figure, namely Zaini Abdullah who was not re-nominated by the *Partai Aceh*, Muzakkir Manaf as his deputy in the 2012 period advanced as an *Partai Aceh* candidate for governor. Zakaria Saman is in the same boat; he left the *Partai Aceh* management to run as an independent candidate for governor.

During the 2017 election season, the *Partai Aceh* began to form a national alliance with the *Partai Gerindra* (*Gerakan Indonesia Raya*). Muzakkir Manaf, a candidate for governor from the *Partai Aceh* (PA), was paired with T.A. Khalid as the *Partai Gerindra* deputy governor. One strategy for placing *Partai Aceh* (PA) cadres at the national level through the *Partai Gerindra* is affiliation with national parties. The *Partai Gerindra*, on the other hand, is interested in gaining votes from Aceh province voters in the 2019 presidential election. This assumption is supported by the fact that the *Partai Gerindra* received 2,400,746 votes in Aceh in the 2019 presidential election, compared to 404,188 votes for the *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan* (PDIP). Prabowo Subianto is the *Partai Gerindra* presidential candidate, while Joko Widodo is the PDIP's.

The KPA (*Komite Peralihan Aceh/Aceh Transitional Committee*) or a grassroots GAM comprised of former GAM combatants can work full-time to win the 2019 presidential election. KPA was formed following the peace in Aceh in order to easily control former GAM combatants. KPA is the foundation of the current *Partai Aceh*, which wields significant power for GAM after winning regional elections in Aceh in 2012. In the 2006 regional elections, the KPA also worked to win Irwandi Yusuf, though some of its

members remained loyal to the old GAM group at the time.

GAM was formed in the 2017 election as a result of *KPA's* failure to win the Aceh election. According to the author, there was a crisis of public trust in the *Partai Aceh*, which resulted in Irwandi Yusuf and Nova Iriansyah winning the 2017 election. Irwandi Yusuf advanced in the 2017 election through a local party, the *Partai Nanggroe Aceh*, in tandem with Nova Iriansyah from the national party, the *Partai Demokrat*. Interestingly, in the 2017 election period, young GAM groups advanced through the *Partai Nanggroe Aceh (PNA)*, whereas in the 2012 and 2006 elections, young GAM groups advanced through an independent path. Young GAM groups began to affiliate with the National Party, namely The *Partai Demokrat*, through the *Partai Nanggroe Aceh (PNA)*, and are supported by several other national parties, namely the *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB)* and the *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan (PDI-P)*.

It is interesting to note that among the young GAM group affiliated with the *Partai Demokrat*, Acehnese people have a high level of trust in the *Partai Demokrat*. The *Partai Demokrat* represents Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to the people of Aceh (SBY). Aceh peace was realized during the era of SBY's leadership as president of the Republic of Indonesia and his deputy Jusuf Kalla, who gave meaning to the people of Aceh (JK). SBY became a symbol of peace for Aceh, despite the fact that he recognized JK's importance in the Aceh peace process. The *Partai Nanggroe Aceh* affiliation's with the *PDI-P* is significant, given that the *PDI-P* is one of the national parties in power and is expected to win the presidential election in 2019. As a result, the *PDI-P* was victorious and reclaimed control of the Republican presidential nomination. Indonesia, with incumbent Joko Widodo. The strategies employed by young GAM are deemed appropriate, as are the methods by which it builds affiliation with national parties, as well as the programs offered, which are welfare-based and pro-people, as demonstrated during the 2006 election period.

3.1.1. Genealogy and GAM ideological Cleavage

The dynamics of local politics between young GAM and old GAM groups, which began in 2006, 2012 to 2017 regional elections, have brought GAM to a point of fragmentation in the 2017 regional elections. This division caused GAM's ideology to shift and even split into two variants of GAM ideology. Since the 2006 regional elections, 2012 to 2017, the author observes the formation of ideological variants, namely Conservative Aceh Nationalism, which tends to be embraced by old

GAM groups, and Moderate Aceh Nationalism, which tends to be embraced by young GAM groups, though this ideology can be soft at times.

GAM's ideology is a continuation of the *DI/TII (Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia/Army Islam Indonesia)* movement, which was started in Aceh in 1955 by Daud Beureueuh, who declared his intention to join Kartosuwirjo's *DI/TII* movement in West Java. Daud Beureueuh felt betrayed by Soekarno as President of the Republic of Indonesia because he did not provide Islamic Sharia for Aceh and also merged Aceh Province with North Sumatra, so he mobilized this movement.

Hasan Tiro, who founded GAM in 1976, had a close relationship with Daud Beureueuh, so GAM is linked to *DI/TII* Daud Beureueuh, though the pattern of movement differs slightly. *DI/TII* considers itself Indonesian nationally and seeks Islamic Sharia for Aceh in accordance with Soekarno's promise when inviting Aceh to join the Republic of Indonesia. Meanwhile, Hasan Tiro advocated for Aceh's independence from the Republic of Indonesia. Daud Beureueuh supported GAM because he believed it would establish Islamic Sharia. Several *DI/TII* figures were also involved in GAM, including Ilyas Leubee (GAM's Minister of Justice) and Daud Paneuk (Commander of the Armed Forces of GAM) [23].

The Hasan Tiro movement made no direct mention of Islamic law, but if the ideals of an independent Aceh are realized, Islamic law will follow. In his movement, Hasan Tiro developed the ideology of Aceh Nationalism, instilling the concepts of "knowing oneself" (*turi droe*; Acehnese), the "best" nation (*teuleubeeh*; Acehnese). This nationalism ideology is still being developed in Acehnese society in order to gain support from the larger community. The symbols of "Aceh," the GAM flag, the old Aceh flag, the GAM symbol, and the glorious history of the Acehnese kingdom, have continued to campaign for support from the larger community.

Interestingly, Hasan Tiro's Aceh Nationalism ideology used the concept of hegemony and ideology as a tool, so that the wider community was hegemonized and accepted that ideology, and the Republic of Indonesia received broad support for independence. Hasan Tiro did not dominate the people of Aceh, but he used a gentle method to influence them, namely through hegemony when quoting Antonio Gramsci's concept so that people are "aware" to support independence, even though this is known as false or pseudo consciousness in Antonio Gramsci's concept [24].

Following the peace, the ideology of Aceh Nationalism was split into two variants, namely Conservative Aceh Nationalism and Moderate Aceh

Nationalism, as seen in Aceh election contestation from the 2006 regional elections to 2017. The Partai Aceh (old GAM) played the Conservative Aceh Nationalism variant, work programs when he was in power tended to be directed at symbolic things, and Acehnese, development programs tended to be neglected. Even if you listen to political campaigns and debates, the group's work program does not ignore social development, but in the course of its administration, it tends to be directed at symbolic and Acehnese things.

Meanwhile, the *Partai Nanggroe Aceh* represents the Moderate Aceh Nationalism variant (young GAM). When he was in power, he directed work programs toward social development issues such as the Aceh Health Insurance (*JKA/Jaminan Kesehatan Aceh*), scholarship programs for Acehnese students, the construction of poor-houses, and the establishment of Islamic boarding schools. Work programs leading to symbols and Acehnese are not prioritized. Social development programs are far more important to the moderate group than symbolic matters. Aceh's nationalism is not only a symbolic issue; it is also an issue of post-peace community welfare.

3.1.1.1. *Reproduction of GAM's ideology*

GAM's ideological division into factions or variants of Conservative Aceh Nationalism and Moderate Aceh Nationalism has resulted in an ideological crisis. GAM's ideological divisions have harmed the organization's future in Aceh. GAM won three regional elections in Aceh, albeit in different forms. GAM leaders are currently re-discussing reuniting groups that have been divided into variants. GAM is concerned that they will lose their place in Aceh's local political struggle, as well as recognition from the Acehnese people, one day.

These divisions are expected to reoccur if GAM is unable to manage its internal group, especially now that GAM, through its variants, is affiliated with national parties that are, of course, ideologically opposed. Divisions within political parties are common in a democracy, but if these divisions were linked to GAM, the situation would be different. GAM does not want its group to be recognized by the Acehnese people because the struggle for GAM has not ended, despite the fact that its ideology has shifted from Aceh Nationalism-Self Determination to Aceh Nationalism-Self Government.

In response to these concerns, GAM is currently attempting to reproduce its ideology through commemorations such as the Haul Hasan Tiro commemoration, the Helsinki MoU commemoration, the GAM anniversary celebration, and a re-debate on

the issue of flags and symbols. Ideology reproduction is carried out in a hegemonic rather than dominant manner in the hope that the wider community will accept GAM's ideology within the space of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Every year, these celebrations are officially commemorated, and various GAM groups, both conservative and moderate variants, as well as groups outside of that variant, attend. These celebrations are a form of reproduction of GAM's ideology after the peace, in order for them to retain a place and recognition in the larger community.

The issue of the Acehnese flag and symbol is still pending, and there is a dispute between the central government and the Aceh government during the period when the conservative GAM group, namely the *Partai Aceh*, was in power. During the moderate GAM group's period of power, namely the *Partai Nanggroe Aceh*, the issues of the Aceh flag and symbol seemed to be dimming and did not become an interesting issue for the Aceh government, especially now that the 2017 Aceh governor stumbled on a corruption case, so his position was replaced by the deputy governor, Nova Iriansyah, from *Partai Demokrat* as a national party.

GAM representatives are still debating the Acehnese flag and symbol. It is hopeful that the Aceh flag and symbol will be approved by the central government. The central government rejected the Aceh flag and symbol because they were thought to be similar to the GAM flag and symbol, namely the *Bulan Bintang* flag and *Buraq Singa* Symbol. Meanwhile, GAM believes that the flag and symbol will be realized immediately because it is a manifestation of the Helsinki MoU's implementation. These symbols are important for GAM because, in addition to GAM celebrations, they are a source of strength for GAM because they will continue to be recognized by the Acehnese community at large socially and politically, even if these symbols will be modified to be accepted by the Acehnese people in general.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study provides an overview of how GAM's ideology shifts, as well as why and how GAM's ideology can be reproduced. GAM's relationship with *DI/TII*, which shifts the ideology of Aceh Nationalism-Self-Determination to the post-peaceful ideology of Aceh Nationalism Self-Government. Following the peace, GAM experienced ideological divisions, including Conservative Aceh Nationalism and Moderate Aceh Nationalism, as evidenced by the presence of two local parties, the *Partai Aceh* and the *Partai Nanggroe Aceh*. Following this split, GAM figures outside the party attempted to recreate their ideology and discussed reuniting groups that had been split due to contestations

in Aceh's regional and legislative elections. Each group, in addition to groups in local parties, continues to reproduce GAM ideology in its own perspective, both in GAM celebrations and in the form of GAM symbols. Ideological reproduction is carried out so that GAM can continue to be recognized and gain a place in the local Aceh political struggle.

Reproduction of ideology is important for GAM, but if GAM cannot manage its internal group, GAM's ideology will continue to shift and new ideological variants will emerge, threatening GAM's survival. The emergence of new variants jeopardizes the implementation of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding, which has yet to be fully implemented. Whether or not it is currently recognized, GAM is a group that is working to ensure that the central government fully implements the Helsinki MoU in Aceh.

AUTHOR' CONTRIBUTION

The first author contributes as a data collector, presents data and data analysis, while the second and third authors analyze the field findings and relate them to the theory used so that the analysis is well structured. Furthermore, this article was written and discussed together for the perfection of its contents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article is part of a dissertation as a requirement to complete a doctoral degree in Sociology at the Department of Sociology, Universitas Gadjah Mada. I thank the promoter team, Prof. Dr. Heru Nugroho and Dr. Arie Sujito who has given me a lot of guidance. I also thank LPDP (BUDI DN) as a scholarship provider who has supported the smooth running of my studies.

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