

GAM and Social Transformation; from A Rebellion into A Political Movement

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Abstract—In 1976 the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) declared as a form of protest against “Indonesia” neo-colonialism which was considered to have exploited Aceh. Since that time then, GAM has become a platform for movement and rebellion for the majority of Acehnese to demand independence. In 2005 after the Tsunami disaster struck Aceh, the dispute between GAM and the Indonesian Government found a meeting point with the signing of the Helsinki MoU and at the same time became a door to peace in Aceh after almost 30 years of conflict. Post the MoU, GAM no longer raised weapons, but his struggle still alive and GAM as a social-political movement still exist, because the Helsinki MoU only disperse the force of their armed, while the ideas, structure, and actors transformed in the form of a political movement.

Keywords—Aceh, GAM; political movement; transformation

I. INTRODUCTION

Various momentum and events that took place in Aceh gave birth to many works and studies on Aceh. It is not difficult to find literature that talks about Aceh. As an area that was first embraced by Islam, Aceh became the basis for the study of the development of Islam in the archipelago. The triumph and sophistication of the kingdom of Aceh is also an interesting study in the realm of history. Until then the resilience and resistance of the Acehnese people against the Dutch in the era of colonialism also became an interesting study.

The rebellion against the Indonesian government of which emerged after the independence of Indonesia, the upheaval of DI/TII and the movement free Aceh brought a considerable impact on the community, especially when the determination of Aceh as a Military Operations Area (DOM). The conflict study was quite adequate about the rebellion of Aceh at that time. Belonging to the conflict resolution process, starting from the momentum of the referendum, the implementation of Islamic law, to the peace agreement reached in 2005 after the Tsunami. After the Tsunami, the study of Aceh became widespread, not only about the conflict but also about Tsunami, refugees, Islamic law, gender issues, reconstruction, and rehabilitation.

After the peace agreement was signed, Aceh's socio-political dynamics changed significantly. The MoU and the UUPA have changed the social and political structure of the Acehnese. The political arena has become a new contestation arena after the conflict. When the UUPA and qanun about political parties ratified, the political constellation and contestation no longer dominated by the national elite (Jakarta) but was colored by local dimensions filled by former members of the movement (Ikramatoun & Amin, 2018). Although the conflict was over and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) returned to the Republic of Indonesia, the buffetings ideas fought during the conflict still have an existence. Nuhasim (2009) mentions that GAM activities in the political sphere clearly shows, GAM made significant changes in its, and the transformation had a significant impact on the dynamics of local politics and the elite socio-economic activities of GAM.

Therefore, this article aims to discuss how the process of GAM transformation from the rebellion to a political movement based on the genealogical movement that developed in Aceh across history. This paper also talks about negotiations and socio-political factors that influence GAM social transformation, including the dynamics of context, structure and movement actors.

II. METHOD

This study conducted using qualitative methods with an analytical, descriptive model. The purpose of this method to describe the nature of the situation and examine the causes of a particular event (Meleong, 2010: 6). The data in this paper sourced from passive observation and interviews, as well as literature studies as secondary data in the form of Helsinki MoU documents and UUPA, as well as results related to the theme of this study. Furthermore, the process of data analysis is carried out by developing the linkages between data from informants and paying attention to data that is not explicitly seen (Neuman, 2003: 457).

III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A. *Genealogy of the Free Aceh Movement*

The conflict between Aceh and the Indonesian Government has occurred twice since Aceh joined the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), namely the Darul Islam-Tentara Islam Indonesia (DI/TII) conflict in 1953-1962 led by Teungku Daud Beureuh and GAM conflict in from 1976-2005 led by Hasan Tiro. However, throughout the history of the struggle of the Acehnese people, it was noted that Aceh as a nation never escaped the resistance. Similarly, the Free Aceh Movement as a rebellion to demand independence was not something that happened without a socio-historical setting. Of course, there are historical roots that can be traced to understand why then this movement existed and won massive support from the people of Aceh. Sociologically it can be said that there are genealogical roots which then give birth to a variety of rebellion by the people of Aceh.

When the Portuguese had entered Aceh at the beginning of the 16th century, the Acehnese kingdom attacked several Portuguese ships that want to anchor in the Aceh region. This attack was motivated by economic, social and religious factors, which at the time were economically detrimental to the Portuguese economy of Aceh and their arrival was considered to threaten the system of religion which was embraced by the people of Aceh at that time. Then in 1602 the beginning of the arrival of the Dutch which then began to monopolize and control the territories in the archipelago and was realized by Aceh as one of the threats of sovereignty. With social, cultural, political and religious considerations, the people of Aceh did not provide an opportunity for the Dutch to enter the territory of Aceh and did not want to recognize Dutch sovereignty. Finally, in 1873 the Dutch declared war on Aceh and succeeded in occupying the Grand Mosque of Baiturrahman and the territory of the Palace in 1874, but this did not cause the fading of people's resistance to the Netherlands (Taufiq A, 2000: 30-45). Since then, the Acehnese have continued to resist the Dutch as a form of support for the sultanate and efforts to defend the sovereignty of the sultan over the Aceh region.

The event of the capture of the last Sultan of Aceh by the Dutch indeed closed the sheets of the power of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam. However, even without the command of a Sultan, the people of Aceh remained enthusiastic against the Dutch occupation and lasted until 1942 when Japan entered Aceh (Van 't Veer, 1985). The Aceh People's resistance through the PUSA erupted on March 11, 1942, when the Dutch rejected Teungku Nyak Arif's ultimatum to hand back power to Aceh. It was in this situation that Japan landed in Aceh without resistance from the Netherlands, precisely the day after the eruption of the popular uprising. This incident brought defeat on the Dutch side and immediately left Aceh (Sjamsuddin, 1999: 44-46).

When the proclamation of independence announced by President Sukarno, Aceh became one of the ones who supported and supported Aceh against Indonesia known as the "Declaration of All Aceh Ulama" (Amiruddin, 2004: 55; Sjamsuddin, 1999: 129-130). In the declaration also mentioned that any sacrifice that will be given to defend the country (Indonesia) and maintaining independence is a holy struggle called the War of Sabil, a saga that always encourages the people of Aceh to fight. Although initially, the Acehnese responded enthusiastically to the proclamation of independence, in its development, some of the Acehnese felt disappointed to an elite of Indonesia which did not give attention to the distinctiveness of Aceh as the basis for the development of Islam in Indonesia.

Departing from various disappointments towards the central government which ignored its promises and responsibilities towards Aceh, Daud Beureuh helped support the Kartosuwiryo movement known as the Darul Islam movement or the Indonesian Islamic Army. So on September 21, 1953, Daud Beureuh proclaimed Aceh as part of the Islamic State of Indonesia. The emergence of this movement is an accumulation of disappointment of the Acehnese people towards Jakarta (El Ibrahimy, 1986: 1). The Acehnese were disappointed with the attitude of the central government which allowed Aceh to be post-war devastated in the 2nd Dutch military aggression and Soekarno's promises that allowed the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh. In addition, the political turmoil that emerged during the Aceh smelting into North Sumatra Province and followed by various other socio-political problems in the structure of the Acehnese community, added to Daud Beureuh and the Acehnese disappointment towards the central government, making it easier for them to merge with the Kartosuwiryo movement.

After the rebellion through DI/TII ended after Daud Beureuh's death, the next form of rebellion from the Acehnese people to the government, especially in "Orde Baru" era was the emergence by the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). Hasan Tiro's involvement in the DI/TII upheaval was the begin of the friction between Tiro's political ideology which he built later in the Free Aceh Movement. The culmination of the Acehnese's disappointment was represented in the rebellion movement. On December 4, 1976, Hasan Tiro declared the Free Aceh Movement in Pidie. In the text of the declaration, Hasan Tiro wrote briefly, how Indonesia, especially the Javanese nation, became neo-colonialism in Aceh after the Netherlands. Whereas Aceh is a sovereign country that cannot be a part of Indonesia just because it was handed over by the Dutch. The text ends with the text "On behalf of the people of Aceh, Sumatra, who are sovereign. Tengku Hasan Muhammad Di Tiro. Chairperson, Aceh Force, Free Sumatra and Guardian of the Country "(Di Tiro, 1984: 17).

The rise of GAM as a continuation episode of the failure of the NII was the impact of the seriousness of the central government in realizing its promises to Aceh, also a manifestation of the accumulated disappointment of the Acehnese that had dragged on to the central government. Therefore, in the early days of the Free Aceh Movement was formed, most of the supporters of the Free Aceh Movement were those who involved in the DI / TII war. In 1984, Hasan Tiro published a book that wrote the history of himself and his family. Hasan Tiro is a descendant of Tgk. Chik Di Tiro Muhammad Saman, a great

Acehnese cleric in the last days of the kingdom of Aceh, was given the mandate to take power in leading the Acehnese community against the Dutch. Down and down, the Tiro family heroically led the Acehnese against the Dutch. In his writing, he tells how he seemed to have inherited the charisma of a Chik Di Tiro since childhood. Many people admire him and leave a message to him to continue the struggle of his ancestors (Tiro, 1984). Borrowing Drexler's term, the historical narrative of the Di Tiro family breed with heroic struggles, became another important point that strengthened the charisma of a Hasan Tiro. In his journey as the leader of the movement and Guardian of the Free Aceh State, Hasan Tiro continued to spread his political doctrine conveyed by every GAM leader in Aceh while celebrating GAM's birthday. Thus, Aceh's independence is the only way to revive the dignity of the Acehnese people who have been colonized by Java. The ideology built by Hasan Tiro brought influence to the community and intellectual circles such as students, academics, government and scholars (Djalil, 2009: 26-29).

B. GAM and Momentum of Transformation

1) Political Transition of '98: Reformation and Traces of Peace

The wave of reforms carried out by Indonesian students in mid-1998 became a big momentum in Indonesia's history. Reformation is a momentum of political change in Indonesia, which not only affects the national political system but also influences the dynamics of local politics, especially Aceh and some conflict areas that get repressive treatment from the central government. So, reform became a momentum to get out of the various pressures of the Orde Baru.

Revocation of DOM status Begins Habibie's administration's solution to the Aceh conflict. Habibie gave amnesty to 39 GAM political prisoners, carried out several steps of reconstruction and rehabilitation to victims of the DOM and issued law number 22 of 1999 concerning the Regional Government of Aceh, law number 25 of 1999 concerning financial balance between the Central and Regional Governments, and legislation Law No. 44/1999 concerning the organization of Aceh's privileges which emphasize the implementation of Islamic Shari'a, the establishment of ulama institutions and the implementation of traditional life. The law was derived from Missi Hardi in 1959 when the government resolved the DI/TII conflict (Basyar, 2008: 13-16).

Meanwhile, Acehnese intellectual groups pioneered by students began to carry out some advocacy actions. Students of Acehnese demanded a referendum, and massively students raised funds and support from the Acehnese community. The emergence of the Aceh referendum was a reaction to the Aceh conflict which had killed Aceh's civilization and silenced the lives of the people through repressive government actions. Regardless of what happens at the elite level of the national and regional governments, the movement at the level of civil society quite effective in raising public awareness of their rights. Before stepping down, Habibie permitted a referendum in East Timor on 30 August 1999 which ended in the release of East Timor from Indonesia. Habibie's actions impacted the prosecution of a referendum in Aceh. The student movement and elements of civil society incorporated in the SIRA (Aceh Referendum Information Center) succeeded in gaining the support of hundreds of thousands of Acehnese to carry out a referendum. The wave of demands for a referendum known as the General Assembly of the People's Consultative Assembly (Supporting Community Referendum) centered on the courtyard of the Great Mosque of Banda Aceh on November 8, 1999 (Bertrand, 2004: 176; Aspinall, 2002; Basyar, 2008: 17).

Abdurrahman Wahid or Gus Dur as a next president of Indonesia initially agreed to conduct a referendum in Aceh with the option offered by SIRA, namely independence or remain within the Republic of Indonesia. But finally, Gus Dur changed the options that would be offered in a referendum and continuing Aceh's current status or full autonomy while remaining within the Indonesian republic. This immediately foiled the referendum in Aceh (Sulistiyanto, 2001: 448). The central government at that time seemed to understand the dynamics in Aceh. Seeing a fairly large wave of referendums, it is almost certain that Aceh will be separated from Indonesia such as East Timor. Long conflicts and repressive actions by the government have strengthened the independence ideology developed by GAM.

The failure of the referendum apparently did not discourage the Acehnese civil society elements from resolving the conflict. Acehnese intellectual groups managed to establish relationships with international NGOs to facilitate GAM and the Indonesian government implemented the peace agreement. The Henry Dunant Center is an international institution which later succeeded in bringing together the GAM elite and the Indonesian Government in Switzerland in early August 2000. The meeting resulted in an agreement to conduct a ceasefire known as the Aceh Humanitarian Pause (Reid, 2010: 138-139). The ideals of independence showed to evaporate with this negotiation. There is something interesting from the story of one of the informants while attending the negotiations in Geneva, Switzerland.

"Watee lon jak u Jenewa uroe nyan, kebetulan perintah yue duek toe Teungku. Kakeuh duek. Na siat geu peh baho lon, "ka meuase beh". nyan keuh sikrak geu kheun. Na kira2 meu padum minet, "nyoe ka meuase man sigom donya beh". leuh nyan siat geu peh baho lom, "nyoe ka meuase, jak woe jak meuato". nyan keuh haba. Na siat troh teuk jeh, asoe tata cara untuk perundingan, jadi ken bak keurtah ata nyan, GAM - NKRI. lon kheun i lon, nyoe ken, peu nyoe, ken ka rugoe 30 thon nyoe, peu NNKRI. ngen keung geu jaweub. (The moment I went to Geneva that day, I happened to be told to sit near Teungku. Suddenly he clapped my shoulder, "there are already results". It's just a piece of the word he said. About a few minutes later, "there have been results in the whole world". Not long after, he clapped my shoulder again, "now there are results, let's go home, we set it back". Those were some of his words at that time. Then, there a draft procedure for negotiations, it was written on the paper GAM - NKRI. I said to him, what is this, I have lost 30 years, what is NKRI. He only pointed with his chin to the negotiating team from GAM) "

There are important points that can be analyzed from Hasan Tiro's words and actions. Hasan Tiro's actions showing the chin towards the GAM negotiating team, as if explaining that Hasan Tiro might fundamentally disagree with the negotiations, was a compromise of GAM elites, considering that Hasan Tiro's age was already old and several times attacked by disease. stroke. If this is the case, then there are indications of divisions within GAM, namely those who still adhere to the ideology of independence with those who begin to melt and seek other areas of struggle. But that is also very possible by looking at Hasan Tiro's words 'kameuase man sigom donya' there is something that has already been produced throughout the world, that is, all components of the world community will come to help Aceh. The negotiations did not indicate that GAM lost or succumbed, but it could also be the beginning of a change in the form of GAM's struggle. Furthermore, the negotiations between the GAM elite and the government of the Republic of Indonesia did not work effectively in the field. Gun contact continues, and the number of civilian casualties continues to increase. So that the discussion about resolving the Aceh conflict continues. The government began to take action in a persuasive approach with GAM. The idea of special autonomy then emerged as one of the solutions to resolve conflicts. The discussion of special autonomy for Aceh went through a long debate between the Aceh elite and the central government. The debate finally found a meeting point and produced Law number 18 of 2001 concerning Special Autonomy for the Province of Aceh. The law regulates some privileges for the Aceh government. (Umar, 2002: 3-9,164).

2) MoU Helsinki; The End of Conflict and the Beginning of Transformation

Anton Aliabbas said that the Helsinki MoU not only made fundamental changes to the conditions of peace and conflict in Aceh but also 'forced' GAM to make transform. One of the transformations that took place was a transformation in the political field. The basic principle of the Helsinki MoU is to change violent conflict into a political struggle for political transformation with the aim of resolving the conflict. The transformation of this conflict directed at the occurrence of massive changes in from war into political transformation through the struggle for political struggle in a new political system. Relating to negotiating a number of basic principles in the field of government politics and social and economic participation (Nuhasim, 2009: 85).

The Aceh privileged law issued by the central government in 2000 did not fully bring success in resolving the conflict in Aceh, because after the ratification of the Law there was still armed contact and conflicts that occurred in the community. After the Tsunami destroyed Aceh in late 2004, the government increasingly serious in resolving conflicts through hearings, as well as GAM who felt the people had suffered enough with the Tsunami. This seriousness was welcomed by the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) which later facilitated a meeting between the Republic of Indonesia and GAM in Helsinki Finland. This meeting finally culminated in the signing of the August 15 Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a number of points of agreement which adequately demonstrated the seriousness and concern of both parties to immediately resolve the conflict in a peaceful manner, and tried to improve the condition of Aceh which was in ruins. The peaceful way that the SBY-JK government continues to strive for indeed less used by the previous government since the Orde Baru. The Helsinki MoU which ended this period of conflict greatly appreciated by the Acehnese (Basyar, 2008: 26-27).

The contents of the Helsinki MoU discuss new rules and special rights for Aceh and GAM. The six parts of the Helsinki MoU includes Aceh's governance, human rights, reintegrating GAM members into the community, restoring security, and establishing the Aceh Monitoring Mission and its tasks (Helsinki MoU Document). The peace agreement was opposed by the central legislature because it feared that Aceh separate from the Republic of Indonesia like Timor Leste, but SBY-JK government more quite consistent with this choice, the government also carry out political integration strategies by giving members the widest possible space for GAM in politics. The process of integrating former GAM members back into society adds to the dynamics of people's lives.

In a state of deterioration after the Tsunami, the community, as well as GAM members who had intermingled, began to open up with new things and also the arrival of people outside Aceh. The integration of former GAM members also helped accelerate the realization of the contents of the Helsinki agreement and helped the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation of Aceh after the Tsunami disaster. The integration process improves GAM relations with the government and other communities. As stated by Sjamsuddin (1999: 129-130) that political integration eliminates differences that exist between influential and affected groups. The return of former GAM members to the community minimizes the level of conflict that has occurred. In addition, this integration also increases the peace and security of the lives of people who were previously still afraid of the conflict for too long. Therefore, this Helsinki agreement really brought Aceh to a new country that was more peaceful and strong with special rules in its area.

The privileges given by the Indonesian government to Aceh in the MoU immediately received a positive response from the regional government and the Acehnese people so that all parties tried to realize each of the points of the Helsinki agreement as soon as possible. One of the important points in the agreement is that Aceh will establish new law specifically regulating the Aceh government (UUPA). In the UUPA there is a number of things that reflect the distinctiveness of Aceh and the breadth of the space for political participation for GAM members, namely giving permission for every Acehnese to establish a local party and participate in every election in Aceh. Then, for the 2006 regional head elections, the right of the Acehnese people to participate in the independent pathway was also given. This is a reflection of the contents of the Helsinki agreement as demanded by GAM, and this approved by the Indonesian government in order to solve the problems in Aceh.

After the Helsinki agreement and the UUPA, the people of Aceh really look forward to a more peaceful, safe and certainly more prosperous life change. As the MoU and UUPA implemented, in 2006 the Acehnese also passed the process of regional

elections (Pilkada) both at the provincial level and at the second level. In this sense, the realization of the MoU and the UUPA can be said to be a manifestation of the process of political integration that took place in Aceh.

C. GAM Transformation; from a Rebellion into Political Movement

Transformation is a process that brings a fundamental change to replace a status quo situation that is better (Rembe, 2005: 34). In the context of conflict transformation, Miall et. Al (2000; 250-251) introduces five types of changes that contribute to conflict transformation, namely:

- a) Transformation of context, conflict is related to the social context that influences a conflict. The occurrence of changing contexts will have a large influence on the intensity or into conflict.
- b) Transformation of a structure refers to changes in the power structure, relationship structure, an imbalance of power which is a problem in conflict. In an asymmetric conflict, for example, the transformation is carried out to change unbalanced relationships between parties in conflict, one way may be to empower weak parties (e.g., by recognition, international community support or mediation).
- c) Transformation of actors, this can occur if there are changes in actors and leadership. In many conflicts, leader turnover is often the agent of conflict resolution.
- d) Transformation of issues, where conflict is determined by the position of the parties in addressing an issue/problem, if they change their position, or there is a new issue, there will be a change in the conflict.
- e) Personal/elite transformation, involving changing perspectives, changing conscience, and desires at the elite level.

In accordance with the Helsinki MoU agreement GAM groups no longer took up arms to realize their ideas, but instead, GAM groups will fight for their interests through politics. Until the three years of the Helsinki GAM MoU as a never-dissolved organization which was dissolved was the Army of the Neugara Aceh (TNA) which was previously called the Free Aceh Movement Force (AGAM), while GAM as a political movement still existed and only their armed forces were dissolved. After the Helsinki MoU, former GAM in the field carried out a number of metamorphoses from the ideological organization side and other forms of clothing change as a means for them to consolidate and struggle for a number of their demands during negotiations with the Republic of Indonesia (Nuhasim, 2009: 86).

To fight for its interests, GAM groups in Aceh formed various institutions which were a form of their transformation. There are several organizations formed by GAM, on the side of the command organization they established two institutions namely the Aceh Transition Committee (KPA) and the National Assembly. The National Assembly established as the highest political institution that united all economic and political resources of GAM, while the KPA was formed to oversee the demobilization and reintegration of former GAM combatants on the one hand and on the other to control the strength of GAM ex-combatants (Aliabbas in Bakti, 2008: 135-174). The two institutions have relatively similar roles and functions because they coordinate with each other the National Assembly is a forum for former GAM non-combatants from the civilian group while KPA serves as a forum for former GAM combatants (Nuhasim, 2009: 86).

Another form of political transformation is the GAM group as a political force by allowing this group to establish political parties. The struggle to seize political power caused this group to shift the old forces in both politics and economics. This shift can identify from the emergence of GAM groups as the main force of Aceh's current politics. They feel they have historical reasons because Aceh will not be what it is now if there is no one. These historical reasons have always been that they are socializing that Aceh is changing now because of their struggle.

KPA which was originally formed to maintain control and as a source or data of information about former GAM sympathizers in its development has become an exclusive and elitist organization closed to groups outside the former GAM sympathizers. As a result, in the reconciliation process, KPA not only transferred GAM from the armed movement to a civilian movement but also as if it had turned into a political movement. (Basyar, 2008: 36-37, 91). And structurally, there were no significant changes in the management structure of GAM and KPA. KPA's task began with economic empowerment and the reintegration of ex-combatants to function as a basis for organization and political discussion. GAM leaders are also relieved that they remain in their original positions, for example, like the GAM commander who operates at the local level, in the KPA structure, he serves as the head of the regional KPA office (Tornquist in Ikramatoun & Amin, 2018: 95). KPA formed the Aceh Party (PA) together with local political parties in the contestation of Aceh's democratic stage. For GAM, local parties became a new place of struggle, with little change from the armed struggle to a political struggle. GAM established the Aceh Party as a forum for political participation and was automatically supported by most of the former Free Aceh movement fighters, especially those in the three northern coastal regions of Aceh who were GAM bases during the conflict (Ikramatoun & Amin, 2018: 95).

In general, elections held simultaneously throughout Indonesia on 9 April 2009, the Aceh party as an absolute victory in a number of districts/cities in Aceh, also at the provincial level. In absolute terms, the Aceh Party controls almost 50% of the seats in the DPR Aceh parliament. Aceh Party gets 33 seats out of 69 seats. The number of seats obtained by the PA is even different from the seats of the Democratic party which is the winner of national elections. The Aceh Party that just emerged and first participated in the legislative elections was able to shift the position of national parties which had long been involved in the

political world of Aceh. PA victory in Aceh's legislative elections broadens the participation of former GAM members in Aceh's power politics after previously gaining victory for the Irwandi-Nazar pair in the 2006 regional elections. On the one hand, the victory of the Aceh party could be seen as a people's victory that brings new hope in Aceh's government. However, on the other hand, the dominance of the Aceh party and former GAM fighters shows that GAM's struggle has transformed in a new form, namely the political movement.

The victory of the Aceh Party (PA) as a representation of GAM in various elections in Aceh after peace, shows that the political arena as a new means of struggle in realizing the ideals of the post-peace struggle yielded satisfactory results. However, the political arena which was nominated by former members of the movement empirically turned out to be unable to bring Aceh out of various social problems. The conflict has indeed been completed, but the social problems in the form of poverty and unemployment have not been able to be overcome even though policymakers in parliament and executives are those who used to fight for it. The spaces of power inhabited by former combatants seem to succeed in trapping and bringing them out of the noble ideals of the struggle so that even though they have been in power, the people still suffer (Ikramatoun & Amin, 2018).

IV. CONCLUSION

The Free Aceh Movement is a rebellion born of a long historical root. Its presence in the dynamics of the journey of the Republic of Indonesia as a nation has provided valuable lessons to the Indonesian people about the importance of justice and partisanship of the government to the people. The culmination of society's disappointment in its various forms could have led to a similar movement of rebellion so that it required social and political sensitivity for stakeholders to continue to act fairly. Although GAM is no longer organizational, the current political constellation of Aceh shows that GAM in a movement still exists. The symbols of struggle along with the struggle discourse are still dominant as political narratives in each contestation indicating that GAM has transformed into a political movement. This means that there is a possibility that a similar movement will reappear if the roots of the movement in the form of injustice, exploitation, oppression or "colonialism" are allowed to continue to exist.

This transformation process takes place against a background of many factors both internally and externally, but in a dominant manner, the transformation is influenced by Indonesia's socio-political context which experienced significant changes after the reformation and the Tsunami disaster that destroyed Aceh. The involvement of the international world also contributes to the process of political integration that occurred after the Reformation. The government's approach to soft power in dealing with GAM has brought significant changes. Now, members or former members of GAM have become an integral part of Aceh's socio-political-economic system. Transformation movements that occur within GAM from the rebellion the political movement has transformed the context, structure, and actors in the life of the Acehnese for the better. The dominance of the Aceh party as a representation of GAM and the current ex-combatants of GAM in the current political arena of Aceh shows that the struggle of GAM has transformed in a new form, namely the political movement. Finally, if GAM can transform into a successful political movement like today, it is possible that they can also transform into their original form.

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