

How is the Cultural Identity on Aceh Post Conflict 1998-2005 in Langsa?

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Abstract—Cultural identity in Langsa after the conflict in Aceh became an interesting study because it has multicultural roots and society. This paper aims to identify how the construction of cultural identity in Langsa after the Aceh conflict, seen from the developing community culture and its museum collections, and how the construction of cultural identity contributes to maintaining harmonious values to the Aceh multi-ethnic community aftermath the conflict. Methodologically, this study used a qualitative approach through a phenomenological research design. The techniques used in collecting data were in-depth interviews, observation, and literature review. The data was analyzed through an interactive analysis model. The findings showed that in a multicultural society culture of Langsa city since the Aceh post-conflict, the cultural identity construction, politically and policy-wise was more dominant than the multicultural identity construction. However, multicultural identity was given an excellent opportunity in its existence. Then, the cultural identities developed in Langsa, both Acehnese and multicultural, were campaigning peace and harmony. Thus, cultural identity in Aceh's post-conflict played a role in the process of social cohesion to create a sustainable and peaceful society. The construction of cultural identity in Langsa still leaves homework related to strengthening customary institutions, strengthening season collections, improving management, and providing policy support for the development of multicultural society cultural identity.

Keywords: Cultural identity, post-conflict, multicultural

I. INTRODUCTION

The construction of Aceh's cultural identity is solid amid of Langsa's multicultural society after the conflict. This is an implication of the Republic of Indonesia's Law number 11 of 2006 concerning Aceh's Government (UUPA) which strongly supports the Aceh's cultural identity development. Moreover, Aceh has experienced cultural hegemony by the rulers in the previous government (Hasan 2009, 329). However, Aceh will be trapped in ethnocentrism patterns if the cultural identity is not immediately observed (Nasya Bahfen 2018, 107; Nurrahmi 2018, 299). The development of post-conflict in Aceh is powerfully helpful in maintaining

peace through various sectors. The construction of a cultural identity that is developed based on the community's historical and cultural roots will help sustain peace.

So far, studies on the post-conflict in Aceh have been dominated by macro-based political studies, such as political integration between former combatants and the government of the Republic of Indonesia, and encouraging democratic development in Aceh (Sholeh 2015, 299; Espesor 2018, 235). Besides, there are also many studies on the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh (Zuhri 2013, 133; Kloos 2014) as a new norm, which is agreed based on UUPA. Furthermore, studies on Aceh's culture development after the conflict have also been carried out by many previous researchers. However, those studies tend to look only at the perspective of Acehnese cultural identity, that is the need to construct an Acehnese culture that previously disturbed (damaged-neglected-forgotten) during the conflict period to restore identity (Schröter 2010), whether in form of symbols (Nurrahmi 2018), revitalization and dynamics of customary social space (Mujib, Abdullah, and Nugroho 2014; Mahmuddin et al. 2014, 265; Mukhlis 2015, 201; Mahmuddin, Laura M Kolopaking, Rilus A Kinseng, Saharuddin 2016, 102; Gayatri 2018). Meanwhile, Aceh as a famous for its multicultural society, apparently not much discussion about the strategy of harmonizing multi-ethnic society through multiculturalism. In the context of a multicultural society in Langsa, constructing a relevant cultural identity with the community's social conditions is very important to build a harmonious, sustainable society.

This paper aims to identify how the cultural identity construction in Langsa after the Aceh conflict, seen from the developing community culture and from its museum collections, as well as how it contributes to maintaining harmonious values on the multi-ethnic society after Aceh conflict.

This paper, based on the argument the construction of post-conflict cultural identity in Langsa has a strong relationship with the implementation of harmonious social life. The existence of a multi-ethnic community has play roles

in creating cultural identity. The development of cultural identity construction needs to be synchronized with the society. Thus, the intended construction in Langsa needs to be designed as an effort to maintain a sustainable and harmonious society.

II. METHODS

This was a qualitative method through a phenomenological approach. This was fieldwork research through observational stages, in-depth interviews, and data analysis. Also, the data was obtained through literature studies to obtain relevant information with the topic of the research.

The research was taken from January 2020 to July 2020. During the research, there were various activities organized from multi ethnicities in Langsa, so that the researcher could take figures of cultural identities. Interviews with informants were carried out in a relaxed situation by chatting at the respondent’s house, coffee shop, and office.

Observations were conducted in Gampong Karang Anyar, Gampong Alue Dua, Gampong Lhok Banie, Gampong Matang Setui, Gampong Alue Pinang Timur, with aims to capture cultural identity. Besides, it was also conducted at Langsa city museum, which is managed by the education office and the protected forest museum managed by the youth and sports office to capture the construction of cultural identity based on the collection objects.

In-depth interviews were conducted to the selected information following on the research needs to obtain complete and in-depth information about attitudes, knowledge, and informants’ views related to identity issues in Langsa city. Informants from representatives of Customary institutions were chosen to investigate the existed cultural identity based on the policymakers’ perspectives. The informants were selected according to the representative ethnicity as the way to access the information about cultural identity construction based on the community perspective, museum educator as an informant to investigate identity construction through the museum, and museum visitors to portraint the result of identity construction through the museum. The informants consist of:

Tabel 1. Informant List of Interview

No.	Information	Number of Informants
1	Chairman of the Langsa City of Aceh Traditional Council	1 person
2	Javanese ethnic community	1 person
3	Acehnese ethnic community	1 person
4	Mandailing ethnic community	1 person
5	Visitors of Langsa city museum managed by the	2 persons

	educational office	
6	Visitors of protected forest museum managed by the youth and sports office	2 persons
7	Langsa city’s museum educator managed by the educational office	1 person
8	Edukator museum hutan lindung managed by the educational office dinas pemuda dan olahraga	1 person
	Total	10

Besides fieldwork study, the researcher also collected the data by investigating book resources, online journals, online newspapers, and relevant dissertations to the topic of the research.

The collected data would be analyzed using interactive analysis from Miles and Hubberman whose analysis activities began with: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or data verification.

This research was located in Langsa, Aceh. Langsa is a multicultural city representing the social relations of the multi-ethnic community that raise interest in analyzing its cultural identity construction, specifically in a multi-ethnic community after the Aceh conflict.

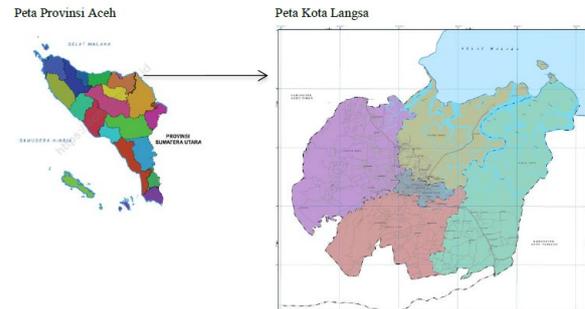


Figure 1. The Research Location

Source: Langsa dalam angka 2020 (Langsa 2020, 212).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Identifying Cultural Identity in Langsa

1. Islam as a City Society Identity

As part of the Aceh government that applies Islamic law, Islamic identity in Langsa City is very prominent. In Langsa, the mosque and menasha are easy to find. In addition, the Langsa city government, through the Islamic Sharia Service, appeals to some issues to obey Islamic law. Those appeals are posted clearly in the city center, tourist attractions even to the remote villages in Gampong.



Figure 2. Proud to be Muslim



Figure 3. The Call to Avoid Gambling

The ballyhoo in figure 2, was installed in front of Langsa stadium. It contained an invitation from Langsa city government for not behave like non-muslim in welcoming the 2020 new year anniversary. Meanwhile, in figure 3, it showed an invitation to avoid gambling stalls.

Otherwise, the Islamic identity in Langsa could be seen from the Mayor’s program of “1 Village 1 Dayah” (Aceh 2019; AA 2020). This program aimed to make Langsa city a place of santri/students and an Islamic studies center.

Usman Abdullah: By the existence of Dayah in each village of Langsa, it will be a city of santri/students and Islamic studies center (Aceh 2019).

Based on the BPS data for 2020, the number of pesantren in Langsa was 19 and spread across all sub-districts.

Number of Dayah in Langsa in 2019

Sub-district	Number of Pesantren
Langsa Timur	6
Langsa Lama	2
Langsa Barat	7
Langsa Baro	2
Langsa Kota	2
Total Number	19

Source: Langsa dalam angka 2020 (Langsa 2020, 212).

2. Policy and Identity of Culture

Islamic identity in Aceh is firm and cannot be denied. It is very influential in the development of

Aceh's identity. Aceh's identity cannot be separated from religious and cultural aspects. Religion and culture are correlated to each other, tied together, and to some extent, cannot be distinguished (Srimulyani et al. 2018, 397; Ishiguro 2019, 113). Moreover, after the conflict in Aceh, cultural identity has become one of the tools for identity negotiations between ethnonationalism and nationalism (Rahmawati et al. 2018, 246).

Aceh culture is involved in politics through special autonomy by accommodating Acehness identity in it (Fitriah 2017). This is an excellent opportunity to develop Acehness cultural identity. There are policies related to the construction of Aceh's cultural identity, namely the establishment of a customary institution called the Aceh Custom Council/Majelis Adat Aceh (MAA), which is contained in the UUPA chapter XIII, article 98, about campaigning the Acehness identity. The MMA plays a role as a vehicle for the communities’ participation in the administration of the Aceh government in the level of province and regency/municipality in the sector of security, peace, harmony, and public order. The development of traditional life and customs is carried out according to the development of privileges and specialties of Aceh, which is based on Islamic syari’at values and being practiced by Wali Nanggroe (UUPA, article 99).

The MAA constructing Aceh’s identity through various socialization programs and community activities.

“Socialization is done all the time. Nevertheless, formally, it has not reached all institutions. Custom is just a matter of time MMA continues to evolve with generations, especially since the conflict 30 years ago has made the role of custom unnoticed”. Mursidin, Chief of MAA Langsa.

3. Culture Activity in Langsa

Culture becomes a means of social interaction in a multi-ethnic society. However, some norms must be followed by the culture itself (Setiawan 2012). In the social society context, Aceh culture is practiced in various activities. The activity such as maulid feast (kenduri maulid), sea feast (kenduri laut), and blang feast (kenduri blang). For the Aceh’s people, kenduri is an expression of gratitude to Allah.

Maulid feast is a feast to commemorate the birthday of the prophet Muhammad S.A.W this activity is held almost around the village/gampong.

“In Aceh, there are special traditions and customs in celebrating maulid, such as performing feasts (kenduri maulid) for children. Every child who joins in celebration has a chance to taste the kenduri rice and will still be served according to the provisions imposed by the maulid committee in each village/gampong”. (Idrus, Januari 2020).

Meanwhile, the sea feast (kenduri laut) is an expression of the fishing community's gratitude for being given a good catch of fish.

"Sea feast (Kenduri laut) for the fishing communities is a manifestation of gratitude, the relationship between humans as the creatures with their Creator, and preserving the surrounding environment in dealing with the local environment". (Pak Benben, Januari 2020;).

Then, the blang feast (kenduri blang) is an activity held by the rice farming community before planting.

"The blang feast (kenduri blang) is an activity of praying together done by the whole villagers, by reading yasin in the mosque as an expression of gratitude to Allah. Kenduri blang is held to gather the community to pray before planting rice and put water into the fields".

Then, the variety of cultures in Langsa also presented in the activity, such as horse braids and wayang turonggo. This culture was initially brought by the Javanese, who became Dutch plantation workers in the colonial era. Social relations based on ethnicity gave them a strong sense of unity and made this into the arts that still exist.

"The arrival of Javanese to Aceh before independence occurred because they were brought by the Dutch masters to work on Dutch-owned plantations. The Javanese are well known as a diligent and persistent, have high enthusiasm and skill, and have strong cooperation between ethnic groups. They also brought in wayang kulit (shadow puppets) in Alue Dua village" (Interview, Surono pada 18 Maret 2020).

In cultural actualization, braided horses often perform with a system of responses or invitations from someone who has a celebration (hajatan).

4. Museum as a Cultural Construction Space

Langsa has two museums. First, the Langsa City Museum, which is located in the Balee Juang Building, managed by the City Education Office. Second, the Protected Forest Museum, which is located in the Protected Forest Park tourist complex, managed by the Youth and Sports Agency. The museum was established for the cultural heritage of Langsa's younger generation by exhibiting various historical and cultural collections.

"The museums were established after the raise of awareness from community leaders. They saw that many young people were no longer familiar with their culture. Therefore the museums were created as a cultural and educational inheritance (Islam) to young people in Langsa. So, they will learn about the historical heritage of the museum. Inside the museums, there is a historical collection, ethnographic manuscripts, cultural

ethnographic (household appliances for the Aceh people)". Tengku Nur Iman, Juni 2020.



The construction of cultural identity at the Langsa City Museum faces an incomplete collection problem. It does not reflect Langsa's cultural identity, and also an inability of museum guides to process knowledge information.

"The contents of the Langsa city museum also contain many special items from the Aceh region itself, like weapons, kitchen utensils, and other uniqueness". Cut Sara, June 2020.

Other museum visitors reinforced this:

"When looking at the museum's collections, it is like a mixture of Aceh and the Netherlands heritage. I see that the architecture is typically Dutch, but the contents of the collection are mostly related to Aceh heritage. Nevertheless, the museum presents collections of historical objects from the Dutch colonial" Hafiz, June 2020.

Thus, it raises the dissatisfaction of museum visitors.

"After visiting the museum, I can say that I am not satisfied because there are many museum collections that the curators cannot explain. In the future, I hope that the museum will have a curator who can explain the museum collections well", Ismail Sigalingging, June 2020.

The Role of Cultural Identity in Maintaining Social Harmony to the Multi-Ethnic Communities after Conflict in Aceh

In the context of social society, Acehese culture is still practiced in various activities. Some of the cultural activities including the Maulid feast (kenduri Maulid), blang feast (kenduri blang), and sea feast (kenduri laut). Kenduri is the cultural identity of Aceh. In its implementation in Langsa, the festival is open to people from any ethnic group. As said by Mr. Anwar, a resident of Matang Setui village, Langsa:

"During the Blang feast, everybody came. There were gardeners, fishermen, rice field farmers, all of them can join. All tribes too. There was also an invitation to the service, from another village". Pak Anwar, Matang Setui, June 2020.

This tradition is also applied in the Blang and the Sea feasts, which are very open to the whole community, regardless of ethnicity.

Likewise, the braided horse culture is very open to all ethnicities. Braided horse in Langsa, is favored by all ethnicities.

“Acehnese and Batak people also admire braided horses and even participate in the performance. Tribes other than Javanese often present braided horses at family receptions” Asrul, July 2020.

Similar to the wayang turonggo culture, which in its progress, was adapting with the social and community conditions in Langsa.

“..in its development, wayang traditional art adapts by adopting the local culture, including using Acehnese language and Indonesian language in performances. So we were often invited to perform not only in communities where the majority are Javanese” (Darsim, retrieved on 02 January 2020).

Meanwhile, the role of Langsa's museums in maintaining harmony to the multi-ethnic communities has not seen significantly. It was because the theme and collections did not represent the condition of a multicultural society.

“Langsa Museum tends to portray general things about Aceh, there were only a few collections from Langsa area and even almost unexposed. Even more, the curator was unable to explain maximal information about the museum that did not have enough knowledge”, Hafiz, June 2020.

Discussion

Islamic law has become the foundation for cultural construction in Langsa. Thus, a cultural identity that can be accepted and recognized in Langsa is a culture that does not violate the principles of Islamic law. In Aceh culture, Islam and custom are inseparable things. In other words, the construction of a cultural identity that gets creative space is in line with Islamic law.

The emergence of qanun about the uniqueness of Aceh and the Law on the Government of Aceh gave MAA the authority to become a key player in the construction of Aceh's cultural identity, especially in Langsa. The qanun became the basis for policy in the existence of Acehnese culture in Langsa. Therefore, knowing the fact that Langsa people were in a multicultural condition makes them difficult to be covered under the MAA.

However, socially, multicultural culture has received an excellent space to grow and develop. The culture of this multi-ethnic community has also adopted some Acehnese cultural identities, such as wayang using Aceh narratives language, and does not violate Islamic syariah principles. By that, the culture of the multicultural society in Langsa can be enjoyed by all the people.

The culture in Langsa has a useful function in harmonizing multicultural society. Culture is a means of social interaction based on a multicultural

society that is organic, functional, and directly influences the social relations in multi-ethnic communities.

The vary of multicultural society in Langsa also needs to be given support to develop, express, and inherit their culture. Their cultural identity is part of the Langsa cultural identity. The development of a culture based on the community's roots will be useful for social cohesion and will create conditions for a harmonious multicultural society.

IV. CONCLUSION

After the Aceh conflict, the cultural identity in Langsa was under the authority of the UUPA. It implicated them in having a very dominant space for the construction of Aceh's cultural identity. This is very influential in the construction of cultural identity in Langsa. This study shows the findings that in a multicultural society after the conflict in Aceh, politically, and the policy of Acehnese cultural identity construction is more dominant than the multicultural identity construction. However, multicultural identity is given a reasonable opportunity in its existence. Then, the cultural identities developed in Langsa, both Acehnese and multicultural, both campaign for peace and harmony. By this, cultural identity in the post-conflict of Aceh has a vital role in the process of social cohesion to create a sustainable and peaceful society. The construction of cultural identity in Langsa still leaves homework related to strengthening customary institutions, strengthening season collections, and improving management, as well as providing policy support for the development of multicultural community cultural identities.

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