

# *Nationalism Transformation in Aceh*

## Transformasi Nasionalisme di Aceh

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### **Abstrak**

*Nasionalisme adalah ideologi dasar bagi gerakan perlawanan terhadap kolonialisme di dunia. Ideologi ini cepat berkembang antara sesama negara di dunia dalam mempertahankan diri dari kolonialisme dan pengaruh dari luar negeri. Di Indonesia, nasionalisme menjadi kesatuan bangsa-bangsa di Nusantara dalam melawan penjajahan Belanda. Namun, setelah Indonesia merdeka, justru menjadi perusak nasionalisme itu sendiri. Kekecewaan kaum nasionalis menjadi awal gerakan perlawanan terhadap Indonesia. Kemudian pertentangan kaum nasionalis kian meluas dan menghancurkan landasan nasionalisme yang telah tumbuh kuat dan menjadi ancaman bagi nasionalisme Indonesia. Di Aceh, pergolakan yang melibatkan nasionalisme sebagai masalah dasar dapat meruntuhkan semangat nasionalisme Indonesia di pikiran rakyat Aceh, sehingga akan melahirkan etnonasionalisme yang dapat membatasi wacana nasionalisme, serta memperkuat semangat perlawanan untuk memisahkan diri dari Indonesia.*

*Kata kunci: Transformasi, Nasionalisme, Aceh*

### **Abstract**

*Nationalism becomes a basic ideology of the resistance movement against colonialism which exists in the world. This ideology is able in bounding nations across the world to defend themselves from colonialism and influences which come from outside the nations. In Indonesia, nationalism becomes a unity of the nation in the archipelago against the Dutch colonialism. However, after Indonesia's independence, nationalism becomes a destroyer of the nationalism itself, nationalist's disappointment becomes a beginning of resistance movement against Indonesia. Later on the nationalist's counterwork expanded broadly and destroyed the current nationalism foundation which had been grown strongly, and it grows as the menace for the nationalism of Indonesia. In Aceh, the upheaval involves nationalism as a basic problem that may collapse the spirit of Indonesia nationalism which exists on Acehnese's mind, and it is switched with ethnonationalism which limits nationalism discourse as well as more reinforce the spirit of resistance in order to separate itself away from Indonesia.*

*Keywords: Transformation, Nationalism, Aceh*

**Introduction: Ideology Nationalism**

This study focuses on the study of nationalism discourse which grows in history of Aceh's politics. At the beginning, The discourse of nasionalism truly centralized at the national level, but now, it moves into the local area, the movement of nationalism discourse occurs due to the condition of social and politics which grows uncertainly in Aceh. Later on, this movement of discourse becomes the new problem at the national level because it disrupts the nation integrity. The nationalism is considered as the cause of Acehnese in raising the gun to resist. If we review deeper about this, we will know that this discourse would be the necessity because it is as imagined community. Nationalism has its dinamic. the negligence of government in understanding the run of collective imagination or people name it nationalism would make the situation and condition in every area in Indonesia more complicated.

The idea of nationalism was born either from the desire to free the nations from the colonialism or the existance of the similiar suffering of the nations. Nationalism raises up and grows as the concept which is created as the foundation to live as the nation, people and culture that is influenced by the condition of history and socio cultural dinamic in every nation. Nationalism may show up as the concept of the nation or movement which its popular depends on the argument of the people, ethnic, culture, religion and ideology. Those catagories naturally associate each other, and most of nationalism theories mix up a part or a full of those elements. At the beginning, the main elements of nationalism contain the similiar of descent, race, tribe, hometown, religion, language, and culture.

Anthony D. Smith (2003) defines nationalism is an ideology movement to achieve and mantain autonomy, unity and identity for a population or community, and then the members of community decide to form a nation which is actual or potential, this definition defines the nationalism as the manifest ideology exists in a movement which has its certain intention. As an ideology, nationalism constructs a kind of actions. The intention is determined using this kind of ideology core, so that, this special orientation differentiates one movement with others.

Ideology is a type of discourse which agrees with legitimation refers to transcendental realism. The discourse of ideology is reflected in social life. The formed ideology directs to a meaningful action, it is like a text that is able to interpret by anyone, as the basic of primordial in ideology phenomenon. Ricoeur stated the basic form of this, ideology relates to image which is possessed by a kind of social community, By representing their selves as the community which have history and identity. Ricoeur intended to say idology as the social imagination, it is the imaginary of person, and it would not understand a reflection only or understand just an existed illusion. That imagination is not only a reflection about reality but also as a medium to raise up the new realities and to criticize the thing that is accepted as the real ones. Nationalism in Indonesia is a concrete form of imagination which is built from the processes of ideology forming as Ricoeur imagined. That nationalism experiences the utopia of manifestation which unable for the nation to scrape it off (Thompson, 1984).

In that context, Anderson states (2008) Indonesia nationalism was constructed based on the awareness of the group of people and then they are united to form politic entity which had never been imagined before. At the beginning, Each group had never known or never had historical and cultural attachment, then they formed the politic attachment that is limited and bound, but it strengthens the sovereignty belong to them as the nation. The group of the people which is involved in that imagined community had had their own nationalism along time ago before the new nation was formed. When the new nation has been formed, their nationalism transformed into the etnonationalism. The transformation of nationalism term into etnonationalism refers to the different context of the meaning and based on empiric perspective of the formed new entity as Anderson state the imagined community.

**Etnonationalism Shifts Nationalism Hegemony**

It is correctly to put Andreson's theory in context of Aceh where the constellation of politic ideology continously affects either the idea or the implementation of nationalism in social politic life belong to the people. In addition, the constellation

also causes the never ending up-down, even though it sometimes break up or separate into some sub-nationalism and later on those stand alone. By that way, it is important to review how the identity of Aceh acts as the supporting element, and specially how the element provides an interpretation, responds and reacts to the process of imagined community development.

If we review further about this basic in Indonesia, we will know that this basic is not strong enough, it is because ethnics in Indonesia was constructed with the existed kingdoms in the past before Indonesia was born, and they unite each other in every single side of life. As the result, primordialistic which refers to etnonationalism is not lost just a way in unity of new entity. From this context, nationalism in Indonesia is not running as the ideal desire of nationalism itself. In order to shut it up, the people should be given right resource to develop their culture and identity, it can be done by strongly tolerating the identity and culture which are different with theirs. So that, the giving of right is not followed by showing new primordality. In this condition, nationalism tends to be break up and separated and finally it lost its ambition to unite (Hamzah, 2011).

In his book *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, Jacques Bertrand states nationalism in Indonesia needs to taking for granted. The problem source of the conflict among ethnics in Indonesia was started by misunderstanding of nationalism, which means the nationalism is unable to be interpreted factually and unable to be negotiated with the ethnics in Indonesia by the nation. This kind of problem turns on the etnocentric conflict to persue their right, it even raises up the disintegration in Indonesia. Etnonationalism raises up the disintegration will be more strengthened by the reality that government is unable to cope all the existed ethnics, evenmore the government tends to disclaim that etnonationalism as the constructor of nationalism. As the result, tightly tied up in primordialistic perspective that the understanding about the desire to take back the right was born, and this understanding later on is called "etnonationalism". The institution in the nation will be very centralized to strengthen the illusion of etnonationalism in several provinces.

Bertrand's view strengthen the explanation

how etnonationalism was formed and became the antithesis of nationalism as the resistance ideology against the nation in some areas in Indonesia, such as Aceh and Papua. Even though this substance is becoming absurd when we look from plurality perspective in Indonesia. In Indonesia, etnonationalism evolved from differentiation ethnic which is created by history and previous conflict. The various kingdoms in Indonesia archipelago perceived the common interest in fighting against dutch, Later on they made the deal to form new nation to put their common interest in a cope. This new nation is called the imagined community as Anderson states. Etnonationalism symptom was started from the sense of primordialistic is viewed as the raising power to raise the spirit of fighting against the nation as the imagined community. Both of this concept meet in a place, and then the symbol of the existence of the nation will be the central in accomodating all interests belong to the ethnics.

### **Transformasion Nationalism Aceh**

Discourse of (etno) nationalism has been grown strongly as the ideology in Aceh people's minds, it is because of the influences of ideology which was developed by Hasan Tiro. Most of Hasan tiro's thought was developed in order to propagandize the discourse of (etno) nationalism of Aceh which would be made as the antithesis against Indonesia's nationalism. The result of antithesis would raise the fighting of Aceh people against Indonesia. This fighting later on became stronger which is caused by accumulation of etnonationalism discourse and uncertain social politic condition in Aceh at that time.

This etnonationalism has been reviewed by Ahmad Taufan Damanik in his book "*Dari Imajinasi Negara Islam ke Imajinasi Etno-Nasionalis*" which is published in 2010. Damanik reconstructed Hasan Tiro's thought about the discourse of forming politic identity in Aceh. Damanik states Aceh's independence as a new social imaginary, more cristalize and more hegemonize the discourse of politic in Aceh. In contrary, this hegemony is the sign of Indonesia's nationalism dissolution in Aceh people's mind. Damanik's opinion supports Bennedict Anderson's thought about the concept of nationalism which is

relevant to this etnonationalism case occurred in Aceh. Moreover, Damanik absolutely implements the thought of Anderson in case of Aceh, it seems how Damanik views that Hasan Tiro imagined a new community formed like other nation concept which exist in Indonesia.

That view was strengthened by Al-Chaidar (1999), he explained Hasan Tiro had placed Indonesia nationalism not “nationalism”, but, Imperialism to allow new colonialism such a colonialism by centralizing the central of government only in Java which is conducted by Indonesia itself. Basically, the nations within Indonesia archipelago have their own nationalism which stand on the process of the historical forming, language forming, and ethnic in that nation, but, in the final it was changed with Indonesia nationalism means to remove the nation’s history as the mechanism of new colonialism after the dutch’s colonialism.

According to Hasan di Tiro, Nationalism in actual means the limitation of area or territory, and the limitation of who feel disposed to be loyal to the country. However “Indonesia nationalism” means controlling the territory or area, the demolition of that territory or area as well. In addition, Indonesia nationalism at the first was conducted to maintain the unity of dutch east indies, and in this present day, it is conducted to allow Indonesia’s colonialism. Nowadays, Indonesia nationalism has been created as the basic ideology of nation to guarantee and allow mastering the nation dominantly over the land and water of the nations outside java island. The ideas of Hasan tiro is not basically come from individual desire, it comes from the complexity condition of problem in Aceh since the nation of Indonesia has its freedom (Al-Chaidar, 1999)

. Hasan di Tiro expressed the more primordial idea, it is implementation his thought in Aceh’s nationalism, that is strengthened in his master piece “*Indonesian Nationalism: A Westren Invention To Subvert Islam And To Prevent Decolonialization Of Tthe Dutch East Indies*” published in 1985. At the beginning of his writing, Hasan tiro states that nationalism of Indonesia may not be understood as the one unity of the similiar suffering was caused by dutch colonialism which based on the geographical location. The

government of dutch east indies was not the unity which existed because of the geo politic, Indonesia archipelago contains nations which had been great and strong long time before the dutch came, such as Melayu, Dayak, Bugis, Java, and so on. Later on, all the island regions were forced to bow in the country was called Dutch ast indies, finally, it was given to Indonesia in the agreement with the dominion nation in the archipelago. Maka dari hal ini dapat dikatakan bahwa tunduknya bangsa-bangsa di nusantara tidak dapat dibenarkan karena bangsa-bangsa tersebut mempunyai sejarah kedaulatan sendiri.

Hasan Tiro continued to write his next thought about Aceh nationalism, such as “Atjeh Bak Mata Donja” (Aceh in world’s sight) which was written in Aceh language in New York on 15 March 1968. Hasan di Tiro revealed about the causality of the lost historical and politic awareness in Aceh people after war against dutch. Hasan Tiro started to reconstructed Aceh’s history, and strengthen the effort to integrate with Republic of Indonesia. Acehnese nationalism was stated firmly by Hasan Tiro in this writing, his thought influences the soul of Aceh people, so that it grows and develops again the spirit of Aceh people in resisting the pride and honor of Aceh as the great nation and had ever been recognized by the world.

### **The Correction to The Failure of “Nationalization” Nationalism.**

Hasan Tiro becomes icon of Acehnese’s resistance, especially in the new order era. He is strongly filled in Acehnese’s heart and becomes the symbol of Aceh’s pride. His presence and firmness become the brace of how exactly the character of Aceh people. Hasan Tiro is also remembered by Aceh people because he is the most essential figure in bringing back the Aceh values which has ever been eroded along the old and new order era. Both “welcomers” orders post the ducth left from Indonesia raised policies which often disclaimed the values of Aceh. The independence of Aceh as a new social imaginary more crystalize and hegemonize the politic discourse in Aceh. In contrary, its hegemony is the sign of the dissolution Indonesia nationalism discourse in Aceh people’s mind (Sulaiman 2000).

Aceh people synchronize Hasan Tiro’s

thought with the condition in Aceh where the natural resource and cultural peculiarity was betrayed by Jakarta. All the production of Aceh natural resource had been taken and carried to Jakarta. Jakarta meant to treat Aceh as the “asset area”. The government of Indonesia drained Aceh’s natural resource to fulfill their own politic elit’s interest, in contrary, Aceh people as the owner of the natural resource in their own area only watched their treasure was taken. This condition was worse because the government was passiveness to keep its promise to realize the speciality which had been promised by government at the first. Hasan considered this practice as the betrayal and victimization which was done by the government of Indonesia to Aceh people.

That fact may become the evidence that the nationalism of Indonesia had even been down in Aceh. Disillusionment of Aceh people toward the existence of Indonesia became the great resistance because the nation unable to cope its people. that resistance later on supported by the strong etnonationalism. So that, the desire to separate from Indonesia was greater. Nationalism was lost from Aceh people, then became the strong supporting factor from the resistences against the nation of Indonesia. Aceh in its history as the province in Indonesia has suffered politic degradation then leading the people to not believe the nation anymore, and they changed their belief into the movement fighters groups which was considered can give what the people of Aceh need is new order to change the existence of Indonesia as the nation.

### Conclusion

Indonesia nationalization has not run as we want. Because the failure of this nationalization, Aceh and others regions keep questioning the substance of the nationalism itself, evenmore it was worse by raising the new fights against the existence of Indonesia. It can be stated that the concept of nationalism is not strong, and not centralized only in one dot or source. Nationalism must move on into the process following the development of condition. Nationalism follows the social dynamic of people. faith, hope and purpose stand on the same side, and nationalism stands on the other side, there is an conceptual intimacy in

depth. It means nationalism of people will raise if it is sustained by the new hope, purpose and faith, as well as ambition to live which is struggled together or if the social reality has been fit with hope and ambition of life which exist in people.

In conclusion, for strengthen Indonesia nationalism value in Aceh, the nation should have a more optimal role, and should be able to negotiate the social, economy, and politic condition in public and it is opened for all people. The nation should become politic entity which unable to implement sublimation and pull up the seed of conflict. The nation should be able to fulfill the substance of nation’s ideology promises which based on the sense of nationality by concrete work and it is implicated in change and development of people which safer and more prosperous. Besides the role of nation, civil society as the counterweight of the nation should stand together with the nation to guard the policy in order to get the wiser policy in constructing the life of nationality.

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