

JCIMS

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Submission date: 21-Oct-2023 02:02PM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 2202581287

File name: 3._Juliandi_-_M._Syahnan.docx (195.82K)

Word count: 5409

Character count: 30239

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Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies

2023

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1 new research question, statements of the brand-new scientific article, main search problems, hypothesis, and purpose(s) of the article.		
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2

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Conclusion is the answer of the hypothesis and research questions. It should not contain only the repetition of the results and discussions.

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Medan, 2023

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Name

Ulama, Education, Public Space, and Local Tolerance in Langsa Aceh

Abstract: This article reviews the perspectives of ulama in shaping the locality of tolerance in the public sphere of education in Langsa, Aceh by highlighting the fact that there is local tolerance as a critical argument against the hegemony of the universal meaning of tolerance. Using a qualitative methodology, this article explores the perspective of scholars regarding the limits of tolerance such as clothing, social interaction, religious and organizational activities, and the right to receive religious education among non-Muslim students and students. This study produced several findings, first, the way to treat diversity in the Langsa-Aceh public education space is distinctive because the ulama's perspective on tolerance presents local practice both in terms of dress styles, religious and organizational activism, and religious education. Second, the perspective of these scholars reconstructs the meaning of tolerance which was originally universal in a direction that is local and contextual.

Keywords: Ulama, Locality, Tolerance, and Education.

INTRODUCTION

The issue raised in this paper is about the locality of tolerance in the public sphere of education. The hegemonic meaning of universal tolerance not only does not get a place in the historical space, but also stifles the breath of various local cultures. Instead of the universality of the meaning of tolerance being able to create global peace, it actually triggers horizontal conflict at the local level. Forst¹ emphasized the possibility of varying expressions of tolerance in each social group. In other words, what is considered intolerant by a group (*social acceptance*) involves the rejection of another people whom we perceive as different (*social rejection*).

Such a tendency is found in Langsa. The experiences of Yetty, Nita, Dina et al., who were intimidated by local youths to pause their spiritual choral practice at a boarding house in Langsa², may generally be regarded as intolerant to the

* 46 responding Author

¹ Rainer Forst, *Tolerance in Conflict: Past and Present*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

² Yetty, Nita, dan Dina (nama samaran), wawancara dengan Mahasiswi di salah satu kompleks kos-kosan di Meurandeh-Langsa, 9 April 2017.

outsiders, but in local perception it is precisely considered tolerant. Likewise, when Tgk Syech Muhajir Usman (Dayah Darul Huda Langsa) asked the authorities to lower the red lanterns in the shopping area installed by the Indonesian Chinese Marga Social Association (PSMTI) during the Chinese New Year celebrations. Despite the opposition of academics, the lanterns were eventually forced to be taken down. Among the distinctive tolerance, the authority of the clergy, and the privilege of implementing the Shari'a succeeded in coloring Langsa as a new local tolerance in Indonesia.

Actually, the face of tolerance in Indonesia's past need not be doubted. Various ethnicities, races, religions and customs, since the beginning³⁰, have bound themselves in one national knot called Pancasila. Likewise with historical records of the spread of Islam in Indonesia, which was pursued through peaceful channels. According to Azra, the presence of Islam accommodates locality. Islam in Indonesia exists through these values and methods.³

However, in the last two decades, the issue of intolerance as a product of radicalism has become increasingly questioned. Noorhaidi Hasan indicated the emergence of religious militancy movements which threatened minorities after Suharto's rule because of the state's failure to care for diversity.⁴ More than that, Masduki argued that there was "infiltration" of salafi groups through the media, especially radio broadcasts in Indonesia.⁵

Salim demonstrated the strong interplay between Islam and politics in the last two elections (2014 and 2019) as religious issues influenced the vote. Political contestation with religious nuances triggers intolerance in various regions as Sumaktoyo said that religious adherences potentially demonstrates religious sentiment through politics.⁶

Initially, intolerance targeted Jokowi as a presidential candidate. Furthermore, it affected minority groups such as Chinese descent and non-Muslims..

The Wahid Foundation and the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) 1 August 2016 presented the results of their collaborative survey on the Potential for Intolerance and Religious Social Radicalism among Indonesian Muslims showing that the continuation of maintenance of tolerance in Indonesia is still

³ Azyumardi Azra, "Islam Washatiyah: Masa Depan Islam Indonesia, dalam Azyumardi Azra, d³⁴ *Islam Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: UII Press, 2020).

⁴ Noorhaidi Hasan, "Religious Diversity and Blasphemy Law: Understanding Growing Religious Conflict and Intolerance in Post-Suharto Indonesia" 55, no. 1 (2017): 105.

⁵ dan Toni Hartono Masduki, Akh. Muzakki, Imron Rosidi, "Islam on the Air: The Struggle for *Islam Through Radio in Indonesia* 12, no. 1 (2022).

⁶ Victor Ottati and Vinaya Untoro Nathanael Gratias Sumaktoyo, "The Paradoxical Religiosity Effect: Religion and Politics in Indonesia and the United States", *Politics and Religion* 9, no. 3 (2016): 481.

very worrying. out of 1,520 respondents, 59.9 percent had groups they hated. In fact, as much as 92.2 percent of the 59.9 percent do not agree if the party they hate becomes a government official in Indonesia. Worse yet, as many as 82.4 percent are not willing if the hated party becomes their neighbour.⁷

Intolerance is very prone to occur in areas where the majority are adherents of certain religions. Aceh has the potential for acts of intolerance not only because Muslims are the majority but also because of the shariatization of Islam.⁸ The SETARA Institute report on the 2017 Tolerance Cities Index (IKT) shows that Banda Aceh is the second city with the lowest tolerance score (intolerance). Apart from various reactions of rejection and acceptance, Banda Aceh as the second intolerant city in Indonesia represents intolerance throughout Aceh. Especially in areas that have public schools and campuses. Because schools and campuses are public sphere⁹.

Perkembangan minoritas sangat pesat di Langsa selain karena keberadaan Universitas Samudera (UNSAM) yang dalam beberapa tahun terakhir telah bermetamorfosis menjadi kampus negeri umum, letak geografis Langsa di pintu gerbang Aceh yang posisinya tidak terlalu jauh dari Medan turut mempermudah akses kelompok Kristen Sumatera Utara menjangkau kota ini.

Based on the author's observations, there are female students who do not wear the hijab around the University of Samudera (UNSAM). Its number has increased compared to three years ago and is now a new phenomenon. Most of them did not know that UNSAM was in Langsa-Aceh because the campus name was not attached.¹⁰ As a citizen comer, as Olberg terms it, they will experience culture shock because it is completely different from its origin which alienates them.¹¹

As described above, this research does not justify various acts of intolerance, but rather focuses on framing local tolerance in the public sphere of education by local ulamas in Langsa which influences the construction of universal tolerance. Dress, religious learning methods, religious activism, and interfaith social interactions in Langsa educational public spaces are the focus of this research.

⁷ Mustamar Iqbal Siregar, "PENDEKATAN ANTROPOLOGI DALAM PENDIDIKAN ISLAMUNTUK MERAWAT KEMAJEMUKAN," *Aceh Anthropological Journal* 2, no. 1 (2018).

⁸ Kamaruzzaman Bustaman-Ahmad, "The Application of Islamic Law in Indonesia; The Case Study of Aceh", *International Journal Of Indonesian Islam-Australia* 01, no. 01 (2007).

⁹ Jurgen Habermas, "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into Category of Bourgeois Society" 7, no. 3 (2010).

¹⁰ Siregar, "PENDEKATAN ANTROPOLOGI DALAM PENDIDIKAN ISLAMUNTUK MERAWAT KEMAJEMUKAN."

¹¹ Ibid.

METHODE

This research is descriptive-analytical using in-depth interviews. As key informants, the Langsa clerics were divided into three groups, namely local dayah ulamas, The Aceh Ulama Consultative Council (MPU) of Langsa, and academic clerics. In addition, students and teachers are supporting informants in describing tolerance in the public sphere of education in Langsa. Due to convenience considerations, the identity of the students in this study was disguised (*hidden identity*).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Diversity in Langsa: A Panorama

Langsa—demographically—is very heterogeneous. In contrast to other districts/cities in Aceh which tend to be homogeneous one. Religious adherence is the most exotic panorama of diversity there. The Chinese are one of the ethnic and religious minority groups that contribute to the diversity in Langsa.¹² Right in the heart of the city, you can clearly see stalls owned by Chinese citizens lined up neatly with various types of products being sold. But along the way, all sell halal products. There are no gambling locations, not even "thigh exhibition" as a common style for modern Chinese women as is the case in other cities outside Aceh. This is how Chinese women adapt their bodies within the framework of Islamic law in Langsa. Chinese children also colored the face of diversity in the Langsa educational public space. They generally study from elementary school (SD) to public high school (SMU) in Langsa. However, most prefer higher education institutions outside Aceh. Students from North Sumatra create diversity in the education space in Langsa

Ansor and Meutia point out the potential for diversity among teachers in Langsa.¹³ In a different article, Ansor referred to it as *politics of the female body*¹⁴, like a ploy to escape various cynicisms and checks. Even though the sharia rules in Aceh regarding clothing are not meant to discipline non-Muslims, it cannot be denied that officials often raid them.

In recent years, regarding controlling the headscarf, the Shari'a public space in Langsa has been more tolerant than other areas in Aceh. Minorities experience a shift in habitus – which in Bourdieu's classification includes

¹² Kong Yuanzhi, " *Silang Budaya Tiongkok-Indonesia* ((Jakarta: Bhuana Ilmu Populer, 2005), 25

¹³ Muhammad Ansor dan Cut Intan Meutia, " *Jilbab dan Reproduksi Identitas Perempuan Kristen Ruang Publik Sekolah Aceh*, Jurnal Kawistara, n.d.

¹⁴ Muhammad Ansor, " *Being Women in the Land of Shari'a: Politics of the Female Body, Piety, and Resistance in Langsa, Aceh*, *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 52, no. 1 (2014).

lifestyle, values, and disposition – towards symbolic liberalization (without head covering). Such a panorama can be seen in several places towards the University of Ocean. Minority freedom without headscarves in Langsa is inseparable from the influence of Muslim intellectuals at IAIN Langsa who are identified as an organic intellectual class as popularized by Antonio Gramsci who is next to the oppressed group¹⁵ such as Ansor, Febriandi¹⁶, Miswari¹⁷, who pay attention to minority issues through their works¹⁸ in *Al-Jami'ah*¹⁹, *Studia Islamika*²⁰, *IJIMS*²¹, and *Journal of Social Science and Religion*²².

Apart from that, in Langsa there is also one active church as a place of worship for Christians. Every visitor who rides on the carriage in Merdeka Square is always brought past in front of the church.

Ahead of the new year 2022, the writer and his family deliberately got on the carriage to ask what the coachman's opinion was about the church. He said: "... This is the only church in Langsa. This church is already uninhabited. What he expressed, borrowing the social theory popularized by Herbert Blumer, is symbolic interactionism as a form of reaction interpretive in interpreting reality. Regardless of whether the meaning is correct or not, narratives of cynicism towards minorities still surface in the public space of Langsa City. This is a "fire

¹⁵ Donald V. Kurtz, "Hegemony and Anthropology: Gramsci, Exegeses, Reinterpretations," *Critique of Anthropology* 16, no. 2 (1996): 103–135.

¹⁶ Yogi Febriandi and Yaser Amri, "Stuck in Sharia Space: The Experiences of Christian Students to Reside in Langsa, Aceh," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 59, no. 1 (May 26, 2021): 33–56, accessed October 7, 2022, <https://www.aljamiah.or.id/index.php/AJIS/article/view/59102>.

¹⁷ Miswari, "Mu'dilat Al-Aqlīyah Al-Masīḥīyah Fī Ḥudūd Balaḡ Al-Sharī'ah Al-Islāmīyah," *Studia Islamika* 25, no. 2 (August 31, 2018): 351–403, accessed October 7, 2022, <https://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/studia-islamika/article/view/6978>.

¹⁸ Menarik untuk dicermati bahwa Muhammad Ansor bukanlah putra kelahiran Langsa. Ia berasal dari Riau yang mendapatkan amanah kerja sebagai Dosen IAIN Langsa-Aceh. Meskipun ia bukan putra Langsa, namun karya-karyanya seputar multikulturalisme adalah patron bagi Dosen-Dosen lainnya, termasuk para aktivis organisasi yang *concern* di bidang HAM dan gender.

¹⁹ Muhammad Ansor, "Being Woman in the Land of Shari'a: Politics of the Female Body, Piety, and Resistance in Langsa, Aceh," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 52, no. 1 (June 8, 2014): 59–24, accessed October 7, 2022, <https://aljamiah.or.id/index.php/AJIS/article/view/52103>.

²⁰ Muhammad Ansor, Ismail Fahmi Arrauf, and Yaser Amri, "Under The Shadow of Sharia: Christian Muslim Relations from Acehnese Christian Experience," *Komunitas* 8, no. 1 (March 18, 2016): 471–515, accessed October 7, 2022, <https://journal.unnes.ac.id/nju/index.php/komunitas/article/view/4966>.

²¹ Ibid., 125–134.

²² Yaser Ansor, Muhammad; Amri, "Beyond Pious Critical Agency: Women, Interfaith Marriage and Religious Conversion in Aceh," *Analisa: Journal of Social Science and Religion* 1, no. 2 (2016): 217–238.

in the husk" that can trigger horizontal conflict any time, at least forming a negative domination.³⁶

Multiculturalism in the public sphere of Langsa education still leaves a number of problems. Provision of teachers and lecturers of Christian Religion has not been fulfilled as it should. Even though the National Education System Law of 2003 has mandated the obligation to provide religious education that is the same as the student's religion and taught by teachers who share the same religion as the student. As a result, the process of religious education for Christians is provided in the form of two options. *First*, they attend Islamic lectures and learning as other Muslim students or students, and then, they attend services at the Church for one semester while the grades are given based on consideration of the grades inscribed by the Church administrators. But in general, multiculturalism in Langsa's public space is more advanced. The works of progressive Muslim scholars (Muslim intellectuals) who consistently criticize negative domination have also contributed to this progress. In fact, their works experienced a peak of revitalization after the theme of religious moderation emerged as a national hot issue. Local ulamas of Dayah will be the toughest challenge. Instead of launching an agenda of religious moderation in Langsa, progressive scholarly Muslim groups in IAIN Langsa will instead be faced with the dynamics of contestation of authority with local ulamas.

Ulama, Authority and Contestation in Langsa

The history of Aceh's clergy has been going on for a long time. Arskal Salim²³ said that the Acehnese ulama had a significant role in determining the framing of Islamic identity in Aceh. The activities of the All Aceh Ulama Association (PUSA) led by Daud Beueh²⁴ the early days of independence were evidence of the significance of the role of the Acehnese ulama in socio-political dynamics.²⁴ Likewise, during the reform period, the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh cannot be separated from the role of the Acehnese ulamas.²⁵

¹² Arskal Salim, *Challenging the Secular State: The Islamization of Law in Modern Indonesia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009).

²⁴ Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2014).

²⁵ Salim, *Challenging Secul. State Islam. Law Mod. Indones.*

Broadly speaking, the concept of Islam that is positivized through qanuns related to sharia, such as the prohibition of spreading heretical sects, gambling, drinking, obscenity, khalwat, are religious provisions that are framed through the production of interpretations by ulamas in Aceh.

Langsa, in the landscape of the past did not have many famous scholars. Alkaf²⁶ as a Lecturer at IAIN Langsa stated that, "at least there is the name Ismail Thajeb Paja Budjok who is known by the great PUSA scholars. Unfortunately, local ulamas in Langsa were unable to promote it as a center for establishing religious authority."

In the context of Langsa, the Ulama can be divided into three forms, the MPU, academic Ulama, and the ulama of dayah. Using Antonio Gramsci's theory²⁷, The second category of scholars can be divided into two, organic intellectuals and traditional intellectuals, where organic intellectuals are intellectuals who use their intellectual expression to advocate for victims of oppression and injustice while traditional intellectuals draw more embarrasment lines between science and social reality. They are more oriented towards academic careers so that the boundaries between academics and the socio-political reality of their environment are maintained. The third category are ulamas based in dayah. They are generally closer to the basis of proletarian society.

In general, the authority of the ulama in social life cannot be underestimated. Not only dealing with religious issues, but the legitimacy of the ulama also penetrated government affairs. In fact, the existence of the ulama is often seen as a threat to every regime. But the role of the ulama continues to survive in social life even though a sultan, ruler, or a dynasty has been destroyed.²⁸ However, internally, the variant ulama in Langsa contest authority not only in thought but in charismatic political struggles. Da'wah stage contests have often taken place in public spaces.

Being Tolerant in Langsa Education Public Space

Introducing the values of multiculturalism into the public sphere of education which produces the tradition of multicultural education has positioned tolerance as what Banks conceptualized as a single space accommodation for all students with different backgrounds in each learning process. The most graceful expectation is how to present a learning atmosphere that avoids intolerance. The

²⁶ Alkaf, wawancara dengan Dosen IAIN Langsa (Langsa).

²⁷ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1932).

²⁸ Glasbe Cyril, *Ensiklopedi Islam* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2002), 417.

atmosphere of multicultural education referred to by Banks as “*people colour*”,²⁹ described in three forms of manifestation, first, the establishment of positive treatment among students of different ethnic, racial, ethnic, religious and cultural differences. Second, stimulating student endurance by teaching them how to decide and be socially skilled. Third, positively portray diversity to students.³⁰ However, such construction operationally necessitates different interpretations when engaging in dialogue with social reality.

⁴⁹ According to Kuhn, social reality is constructed based on a particular **mode of thought** or **mode of inquiry**, resulting in a particular **mode of knowing** as well. Meanwhile, in Kant's assumption, "how to know" can be referred to as a conceptual scheme. Marx named it as ideology; while Wittgenstein named it as a language reserve.³¹ A typical social reality in a typical Langsa will reconstruct a different meaning of tolerance. Cannot be equated with other regions, because naturally, tolerance is negotiated with local traditions.

The general criteria for tolerance require openness, volunteerism, generosity, and gentleness in diversity, which is accompanied by a respectful attitude, acceptance of different people, and positive thinking. Such an attitude will facilitate interfaith dialogue and interaction.³² Aceh in general will certainly face many problems when these criteria are used as parameters. Aceh will continue to be considered as an intolerant area because the parameters of tolerance used are different from the construction of meaning and criteria for tolerance among the Acehnese. So, what is called tolerance in other areas is not necessarily the same as in Langsa.

Quasi Muslim Dress

There are two types of clothing worn by non-Muslim women in Langsa's educational public space as "Muslimah dress" and "quasi Muslimah dress". Non-Muslim women also wear headscarves, long-sleeved clothes and long skirts for the following reasons: *First*, Muslimah dress worn by non-Muslims is only a political body for adaptation and personal comfort. *Second*, this way of dressing is camouflage in nature which actually obscures the identity of diversity. However, the clothes that are commonly worn by non-Muslim women in Langsa and can be constructed as "tolerance clothing" are "Muslimah-like" clothing,

³⁷ James A. Banks, "Multicultural Education: Historical Development, Dimensions, And Practice," *Review of Research in Education* (1993).

³⁰ D.J. Skeel, *Elementary Social Studies: Challenge for Tomorrow's World* (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1995).

³¹ Kuntowijoyo, *Paradigma Islam: Interpretasi Untuk Aksi* (Bandung: Mizan Pustaka, 2008),

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³² Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama, *Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), 444.

where the non-Muslim women dress like Muslim students at the madrasa but do not wear a headscarf. This kind of dress tolerance is only found in Aceh, especially in Langsa, as shown in the following portrait.



Picture 1: A Chines-Buddhis schoolgirl of SDN 11 Langsa.

According to Zulkarnain (Chairman of the interfaith harmony forum) Langsa, the issue of wearing the headscarf for non-Muslim women is actually no longer controversial in Aceh. This is because, apart from the obligation to wear the headscarf in the Qonun, it is only intended for Muslim women, the scholars also disagree if this obligation is imposed on non-Muslims.³³

In line with this view, Bustami (The National Assimilation Forum Chairman) of Langsa said that non-Muslim students do not have to wear Muslim clothes (hijab).³⁴

The opinion of the local ulama in Langsa regarding tolerance for clothing is a "win win solution" between the necessity of maintaining universal tolerance on the one hand, and the will to maintain public order on the other. Not only in women, men's bodies also take part in order. Therefore, for non-Muslims in Aceh, non-Muslims in Aceh can dress "quasi Muslim" as a tolerant way of disciplining the body in order to avoid various crimes. This is in line with Foucault³⁵ who said that the body is seen as an object of discipline because the wildness of the body is believed to create social instability.

Studying Other Religions?

Caring for diversity in the public sphere of education is getting religious education. Because the teaching of religion in schools is not in accordance with

³³ Zulkarnain, wawancara dengan Ketua MPU yang sekaligus Ketua FKUB Kota Langsa, 19 Juli 2017.

³⁴ Bustami, wawancara dengan Ketua Pimpinan Daerah Muhammadiyah, 19 Juli 2017.

³⁵ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 47.

the religion of the students, the Government through Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System article 12 confirms that every student has the right to access religious education taught by teachers of the same religion. However, the realization of these provisions is almost impossible in Langsa. According to Bustami,³⁶ religious education and its teachers/lectures for adherents of other religions in Langsa has not been facilitated in schools and UNSAM.

One of the models of religious education for non-Muslims in Langsa is as stated by Ilyas³⁷, an Islamic Religious Education teacher at SMK N 3, that apart from having to attend weekly services at the church and the monastery, they also take written exams in religious subjects for non-Muslims made by the church. At UNSAM, students take part in Islamic lectures and attend services every week at the church.³⁸

Responding to this, Zulkarnain, Bustami and Kamarullah said that non-Muslim students did not need to study Islam. It is better for them to study religion in their respective places of worship and be guided by a priest.³⁹

In line with the considerations of local ulama in Langsa who consider that religious education is not merely a transfer of knowledge, Riberu⁴⁰ revealed that religious education can be called authentic because it presents knowledge materials while at the same time endeavoring experience and appreciation of values (reasoning of values) in the setting of conditions and the environment of social life. In the context of appreciation, human development is directed at conscious experience of values (werterlebnis). Departing from this conscious experience, there is also an appreciation for every value encountered (wertschatzung). On the basis of this belief in values, it will be easier for everyone to accept the values that enter into them (wetbejaung). So that everyone will radiate positive energy in responding to the values they receive (wertenscheidung) as well as embodying them (werbestatigung) in everyday life.

Thus, granting the right to "learn other religions" in the public sphere of education according to Langsa scholars is an inappropriate attitude. The handover of non-Muslim students and students to be guided in their respective houses of worship by mentors of the same religion is seen by Langsa scholars as the most tolerant solution in the midst of a shortage of non-Muslim religious educators. However, this situation cannot be allowed to continue so that the local

³⁶ Bustami, wawancara dengan Ketua Pimpinan Daerah Muhammadiyah, 19 Juli 2017.

³⁷ Ilyas, wawancara dengan Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam SMK N. 3 Langsa, 31 Juli 2017.

³⁸ dan Dina Yetty, Nita, *Wawancara Dengan Mahasiswi Di Salah Satu Kompleks Kos-Kosan Di Meurandeh* (Langsa, 2017).

³⁹ Zulkarnain, wawancara dengan Ketua MPU Kota Langsa, 19 Juli 2017.

⁴⁰ Riberu J," in *Pendidikan: Kegelisahan Sepanjang Zaman* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2001).

government needs to coordinate with the central government to fulfill the ideal religious education for non-Muslims to be realized in Langsa.

Receiving "Half A Heart"

Complete acceptance of the existence of followers of various religions/beliefs is a challenge in Indonesia, especially to open space for different religious activities. The complete acceptance of other religions in most regions in Indonesia may be realized, but in areas where the majority of certain religions is absolute, such as in Aceh, this becomes a problem.

Zulkarnain⁴¹ said that the rejection of the establishment of the Langsa Christian Student Association by the Langsa Government was not only because they did not meet the qualifications but also an indication of missionaryization.

The suspicion that links social religious activities with the missionary agenda, in the ideal concept of universal tolerance shows an attitude of "half-hearted" acceptance of different parties. At a higher escalation, these negative suspicions can tarnish the face of multicultural education in Langsa as Hidalgo⁴² said that truly free from racism and sexism, as well as other forms of social domination and intolerance.

Local Tolerance in Langsa

As a universal value, tolerance harmonizes local realities. Some of its values are accepted, some are interpreted differently due to cultural differences. Similar to Islam, its presence in social history necessitates dialogical interactions with various local cultures. Ricklefs assesses that there are two possibilities that occur when Islam greets local culture. First, conversion to Islam, second, assimilation with the natives through marriage.⁴³

Syam refers to the contact of Islam and local culture as a process of integration and new unity.⁴⁴ Presumably this last method is more appropriate to call the pattern of interaction between tolerance values and locality in Langsa.

The distinguished tolerance in Langsa presents a narrative of locality in the discourse of tolerance. But in the realm of education, raises a number of

⁴¹ Zulkarnain, wawancara dengan Ketua MPU Kota Langsa, 19 Juli 2017.

⁴² Francisco Hidalgo, "in *"Multicultural Education Landscape for Reform in the Twenty-First Century*, 2001.

⁴³ M. C. Ricklefs, "in *Sejarah Indonesia Modern 1200-2008*, terj. Tim Serambi (Jakarta: serambi, 2009), 9.

⁴⁴ Nur Syam, *Islam Pesisir*, (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1999), 81.

problems. The most fundamental thing is because Aceh on the one hand is a special region, while education is not autonomous on the other hand. However, tolerance in Aceh in general can ³⁶used as a basis for "excuse" of local tolerance.

Even though tolerance in the public sphere of Langsa education is constructed in a distinctive manner and different from the mainstream of Indonesia, the space for understanding it remains temporary because social dynamics that continue to move progressively are a necessity. Even the urge to direct the meaning and practice of tolerance as sub-multiculturalism in the public sphere of Langsa education to its essence will be difficult to avoid. This pressure will race against the wishes of the mainstream of society who want the preservation of local traditions. In this case, local tolerance can be inserted as an in-between agenda to achieve the primacy of peaceful life and continuity of shared education. So that what is considered intolerant outside Aceh becomes commonplace in the local Acehnese community.

Robinson's concept of "religious intolerance" for example, which shows the broad scope of intolerance cannot fully apply in Aceh. He outlined seven forms of intolerance in religion, which include: 1. Dissemination of false or wrong information about belief groups or religious practices, even though the inaccurate information can be easily checked and corrected; 2. Dissemination of hate speech against a group; for example issuing utterances either in explicit or implied form that members of a certain group are considered evil, not good, committing crimes (crimes), and so on; 3. Issue expressions of mockery or belittling a group with certain religious beliefs and practices; 4. Conduct attempts to force religious beliefs and practices on other people to follow their teachings or beliefs; 5. Limiting human rights to members of certain identified religious groups; 6. Devaluing other religions as worthless or considered evil; 7. Obstructing the freedom of others to convert their religion.⁴⁵

As a parameter of intolerance, the seven indicators are generally acceptable, but their explicit operational interpretation in Aceh is still debatable. The misunderstanding in distinguishing between religious activism and missionaryism among Christians is an example. Even the use of Christian religious symbols can be considered as a "missionary agenda" which is then categorized as intolerant. These kinds of things are called local wisdom, which cannot be compared to other areas outside Aceh.

CONCLUSION

This paper shows that the ulema are the holders of social authority in shaping local cultural wisdom in Aceh, especially in Langsa. Their perspective

¹⁷ Tim Penyusun, *Laporan Kebebasan Beragama/Berkeyakinan dan Toleransi 200*, (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2010), 23-24.

is the basis for implementing local tolerance in Langsa, including in the public sphere of education. Meanwhile, the public sphere of education, which necessitates the implementation of the national system, faces a dilemma with local tolerance in Langsa. The granting of the right to receive religious education according to the religion of students and to be taught by teachers of the same religion cannot be fully realized there. Likewise with existential "restrictions" and religious activities through student religious organizations. In this "restriction", the ulema worried there would be an insertion of a missionary agenda against the majority of Muslims which would undermine their faith. In addition, even though local ulama support are not imposing the headscarf for non-Muslims, the imposition of modest clothing is still emphasized. What the author refers to as "quasi Muslim" in this paper is dressing like a madrasah schoolgirl but not wearing a headscarf. Meanwhile, non-Muslim schoolboys are not allowed to wear shorts even at the elementary school level. Thus, due to the absolute Muslim majority and distinctive local cultural wisdom, the implementation of tolerance in Langsa is not the same as in other regions in Indonesia. A locality-style tolerance concept is needed that is acculturative in terms of dress to care for diversity in Langsa.

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