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THE LATENT TRANSFORMATION PROCESS OF THE FREE ACEH MOVEMENT IDEOLOGY AFTER THE PEACE AGREEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM), translated as the Free Aceh Movement, was established in 1976 with the aim of separation from the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). After more than 30 years of rebellion against the central government, the two sides reconciled in 2005. One of the most important points agreed upon is that Aceh remains within the framework of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia. However, once the peace agreement was completed, former GAM combatants could still promote their ideology and symbols in latent forms in their families, in formal organizations and in the community at large. This research aims to describe in detail and analyze the latent process of the ideological transformation of the Free Aceh Movement conducted by former GAM combatants through their families, formal institutions or the social environment in general. The results of the study indicate that

a latent separatist ideology is still being promoted by former GAM members, both in Aceh and abroad. At the family level, GAM members do not allow their family members to use the Indonesian language or respect the red-and-white Indonesian flag and urge their family members to read books written by Hasan Tiro about Aceh independence and to hold former GAM leaders in high regard. The findings also show that the Milad GAM ceremony is still held every 4th of December in two separate regions, the northeastern coastal region and the southwestern region. From this research, it can be concluded that since the peace agreement, the promotion of GAM symbols and ideology has been an iceberg phenomenon: only a small part is visible on the surface, but the roots are very deep and have a negative impact on the sustainability of Aceh's peace within the framework of the Unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

As a large country, Indonesia has an opportunity to play an important role in the international arena in this global era, especially in Southeast Asia. The potential of Indonesia in the form of its social and cultural diversity and natural resources is its strength in building strong beneficial cooperative relationships. Such international relations are possible with the realization of peace, stability and security. In world history, the aspect of security, a universal concept that can be translated in all sectors of life, has been paramount in the pursuit of ideal development. The concept can be categorized in two forms: state security and human security.

In relation to state security, Buzan, Waever and de Wilde (1998) in Hidayat (2017: 110) emphasize that "the security concept is closely related to sectoral security and the concept of securitization". However, the two studies focus on the state as responsible for both military and nonmilitary threats. This focus is reflected in fundamental statements in response to the ontological issues surrounding the following question: what is security? The answer to this question is manifested in the form of existential threats and emergency measures. The security concepts proposed by Buzan, Waever and de Wilde consist of military, political, economic, social and environmental security.

Security is also viewed from the perspective of human security; for example, the United Nations (UNDP) states that "human security consists of three principles: Freedom from fear, Freedom from want, and Freedom to live in dignity." On the basis of the above three principles, "The most dominant one is that the strengthening of ideas and efforts within the framework of human security is a reaction to the humanitarian problems that engulf the world today, ranging from refugees to conflict and physical violence, children and women, food issues, terrorism, illegal weapons trade, human rights violations, and so on" (UNDP, 2015).

Security disturbances can be classified on three scales: small, medium, and severe. A separatist movement is a security disorder with severe and dangerous categories and can have a negative impact on an area where separatism grows and develops. Moreover, separatism is not just a disturbance of security when it results in systemic violence that threatens the existence of democratic human communities. Viewed conceptually, human security produces a variety of interpretations that can be perceived from the different perspectives of power and order of interests. Both types of interest are managed by state actors as well as nonstate institutions, even individuals. Separatism may refer to a nationalist group that tries to secede from a state to form a new state. The motivation of such separatist groups is usually ethnic pride, and such efforts can result in civil war. Separatism is related to the concept of nationalism, in which a nation becomes its reference. From a historical aspect,

several factors lead to the emergence of separatist movements. For example, Hartati (2010) in his research concluded that

“the emergence of separatists is caused by three factors: (1) one of them being political injustice. For instance, a totalitarian government that does not provide enough opportunity for its citizens to express their political demands and interests. Even if there is an election, it tends to be a tool to perpetuate and justify the regime in power. Political regimes like these often suppress the aspirations and desires of a group of people, but sometimes also exploit most of the community. Such heavy political pressure, to some extent, leads to the birth of separatist movements. (2) Economic factors. At the beginning of the reform period in Indonesia, some oil-rich and forest-producing regions demanded a fair share of resources from the government. Economic interests of local people, however, are not the only motive that can encourage separatism. The economic interests of foreign countries also play an important role in the separatist movement in many countries. From the history of world politics, we know where there are US and European roles (especially Britain and France), economic interests are always prominent. This economic interest is also an important factor in the entry of foreign intervention or role. And (3) ideological factors can emerge in line with the presence of a new understanding of the order of life. The failure of secular states to organize human life encourages people to seek alternative ideologies.”

Furthermore, Anwar (2004) in Hartati (2010) emphasized that a number of separatist movements have a long history of "hate" feelings towards the central government and the dominant tribe or religion, resulting in a sense of dissatisfaction with the dominant tribe or group. Historically, separatist movements in Indonesia have their beginnings in a period after independence in 1945. Such movements include the Armed Forces of Indonesia (TII), which on August 7, 1949, proclaimed the establishment of an Islamic State of Indonesia (NII); the Republic of South Moluccas (RMS); the proclamation of the PRRI movement known as the Struggle of the Universe (Permesta); the Free Papua Organization (OPM), a nationalist movement established in 1965; and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), proclaimed in 1976 in Tiro, Aceh. These movements sought secession from the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and tried to establish their own states with their own ideology, which was often in conflict with the Indonesian national ideology of Pancasila. In the case of Aceh, separatists advanced not a single cause but various issues, ranging from economic factors, natural resources, and politics to cultural factors. As a result of the activities of this movement, development in Aceh lags far behind that in other parts of Indonesia. Therefore, it is not surprising that the poverty rate in Aceh has been below the national average every year, unemployment is always very high and even school dropout rates have remained high due to the manifestation of separatist ideology.

After more than 30 years of rebellion, the group reconciled with the central government in 2005, and one of the key points was that Aceh would remain in the NKRI framework. However, to date (12 years after the peace agreement), former GAM combatants are still promoting the values of their ideology in latent, covert forms. Initial observations indicate that former GAM combatants who currently hold high offices in Aceh's provincial and local governments tend to exploit the momentum of official government activities, both formal and informal, to promote the symbols and ideology of the Free Aceh Movement with anti-Pancasila connotations.

One large post-GAM organization that still wields enormous but diluted influence is the Aceh Transitional Committee (KPA). Legally, every organization must be

registered with the *Head of National Unity, Politics and Society Protection*. However, KPA organizations are not registered as legal entities but can easily access and utilize Aceh local government funds to implement their activities and interests. In addition to the KPA, former GAM combatants who are members of a local political party also engage in the covert promotion of GAM symbols to the public. In 2013, the Aceh House of Representatives (DPRA), where the majority of the seats are controlled by the KPA, passed Aceh regional law (*Qanun*) number 3 of 2013, which pertains to the flag and symbols of Aceh. One of the stipulations of the law, specified in Article 4 of Chapter II, is that the Aceh flag is adapted from the GAM flag of the conflict period without any distinction, even though the DPRA knew that the law contravened Government Regulation No. 77 of 2007 regarding regional symbols. Almost all of the articles contained in the *Qanun* are contradictory to Regulation No. 77 of 2007; thus, constitutionally, the *Qanun* is null and void, although members of the DPRA from Partai Aceh (PA) insist on its validity on the grounds that the legislative process is in line with official procedures and also that Aceh is a special area where the principle of *lex specialist derogate lex generalis* applies. They forget that the principle of *lex superior derogat legi inferior* also applies.

In this research, reference is made to previous research conducted by Efendi Hasan in 2007 with the title "*Free Aceh Movement and the History of Aceh*" and research conducted by Cut Maya Aprita Sari (2012) titled "*Hasan Tiro's Thinking: Concepts and Movements*" as well as research conducted by Hadiwinata et al. (2010) with the title "*Transformation of Free Aceh Movement: From Bullet Box to Ballot Box*."

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The reality described above shows that former GAM combatants are still promoting symbols of separatism that are clearly contrary to national laws. The promotion of separatism continues in Aceh, breeding sentiments of national disintegration; such activities are contrary to the spirit of unity and a threat to regional development. Based on the above discussion, this study aims to describe and analyze the latent process of transformation of the GAM ideology after the peace agreement.

METHODOLOGY

Based on the variables raised in this research topic, this study takes a qualitative approach. Bog and Taylor (Moleong 2006) note that a qualitative research procedure produces descriptive data in the form of the written or oral words of people and behavior that can be observed. In line with Bog and Taylor, Kirk and Miller (Moleong 2006) note that qualitative research as a tradition in social science is fundamentally dependent on the observation of humans both in their own regions and in their own terminology. The analysis is performed on an ex post facto basis, meaning data are collected after all events.

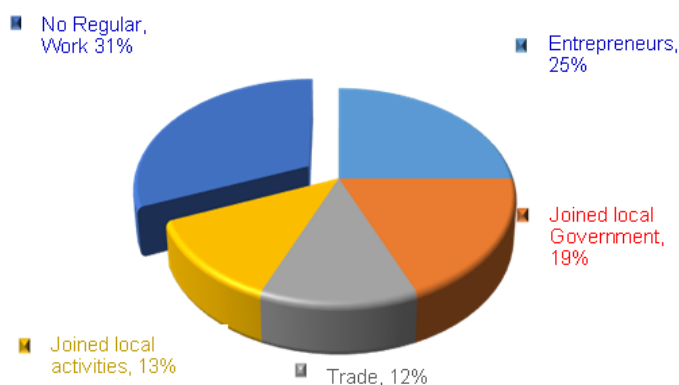
The informants in this study were former GAM combatants, living both in Indonesia and abroad; the selection of informants was determined purposively in the process of seeking information through in-depth interviews using the snowball technique. A review of documents related to this research was also conducted. The collected data were analyzed with the main principle of presenting the information in a descriptive form and simultaneously providing a meaning or interpretation to ensure that the information has scientific or theoretical significance. These data analysis techniques describe, organize and interpret data collected systemically using the interactive model analysis from Miles and Huberman (Moleong, 2006).

RESEARCH RESULTS

The study was conducted in 18 selected districts and cities from a total of 23 in Aceh. However, 8 districts were high-priority districts because they contained a considerable number of ex-GAM combatants. These 8 districts are predominantly located in the northeastern region, while the others are in East Aceh, North Aceh, Bireun, Lhokseumawe, Pidie, Pidie Jaya and Aceh Jaya. The other 10 districts have GAM members who joined the movement in the 2000s.

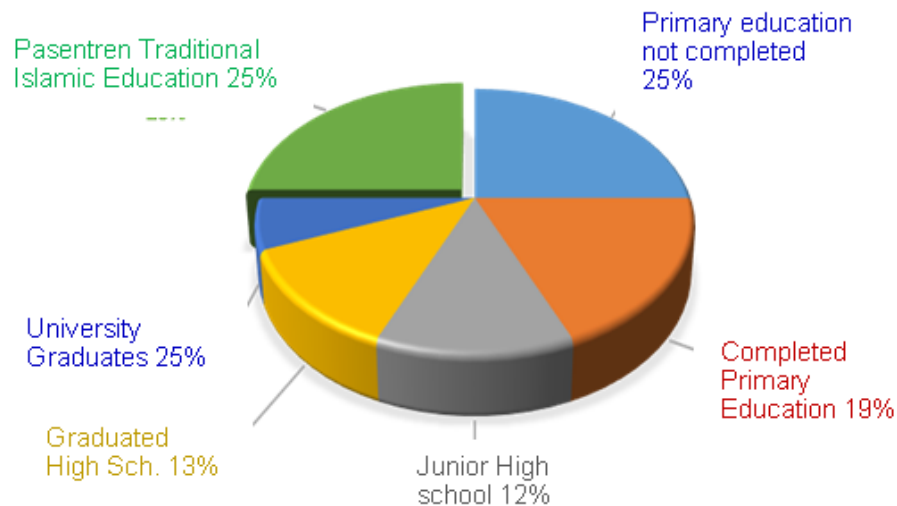
Sixteen ex-GAM members were interviewed by researchers over 3 months from July to early September 2017. After the peace agreement, under the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), 3000 GAM combatants were subject to a community reintegration process through which they were expected to return to their communities and work according to their capabilities and potential. GAM elites who held citizenship in other countries and remained abroad were excepted. The figure below represents the work performed by the former GAM combatants identified in this study.

Figure 1. The work of former GAM combatants post-peace



Based on the above chart, the occupations of former GAM combatants in the postpeace period is highly diverse, but the most dominant group is those without regular work or permanent jobs, who amount to as much as 31%. The second-largest group is post-peace GAM combatants who were found to be involved in entrepreneurial ventures, amounting to 25%. Those in the entrepreneurs category were found to have business connections and activities, especially in construction and supplies, that provide them with an opportunity to participate in government construction projects and procurement. Among the post-peace GAM combatants, 13% joined local political parties in Aceh, in this case Partai Aceh (PA), a party that they founded. The Aceh local government employs 19%, but according to the former GAM members, they work in the local government not as full civil servants but as contracted human resources hired through the influence of the local government head, who is also a former GAM combatant elected from the PA.

Figure 2. Education Level of former GAM combatants



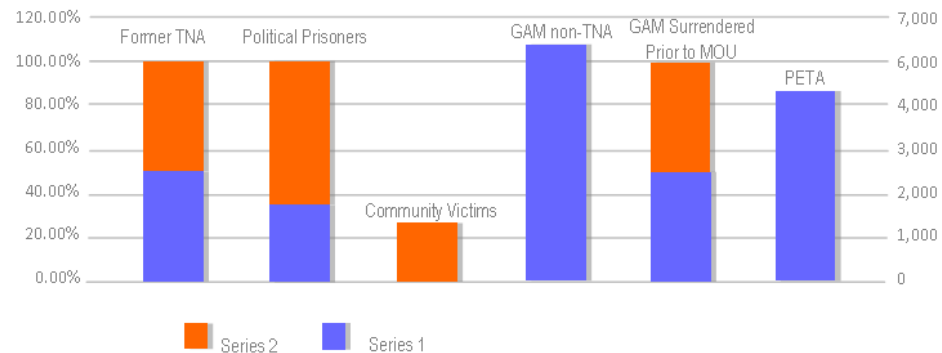
In addition, the post-peace GAM combatants who were informants in this study had diverse educational backgrounds. On average, although many completed elementary and secondary school, many did not attain higher education levels, as indicated in the chart below.

As the chart shows, the level of education attained by 25% of the former GAM combatants was predominantly an informal Islamic school education locally called *pesantren*, and another 25% did not complete primary school education. Only 6% received a bachelor's degree, one of whom, Azhar Abdurrahman, is a former governor of Aceh Jaya. High school graduates' amount to 13%, but the majority of those graduated with the C grade of the government education score scale. This lack of education is what has caused the lack of human resources quality among former GAM combatants. This lack of job training is closely linked to the pattern of employment of GAM ex-combatants and explains why they are mostly nonpermanent workers in certain sectors. From 2006 to 2017, former GAM combatants and noncombatants often took advantage of opportunities to work with the local government to generate income. Therefore, in the regional elections, they backed the election of a former GAM combatant as head of the local government and then mobilized to earn from the local government as workers, contractors and suppliers.

The Transformation of the Former GAM Combatant Ideology

The transformation of the Free Aceh Movement began in early 2006 following the peace agreement between GAM and the Indonesian Government in Helsinki in 2005. Viewed from the perspective of political transformation, the former GAM combatants continued to organize through the KPA. In addition, the KPA structure remained the same as that of GAM before the peace agreement, and Muzakir Manaf (Muallem) was still chairman of the Central AIDS Commission. The KPA structure consisted of a central board and district administrators called *Sagoe*. The main reason for the establishment of the KPA was to manage the integration of former combatants back into their communities, mainly to control any arrogant acts they might perform when returning to their communities. Despite these aims, many community members believe and acknowledge that the arrogance of GAM ex-combatants has continued from the time of the peace agreement to the present. In addition to establishing the KPA, former

GAM combatants also established local political parties, notably PA, which uses logos and symbols similar to the logos and symbols of GAM before the peace agreement.



The local party was agreed upon by consensus between GAM and the central government based in the consideration that it could become a channel through which former GAM combatants might channel their aspirations, rather than defiance. Political parties in the country must conform to the constitution of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila. In early 2006, GAM ex-combatants had not yet established a political party; they were allowed to advance in the elections through independent channels, and in the 2006 elections in Aceh, the governorship was won by former GAM combatant Irwandi Yusuf, who backed by former GAM combatants. His candidacy was agreed upon in a meeting dubbed "*Bansigom Donya*", when GAM returnees met in Darussalam to discuss the political future of former GAM members, including the Aceh Central Referendum Information (SIRA). The 2006 elections were won by former GAM combatants, and former GAM members were to be empowered with agreed-upon approaches to economic advantages and special treatment for former GAM members through the reintegration program, as mentioned above.

There are 6 elements of empowerment obtained specifically through the reintegration program. A recognized number, 3,000, of former GAM and *Tentara Neugara Aceh* (TNA) combatants were to benefit by the end of the BRA's reintegration program through economic empowerment, the question of political prisoners / non-TNA members, and the question of GAM members who had surrendered prior to the MoU. The reintegration of 100% of the former combatants in the program was achieved, and economic empowerment of up to 60% of the conflict-affected people was achieved as well as the economic empowerment of 80% of the former combatants of the *Defenders of the Homeland* (PETA). From this perspective, the economic empowerment of former GAM combatants was completed during the reintegration period; thus, there was no specific reason then or currently for former GAM combatants to make any demands of the central government related to their economic empowerment.

There are rumors that in 2006, Aceh reintegration funds were spent mostly on GAM elites, while former GAM combatants and conflict-affected communities received very little. After the election victory in 2006, former GAM members gained great access to government, not only at the provincial level but also at the district and city level. In the second period, from 2012 to the end of 2016, the Aceh elections were still being won by former members of GAM. Dr. Zaini Abdullah and Muzakir Manaf, the candidate for governor and his running mate, were backed by the PA, which was established by former GAM members. In addition to post conflict programs and tsunami relief funds, Aceh Province receives special financing from the Indonesian central government under its special autonomous region status, locally dubbed *Dana*

Otsus. Almost all large and medium projects are controlled by former GAM combatants, and regional leaders and GAM elites, especially in Sagoe, have made enormous material gains; even their family members have become very prosperous. Most ironic, however, is that former GAM combatants, both in the KPA and the PA, still support and promote the symbols of the Free Aceh Movement; in addition, former GAM combatants are still highly resistant to the name Indonesia and to Pancasila as the state ideology.

Field findings indicate that GAM combatants continue to transform their separatist ideology. However, under the Helsinki MoU, GAM groups no longer take up arms to realize their ideals. Instead, GAM groups fight for their interests through political channels. Up to 12 years after the Helsinki MoU, GAM as an organization has never been dissolved. The organization that was disbanded was the TNA, previously known as the Free Aceh Movement Force (*Angkatan Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (AGAM)). GAM in English is translated as *Aceh Sumatera National Liberation Front* (ASNLF).

Former GAM combatants in the KPA still exercise considerable control, and those currently in government are in high positions, such as regional heads, in regional councils, such as the Provincial Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* (DPR)) of Aceh, and in district- and city-level governments all over the province. GAM elites abroad, especially those in GAM Stockholm (Sweden), constitute the highest line of command line in the GAM power structure and include individuals such as Malik Mahmud, Dr. Zaini Abdullah, Bachtiar Abdullah, and Zakaria Saman Malik Mahmud, whose position is regarded as that of "*Wali Nanggroe*," succeeding the late Hasan Tiro. Some GAM Sweden elite and Tripoli, Libya, alumni were GAM field leaders who consolidated and ran the organization after the death of Hasan Tiro. In the post-Helsinki MoU period, former GAM members in the field underwent a number of metamorphoses, changing the organization and the style of ideology promotion and undergoing other changes as a means to internally consolidate their struggle and advance their demands under the guise of implementing the Helsinki MoU.

The KPA and PA are a form of metamorphosis that is being managed by the former GAM. Meanwhile, to support the political movement, especially in political contests at the local level, the group, especially through the PA, established Lembaga Ulama Nanggroe Aceh (LUNA)/ Institute of Aceh Nation Islamic Scholars as the Islamic scholars' (Ulama) wing. Previously, groups of Taliban clerics supported them under the influence of Abi Lampisang. Because of differences in vision, some factions in the PA eventually established another local political party. The PA then expanded its reach by forming LUNA. Meanwhile, the *Inong Balee* (former female GAM combatants) established the Inong Balee League of Aceh, which generally consisted of former women GAM combatants, under the chair of Sa'diyah Marhaban at the time. To achieve economic gain, GAM established certain companies; although these companies are not directly associated with KPA and GAM organizations, the presence of former GAM members in these economic organizations indirectly places them under the banner of GAM. Limited liability companies (PTs) were established, such as PT Pulau Gading in Lhokseumawe, to undertake high-profile economic contracts, while some former combatants/noncombatants of GAM formed small groups and registered small companies (CVs) and cooperatives to engage in lucrative government contracts; some individuals also became economic brokers.

The mastery of amassing economic assets and economic resources by former GAM members over two political terms (2006-2012 and 2012-2017) in provinces and districts has considerably enriched former GAM combatants and their families; many

already possess luxury homes and more than two luxury cars. This situation has generated a certain envy among the less-privileged former GAM combatants and dissatisfaction regarding the way their privileged comrades are handling affairs, to the extent that some have opted out of membership in the PA. Although such individuals have left the PA to join other local political parties, they still retain their separatist ideology, as expressed in their way of thinking, behavior and attitude.

For former GAM combatants, the different political parties have not been able to replace the ideology that has always existed in GAM's struggle for a dignified Aceh. Some are still convinced that Aceh will separate from the Republic of Indonesia and become a sovereign state. The general sentiment of the majority of former GAM members on policy issues is the wish that the highest authority in the KPA should have the power to issue binding decrees (fatwa) and declarations, including issues of candidate positioning for legislative council members and executive positions as well as certain positions in government.

Many former GAM members still yearn for the direction of their commanders in many issues in their lives. For them, the commander is the supreme leader who provides a fatwa with regard to the future of Aceh. However, Aceh's peaceful journey, which is now 12 years old, is also marked with political complexities among themselves in that their body is divided into two parts: old (senior) GAM and young GAM groups. Friction between the two groups makes young GAM members in the field often appear unstable, as among them are many loyalists who are ready to comply with instructions from high-ranking authorities. To date, former GAM combatants generally follow the *Muallem's* (scholar's) fatwa rather than following the old GAM groups. Thus, in the elections of 2017, older GAM figures, led by Dr. Zaini Abdullah and Zakaria Saman, joined young GAM leaders, primarily the *Muallem* and Abu Razak.

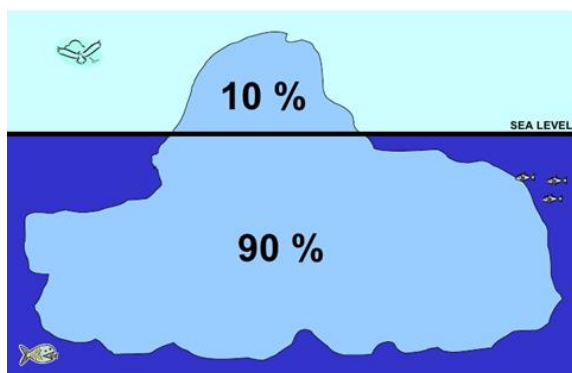
There are two issues that can be identified in regard to the transformation process of the separatist ideology of former GAM combatants: first, social jealousy between GAM's foes has resulted in the emergence of friction among the ex-combatants, and second, the difference between the old GAM group and the young GAM group indicates that internal conflicts in the former GAM body are still fertile. These two issues have led to the stagnation of Aceh's development in the hands of former GAM combatants, who are busy serving their own interests, and to internal strife between the old GAM and the young GAM. According to Galtung (1996), there are two forms of peace: positive and negative. A positive peace will have a good impact on the development of a society, whereas a negative peace will cause the cycle of conflict to resume. If we consider the theory of Galtung (1996), then what is occurring in Aceh can be classified as a form of negative peace; there is potential for the emergence of new movements that could disrupt the stability of the security and economic activities of the people despite this movement's intention to make Aceh a sovereign state. For example, armed groups such as Din Minimi have already emerged, and there is also potential for the emergence of another such group to advance the cause of the ASNLF.

Another new movement has the potential to break out like a time bomb. Within GAM was the TNA, which after the peace agreement morphed into the KPA and political parties. Currently, other versions of the TNA have emerged that engage aggressively in provocative actions through social media and print media. The TNA has been replaced by the *Teuntra Aceh Merdeka* (TAM), which has its own logo and symbols; however, its flag and emblem are similar to the flags and symbols of the former GAM, and it is assumed to be part of the continuation of the ideological struggle of the Free Aceh Movement after the peace agreement.

Latent Transformation

The research shows that before the peace agreement between GAM and the central government, the GAM ideology was spread overtly and was manifested in all GAM activities. The ideological manifestations of GAM prior to the peace agreement appeared in several ways, including (a) ideology and doctrine openly disseminated from the pulpit; the findings indicate that almost every coastal village in Aceh had GAM members who were obliged to utter political speeches. In addition to openly disseminating GAM ideology from the pulpit, the ideology was also spread through special training with materials that were only opposition to Pancasila and to the Republic of Indonesia. The importance of separating Aceh from Indonesia was emphasized based on the purported superiority of the Aceh race and the argument that the vast resources of Aceh should enable it to be a sovereign state. (b) The other means of ideological dissemination is through the formal training of youths and young women (inong bale). In each village, 10 individuals were trained for 4 months in their respective areas and in the doctrine and ideology of the independence of Aceh. After returning to their original area, they conducted the process of indoctrinating the people in their communities with the ideology of Aceh independence by introducing symbols and preaching the benefits of GAM. This activity is a continuous process.

Figure 3: Iceberg effect



After the peace agreement, GAM's ideological dispersal patterns were no longer manifested in formal acts but appeared in latent form. However, the process continues to occur. First, ideological dissemination is latently manifested in social units through the families of former GAM combatants, among whom the doctrine is strongly emphasized. For example, family members are prohibited from singing the Indonesian national anthem, are not allowed to use the Indonesian language in communications and are required to read the writings of Hasan Tiro, whose book is also known as the *Buraq-Lion* book, about Aceh. Second, socialization occurs through formal organizations, such as MUNA and KMPA, the Inong Aceh League and even local political parties. The GAM ideology of the importance of fighting for Aceh's interests and of the need for Aceh to become a sovereign state is consistently stressed in the activities of these organizations. The deployment of GAM's ideology after the peace agreement is an iceberg phenomenon, where only approximately 5-10% is visible on the surface, and the remaining 90-95% lies beneath the surface.

CONCLUSION

The process of ideological transformation of the Free Aceh Movement after the peace agreement has shifted from open to latent. The post-peace agreement approach to spreading GAM ideology and activities is an iceberg phenomenon, with the truth emerging only slightly and what lies below representing the actual size of the matter.

The transformation of separatist ideology by former GAM members has been carried out through family institutions, youth organizations and political organizations as well as social institutions and customs. The ideology dissemination process occurs through active indoctrination and passive indoctrination through the introduction of the symbols of GAM.

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