FASTABIQ AL-KHAIRĀT: ISLAMIC CONGREGATION AND EVERYDAY COMPETITION AMONG PURITAN AND TRADITIONALISTS MUSLIM IN ACEH

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Abstract
This paper explores the contestation between Puritanism and traditionalism in Muslim communities focused on case studies on the East Coast of Aceh by groups in urban religious recitation. The article addressing to the subject so far concludes that fundamentalism and traditionalism are two theological forces that are constantly in conflict with each other. This paper seeks to demonstrate that while interactions between the two groups are affected by doctrinal disputes, the two cultures are fairly effective in managing diversity, such that disparities in religious beliefs do not result in group tension and mass abuse. The data used in this research were collected through participatory evaluation, in-depth interviews and literature studies. Finally, this paper shows that the Acehnese people’s ability to care for tolerance, although it seems clear that the practical tolerance practiced by the people who are the subjects of this research has been redefined and contextualized in line with the situation of a community dominated by traditionalist Muslim groups.

Keywords: Islamic Congregation; Contestation; Traditionalist; Modernist; Puritan

Abstrak
Tulisan ini membahas pergulatan puritanisme dan tradisionalisme pada masyarakat Muslim berdasarkan studi kasus kelompok pengajian masyarakat urban di pesisir Timur Aceh. Sejauh ini artikel yang membahas tema ini menyimpulkan bahwa fundamentalisme dan tradisionalisme merupakan dua entitas keagamaan yang selalu konfrontatif antara satu sama lain. Tulisan ini bermaksud menunjukkan meskipun relasi antara dua komunitas tersebut diwarnai konflik doktrinal, kedua komunitas relatif berhasil mengelola keragaman sehingga perbedaan pandangan keagamaan tidak mengakibatkan konflik komunal dan kekerasan massa. Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatoris, wawancara mendalam maupun studi kepustakaan. Tulisan ini pada akhirnya memperlihatkan kemampuan masyarakat Aceh dalam merawat toleransi, meskipun tampak jelas bahwa praktek toleransi yang dipraktekkan masyarakat yang menjadi subyek penelitian ini telah

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diredefinisi dan dikontekstualisasikan sejalan situasi masyarakat yang didominasi oleh golongan muslim tradisionalis.

Kata Kunci: Kelompok Pengajian; Kontestasi; Tradisionalis; Modernis; Puritan.

مستخلص

تناقش هذه الورقة الصراع من أجل التطور والتقليدية في الجماعات الإسلامية بناءً على دراسات حالة

المجامع في الساحل الشرقي لآتشيه. تستنتج المقالة أن الأصولية والتقليدية هما كيانان دينيان

يقادمان دائمًا مع بعضهما البعض. تحدث هذه الورقة إلى إظهار تجربة الطائفتين في إدارة التنوع حيث

لا تؤدي إلى صراع طائفي وعطف جماعي على الرغم من أن العلاقات بين الطائفتين ملونة بسبب

التنازعات العالية. تم جمع البيانات المستخدمة في هذه الدراسة من خلال الملاحظة المشاركة

والمقابلات المعمقة ودراسات الأدب. تظهر هذه الورقة قدرة الشعب الآتشي على إعادة التسامح،

على الرغم من أنه يبدو واضحًا أن التسامح العثماني الذي يمارسه الأشخاص قد تم إعادة تعريفه ووضعه

في سياق ينتمي مع وضع المجتمع الذي تقيم عليه الجماعات الإسلامية التقليدية.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الدراسات حالة; الجماعات; التنازع; التقليدية; الحديثية; الأصولية

A. INTRODUCTION

Urban communities in Aceh are close to urban systems in other cities in Indonesia. In

fact, urban communities in Aceh or Indonesia are no different from middle-class ones. Urban

communities in Aceh are like metropolitan structures in other Indonesian cities. Abdul Aziz

argued that the urban or middle class tended to be independent, rationalist, punctual, open to

anyone, and accept any external influences.1 Also, According to Aziz, citing Azyumardi

Azra’s opinion, another characteristic of urban communities is the presence of continuity and

steadfastness in the division of labor, the propensity to recognize faith through professional

development, and a dominant tendency to enjoy free time.2

Another characteristic of urban communities is that they have a higher degree of

plurality relative to the rural population in which the city is situated. Urban communities in

Aceh often consist of societies focused on pluralistic cultures, which are distinguished by

1Abd Aziz, “Religiusitas Masyarakat Urban Di Era Digital (The Religiosity of Urban Communities in the

Digital Era),” International Conference Departemen Communication, no. May (2018),


2Aziz.
diverse ethnicities, races, and faiths. In Soejatmoko’s opinion, knowledge of religious diversity will add appreciation to any religious conviction that the meaning of reality is transcendent through opening oneself up to the beliefs of others. This is the beginning point for the development of tolerance and modesty.

However, on the other hand, the emergence of religious plurality in urban communities is very vulnerable to the emergence of differences and conflict between religions or their fellow. This religious diversity becomes an important note by the researcher, looking at the socio-religious conditions that experience turmoil in each of its movements over time. Socio-religious turmoil tends to arise in cities, where a higher level of community plurality exists. It happens because all communities consider religion to be a complementary system in answering the needs of urban communities.

Many recent events have occurred in urban communities in Aceh, and it has been shown that there are socio-religious upheavals in urban communities, particularly in some cities on the east coast of Aceh. The last event was the destruction (burning) of the Mosque of Muhammadiyah in Bireun district. Other incidents in the last several years; the assassination and burning of the Teungku Ayyub reciting community group in July. The fight for Mimbar of Baiturrahman Masjid Raya (the Great Mosque), since it is perceived as another college. They were closing the Islamic Salafi boarding school in Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar. Debating and closing the Pesantren in Bayeun, East Aceh. And the closing of the Tamiang Sufism Recitation Community. There are also such incidents that have not yet been made official, but it spread like fire in the husk-just waiting for the moment to be destroyed.

Some of the causes listed above cannot be distinguished from the prevalence of recitation groups in urban communities along the Aceh coast. These reciting communities were then divided into three groups, including the traditionalist, progressive and puritan or Salaf communities. The three groups then performed a recitation at many mosques in the area, the members of whom were mosque worshipers. The emergence of these modernist and
puritanic recitation groups is a problem for the *Dayah ulama*, who, by the way, come from conservative (traditional) communities. At this time, *Ulama of Dayah* played a crucial role in recognizing the nature of Acehnese culture.

Nevertheless, with the advent of the puritan and progressive reciting groups embodied by *Ustādz*, who came from the Middle East, this may be attributed to contestation between the two reciting groups in the fight for the congregation.9 Interestingly, the recitation participants (followers) were primarily young people. It seems to reinforce people’s views in urban areas, particularly the experiences of young people who are deprived of spiritual values.

Julia Day Howell and other figures commented on social (urban) interest topics. They said that modern culture at a substantial individualistic stage, isolated community from higher stuff, contributed to severe drought and thirst.10 Ismail F. Alatas, University of Indonesia Lecturer, stated that religious rituals in cities that reflect logical facets of faith are deficient in moral and experiential dimensions.11

Several scholars have studied the conflict between Traditionalist Muslims and Puritan Muslims in socio-religious studies. For example, Wahyudi Amaliah studied the fall of moderate Islam in the face of the rise of a new religious authority from the *Wahhabi* community.12 Ahmad Najib Burhani also noticed a contestation between liberal Muslims and puritan Muslims regarding the divine (religious) power.13 Zuly Qadir considered that the variety of the Islamic culture in Indonesia has several groups, including modernist, revivalist, traditionalist, but at the same time radical, neo-traditionalist, and mainstream (popular) Islam.14 Nur Hidayat Wakhid Udin highlighted the contestation between fundamentalist Muslims vis-à-vis Liberal Muslims in the struggle for socio-religious meaning in Indonesia.15

In the meantime, this study focuses on the phenomena of contestation between

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traditionalist recitation groups and puritan recitation groups experiencing the creation on the eastern coast of Aceh. The researcher would extensively analyze the conflict between conventional (traditionalist) recitation groups and puritan recitation groups focused on the contestation of Islamic articulations in everyday life and the actions of the two recitation groups by citing the facts as a critical issue.

In addition, the tension between traditionalist, modern, and puritan recitation communities is not like those articles that suggest that fundamentalism and traditionalism are two theological forces that are often in confrontation with each other. This paper enhances Muhammad Ansor Etal’s earlier writings. Furthermore, it studied the contestation between Puritan and Muslim traditionalists in Aceh Tamiang, which shows the dynamics of the relationship between the two entities. Through this study, the researchers want to demonstrate that the relationship between the traditionalist recitation group and the Puritan recitation group is tinged with the doctrinal conflict. Furthermore, the two groups are relatively good at managing diversity, such that differences through religious beliefs do not contribute to political strife and mass violence. For instance, the traditionalist recitation group argues that the Puritan recitation group belongs to the Wahabi sect.

In contrast, the Puritan recitation group considers that what Tengku (Kiai) conveyed by the traditionalist recitation group, namely the Qur’ān and ḥadīth, does not have a solid basis. This contestation happens only at the elite level of each recitation (Kiai or ustādz) and does not affect the congregation of the two recitation groups. It is because the most recitation congregations, including the traditionalist recitation group and the Puritan recitation group, attend all the recitations that are conducted.

This study is based on the field research, which, thorough documentation, participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and spent three months for data collection. The data were taken from the in-depth interviews with the Tengku (read: Kiai), who gave the lecture to the recitation community, the traditionalists, modernists, and Salafis, The Mosque Prosperity Board (BKM), which conducted the recitation. Moreover, the congregation took part in the recitation group. The researcher also held a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) of the recitation of the congregation in the East Coastal part of Aceh to complement this data.

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17 Interview with Sanusi, the recitation congregation traditionalist of Langsa, September 22, 2018.

18 Interview with Farid, the recitation congregation of Langsa, September 24, 2018.
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By using Emile Durkheim’s framework on Forming Social Solidarity theory,¹⁹ this article will demonstrate that the contestation between Traditionalist recitation groups and Puritan recitation groups in Islamic recitation, which has a dual role: one side is a source of social conflict, but the other side plays a role in the creation process. Social unity of society with regard to their Islamic heritage. Furthermore, the contestation between these three entities will be studied using the theory of culture’s in Between by Hommi K. Bhabha.²⁰ According to Bhabha, cultural identities are established primarily from the product of two or more distinct identities, but negotiations are conducted across processes of social conflict.²¹ There are no clear limitations on the diversity of ethnic differences in society. Nonetheless, conservative (traditionalist), modernist, and puritan recitation groups in Aceh accuse religious values in other cultures. At the same time, however, they practice what the Bhabha terms mimicry: a means of imitating one another. This article will thus demonstrate a contestation between traditionalist, modernist and puritan recitation groups, but, at the same time, it will give the new definition of the recitation group model that is the result of the identity dialog among the three groups.

This article will be divided into six sections: an overview, the image of urban recitation communities in East Aceh, the paradigm of the urban research community in East Aceh, the emergence of fundamentalism, and the problem inside urban recitation groups, the management of urban recitation groups. The discussion then continues with the assumptions and theoretical implications of the research findings.

B. DISCUSSION

1. The Paradigm of Urban Recitation Groups in East Aceh

The term paradigm was first introduced by American physicist Thomas Samuel Kuhn (1922-1996) in his book The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1962)²² and later popularized by Robert Friedrichs in his book Sociology of Sociology (1970).²³ According to Kuhn, the paradigm is a way of knowing social reality constructed by specific modes of thought or modes of inquiry, producing specific modes of knowing. According to Khun, whom George Ritzer quoted, the paradigm is the first picture of the subject in science. He

²¹ Bhabha, 55.
²² Thomas S.Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2002).
determines what to study, what questions to ask, how the questions should be asked, and what rules to follow in interpreting the answers obtained. Paradigm is the broadest unit of consensus in science and differentiates one scientific community from another. It includes, defines, and relates several examples, theories and methods, and instruments.

The researcher may refer to many theories established by Indonesian scholars in explaining the growth of recitation groups in the eastern part of Aceh, for example, Bahtiar Efendi. In his view, the Islamic thought that developed in Indonesia had at least five typologies, namely Fundamentalism-Radical, Symbolic Formals, Inclusive Rational, Emancipators-Transformative, and Liberal.24 Bakhtiar Efendi expressed Indonesian Islamic thought differently with “Neo Modern Islam, Communism, Islamic Democracy, Internationalism, and Universalism.”25 Meanwhile, Nurcholish Madjid noticed that the typology of Islamic thought in Indonesia has at least five typologies, namely traditionalist, modern, neo-modern, multiculturalism, and liberalism.26 As for the paradigm or point of view of the study groups of urban communities in East Aceh, there are three general paradigms: the traditional paradigm, the new (modern) paradigm, and the salafi paradigm.

a. Traditional Paradigm

The term “tradition” in the etymological perspective is always identified with sunnah, which means “the path traveled, praised or not” (al-sīrah asanah kānat aw qabī ah). The word sunnah is also interpreted as the rules, ways of behaving, or the behavior of life.27 This traditional group is deeply rooted in the pesantren or Dayah tradition; this chain of transmission is named Sanad. Sanad has a norm, which means that some ulama are considered legitimate as a connection in one generation (period) while others are considered null and void.28 In Acehnese society, this tradition of Dayah is called the culture of meugure. This tradition is also a breath of life for the people of Aceh, since someone is considered useful and working in society. If that person has ever worked with an ulama or teacher, both in the Dayah and in the madrasa.29 According to Azyumardi Azra, as a traditional educational

26 Nurcholish Madjid, “Keislaman, Keindonesiaan, Dan Kemodernan” (Bandung: Mizan, 1992), 122.
28 Zamakhsyari Dhofier, Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiai (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1994), 79.
29 Kamaruzzaman Bustamam Ahmad and M.H. Aminruddin, Ulama, Separatisme, Dan Radikalisme Di Aceh, Kaukaba (Banda Aceh: Kaukaba, 2013), https://www.academia.edu/9700883/Ulama_Separatisme_dan_Radikalisme
FASTABIQ AL-KHAIRÂT: ISLAMIC CONGREGATION AND EVERYDAY COMPETITION AMONG PURITAN AND TRADITIONALISTS MUSLIM IN ACEH institution, there are at least three an essential role in the Pesantren or Dayah; first, as a center for the transmission of religious knowledge, second, as a guardian of Islamic tradition, third; as a reproductive center for ‘ulama. Pesantren or Dayah also serves as a place to preserve the tradition of classical Islamic knowledge.

One of the features of the boarding school or Dayah is to teach and learn using the Yellow Book (Turats) as a learning guide. According to Eka Srimulyani, teaching and learning the Yellow Book cannot be separated from the tradition of learning in pesantren. The yellow book contains various materials classified into several main subjects, such as tafsir (tafsir Al-Qur’an), Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), etc. The majority of the yellow book is classic texts written by Middle Eastern scholars. Nevertheless, some Jawi scholars (ulama from Nusantara) have also written several Yellow Books, such as Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantany, Shaykh Arsyad al-Banjary.

Hence the recitation group is frequently performed by Dayah. Ulama still uses the Yellow Book as reference material and continues oddly and rigidly. Stiff because what they taught was precisely the same as what the Dayah teacher received when he was studying in the Dayah at that time. Eventually, the language he used Acehnese language. This is understandable because at the boarding or dayah, according to Zamakhysai Dhofer, there is a transmission chain called sanad and the sanad has a pattern, or in the term Kamaruzzaman BA, the meugure tradition has indeed become a life-breath for the Acehnese.

b. Modern Paradigm

Many of East Aceh’s recitation groups have adopted a new method to produce their recitation themes. According to Azyumardi Azra, the modern education system is reflected in the establishment of the madrasa, which adopted classical systems and a curriculum that was never introduced in previous Islamic boarding schools. Ronald A. Lukens-Bull added that modern systems in Islamic education fill the needs of modern society and prevent moral degradation from the emergence of modernity and globalization. Although Robert W. Hefner
noticed that the reformers have many characteristics, including; interest in women’s education, encouraging science and technology studies, using newspapers and journals in their Da’wah. The reformists appear to be more conservative in women’s clothing than traditionalists who are already modest in advocating long-sleeved and more flowing (rather than fitted) tunics, long skirts, and wider headscarves. The modernists tend to be less tolerant than traditionalists when their tradition veers into the religious field. For example; giving some food for the person (ancestor) who has died as their old tradition, creating new ideas on religious education, redefining religion more objectively, easily transmissible, clearly distinguishable from local customs, and more inclined to make law from the Qur’ān and adī than the ulama’s opinion.35

This modern paradigm can be seen in the recitation conducted by Ustādz Tabri, Lc, and Ustādz Awwaluzikri, MA. The presentation uses several methods, including lecture, question, and answer methods, and the explanation tends to be open. Many kinds of research written by scholars, clerics, or Tengku of modern circles or graduates from the Middle East prefer to use methods accessible to urban societies as they are more readily accepted and logical.

c. Salafi Paradigm

When we talk of the word Salafi, we certainly mean an Islamic movement that is intolerant, rigid, even reactionary.36 Whereas according to Muhammad’ Abid al-Jabiri and Fahmi Jad’an, the word Salaf is used as a systematic thought for any step that makes the Qur’ān and adī. Two Muslim writers, Jurj Tharabishi and ‘Aziz al-Azmah, used the word ‘salafism’ to refer to an anti-modernist, reformist current of thought or group.37

The word Salaf itself is literally taken from the root word sa-la-fa which means to precede. The term Salaf itself is described as the first three generations of Muslims, made up of relatives, tabi’in, and tabi’ al-tabi’in, also identified with al-Salaf al-sālih (righteous predecessors).38 The key focus of traditional Salafi teachings, according to Krismono, is on the principle of tauhid (aqidah), which is geared towards the success of faith and morals. By purifying Islamic rituals of all ways of worship called shirk. Based on this rigid philosophy of belief, Salafism firmly excludes all types of the theological invention (bid’ah), rationality

https://doi.org/10.1525/aeq.2001.32.3.350.
36Robert W. Hefner, Making Modern Muslims The Politics of Islamic Education In Southeast Asia, 62.
38Muzammil, 220.
(reasoning), human will, and intellect. Salafi followers believe that with this mindset, the prejudices of human subjectivity can be easily eliminated to recognize one reality about the commands of Allah and believe that Islam accepts only a legal interpretation and does not recognize Islamic pluralism.  

According to Asep Muhamad Iqbal, the existence of Salafis in Indonesia around the mid-1980s. Some signs such as the presence of their people wearing Arab clothing, Arabic-style ties or headgear or white cap, long trousers above their knees, and carrying beards may define this trend. Meanwhile, their women wear the Arab women’s clothing, usually black or brown and loose, and a face-covered veil. The existence of Salafism can be seen from the Salafist societies that appear to be closed, which are formed separately from the urban society in general. They are determined to create an alternative society, different from the current model of society or the Western model, by reviving and implementing the pure sunnah established by the prophet and holy Salaf as an attempt to be an ideal and pure Muslim. To achieve this goal, Salafists have a solid commitment for da’wah activities to re-Islamize the Muslim community by forming halaqah (religious study groups) and dawra (religious training) to teach them about “true Islam. “They believe that Muslims who aspire to the Syar’i’a as the only valid law can only be realized employing an evolutionary process involving ‘cleansing’ (tasyfiah) from actions and un-Islamic thoughts and ‘education’ (Tarbiyah) about true Islam.

2. The Image of Urban Recitation Communities in East Aceh

The religious life of East Aceh’s people today, including Langsa city and Aceh Tamiang Regency, is probably very diverse. Concerning the existence of the Ta’lim and Dhikr assemblies or the routine reciting groups mentioned above, this paper follows the pattern adopted by Syarifuddin Jurdi when photographing the Islamic Social Movement in Indonesia. He sees several Islamic social movements in Indonesia, namely traditionalist, modernist, puritan, and Islamic Left or Islamic Left groups. In the same way, the researcher finds that the recitation groups in East Aceh are divided into three main groups, namely traditional,

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39 Krismono, 180.
42 Hasan, 87.
modern, and Salafi recitation groups. This grouping is loose and open to questioning, repairing (reducing or adding) following the phenomenon of recitation groups in East Aceh.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Paradigm</th>
<th>Recitation Group in East Aceh</th>
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| 1. | Traditional | 1. Tengku of Dayah recitation  
2. Jamaat Shuhuh movement (GSB) Aceh Tamiang  
3. Tarekat recitation |
| 2. | Modern | 1. Non-Dayah recitation (Ustādz graduates from the Middle-East)  
2. Shuhuh recitation of Langsa Kota  
3. City recitation community (KPK) Aceh Tamiang |
| 3. | Salafi | 1. Salafi recitation  
2. Jama’aatTabligh recitation  
3. DakwahIslam board of Indonesia(LDII) recitation |

It can be clarified from the table above that one of the recitation groups that fall into the traditional model is the Dayah recitation group, namely the recitation group held by Dayah scholars or ulama-led recitation who are the leaders or have Dayahs. The recitation takes place at the Great Mosque of East Aceh. In Langsa, the recitation occurs at Grand Mosque of Darul Falah every Tuesday after the Magrib prayer until just before the evening prayer. While in Kuala Simpang, the Dayah Recitation Group was centered in the Al-Furqan Mosque. This dayah recitation method is by reading the yellow book and usually using the Acehnese language.

The As-Sunni recitation group can be categorized as a traditional recitation group because the one who initiated the recitation was the Tengku from Dayah. This As-Sunni recitation was formed by Usta Murdhani, Caregiver Dayah Futūhul Mu‘ārif Al-‘Azīziyyah, Srigut Langsa with the name “Majlīs Ta’līm As-Sunni Langsa”. According to Tengku Murdhani Majlīs Ta’līm As-Sunni Langsa was formed in addition to the dhikr council, also as a unifier when there are problems or disputes aqidah outside the Sunni. This As-Sunni recitation group usually holds recitation at the Al-Falat Grand Mosque in Langsa City every Tuesday and Wednesday night after Maghrib prayer by studying the book of fiqh. Majlīs Ta’līm As-Sunni has also carried out the Bahts al-Masā’il by gathering all Acehnese scholars to discuss contemporary issues, and the reference is the mukhabarat books that apply in many Dayahs in Aceh.

The ALMAIDAH recitation group (Alliance for the Love of Allah and Muhammad Rasulullah) can also be categorized as a traditional recitation group because the one who

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44Interview with Muhammad Nasir, Academician and Former Chairman of the Aceh Tamiang MPU, September 12, 2018.
founded this group was Tengku Syech Muhajir, a director of Dayah Darul Huda in Langsa town, Aceh. This ALMAIDAH recitation group carries out recitation after Subuh prayers and always goes to several mosques in urban areas. Meanwhile, the focus of ALMAIDAH’s study is fiqh with a lecture method, questions, and answers. The lecture, question, and answer method is a recitation system that modern recitation groups usually carry out. Not surprisingly, Tengku Syech Muhajir usually uses the method he often received when he was still studying in the Middle East. The method is also the most readily and easily accepted by the congregation of urban communities.35

In addition to the Dayah recitation group, the recitation held by the Kuala Simpang Community, Aceh Tamiang, which is called by the Jamāat Shubuh Movement (GBS). This group recites every morning after the Subuh prayer at Nurut Dar Mosque in Seumentok. The local Tengku usually leads the recitation by reciting books of Fiqh, such as Fa āil al-Akmāl, and Fiqh Sunnah.

Apart from the Nurut Dar mosque in Seumentok, the Al-Istiqamah mosque also holds recitation after the Subuh prayer led by Ustādz Muhammad Nasir. This recitation pattern is a routine recitation that is carried out every day after Subuh prayers with a system of studying yellow books (Turāṣ), for example, the book of Fa āil al-Akmāl, adī, fiqh sunnah, al-Wāfi syarh sunnah Arbain. This study has been running about 5 years ago or around 2013.36

The recitation group was organized by Tarekat, namely the Ma’rifah community in Seruway, Aceh Tamiang. The researchers were included in the traditional recitation group because this group always used books written by the Mursyid (Great guru) of the Tarekat. In Mohd Nasir and Mawardi’s study, it is clarified that due to this exclusive attitude, the Ma’rifah community still receives unequal treatment from the majority group of Seruway people, Aceh Tamiang.37

The recitation group included in the modern paradigm is the non-Dayah recitation group. The researchers named this recitation group carried out by non-Dayah Tengku or recitation conducted by Tengku who did not lead Dayah and alumni from modern Islamic boarding school or alumni of the Middle East. In Langsa, each mosque carries out this recitation pattern as in the Rahmah Mosque Paya Bujuk Tunong, where there are 3 (three)

35 Interview with Zulkifli, one of the ALMAIDAH congregation in Gampong Geudubang Jawa, September 28, 2019.
36 Interview with Muhammad Nasir, Academician and Former Chairman of the Aceh Tamiang MPU, September 12, 2019.
teachers: *Ustādz* Tabri, Lc, MA, who leads recitation once a week every Monday evening after the prayer of Isya; *Ustād* Awwaluzzikri Lc, MA, who leads recitation every Wednesday evening after the prayer of Magrib; and *Ustādz* Mikel, Lc who leads the recitation on the Tuesday evening after the Magrib Prayer. In addition to the *Rahmah* Mosque, *Muwāhidin* Mosque Gampong Jawa, there are 2 (two) *ustādz*, namely *ustādz* Tabri, Lc, MA, the recitation is held once a week every Sunday evening after Magrib prayer. And *Ustādz* Awwaluzzikri, Lc, MA the recitation is held every Tuesday evening after Magrib prayer.

Meanwhile, there are many non-*Dayah* or modern recitation classes in Aceh Tamiang too. Aceh Tamiang comprises three (three), religious scholars, namely *Ustādz* Muhammad Nasir, MA alumni of Islamic Higher Education, *Ustādz* Syahrizal, MA alumni of Islamic Higher Education, and Dedi Suriansyah, MA, alumni of Islamic Higher Education. The *Ustādz* filled his payroll after the Magrib prayer, such as the Istiqamah mosque, Alur Cucur mosque, *Babul Falah* Kuala Simpang mosque.

The recitation of the Rabbani Generation Community (KGR) is also a modern reciting group. This group comprises a Langsa Muslim youth group founded by *Ustādz* Awwaluzzikri, Lc, MA. KGR is a community whose aim is to invite young people to pray in the congregation and to love the Qur’ān. The program has a weekly program in the form of Taṣīn al-Qur’ān. And the recitation is held every Saturday at the Geudubang Aceh Mosque. There are various programs, namely, Tauziyah Imāniyah, a bi-weekly program in the form of Jaulah or Qur’ān safari at one mosque to another, a monthly program of Jaulah Al-Qur’ān in the form of “we go Tadabur the Qur’ān in the form of Islamic art.48

Aside from KGR, Pemko Langsa’s recitation group is often known as a modern recitation group. The Government of Langsa led the recitation group Subuh Safari at the initiative of Langsa Deputy Mayor Marzuki Hamid. They usually conduct the recitation, which non-*Dayah* Tengku leads. *Ustādz* Tabri, Lc, *Ustādz* Awwaluzzikri, Lc, and *Tengku* Syech Muhajir were always invited to give a lecture and maybe several *Tengku* from *Dayah* invited to lead the recitation. Ibrahim Latief, the head of Langsa’s Syari’ah law office, found the recitation of Subuh, whose method does not study a specific book. However, it uses a thematic scheme to lift a particular theme and explain it according to *al-Qu’ān*, *adi*, and scholar’s opinions. Then go on to offer money to the needy around the mosque.

The Women’s Payroll Group is also a new recitation group in Langsa. Pemko Langsa’s staff initiated this recitation group. For example, some *Tengku* around Langsa led this

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48Interview with Awwaluzzikri, Advisor to the Rabbani Generation Group, Langsa City and Ustadz of the modernist recitation group, September 12, 2018.
recitation, Ustād Hafiz, Lc, whom the women’s payroll group always invited Tausiah (lecture). Nevertheless, the women of the recitation meeting of the Langsa government also invited the popular Tengku Dayah to Aceh and was based in the Grand Mosque of Al-Falah in Langsa.

The study group of Aceh Tamiang City Community (KPK) is also known as a modern recitation group. *Ustādz* Dedy Suriansyah, M. Ag led this study group. He is a member of the representative house of Aceh Tamiang from the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). In the KPK recitation group, participants are from criminals. According to *Ustādz* Dedy Suriansah, M. Ag, inviting thugs to transform their behaviors will take much patience, since at first, the thugs are not unusual to mock. Nevertheless, thanks to its perseverance, the Aceh Tamiang study Committee (KPK) is now gradually gathering.

The recitation group, which has a Salafi paradigm, is the recitation Salafi group. This recitation group has the theme “Langsa Mengaji”. This Salafi recitation group was formed as a place for their Da’wah by a Salafi *Ustādz*. *Ustādz* Rudi Iswadi is a leader with his several friends in Langsa. There is no official form since Da’wah is pure. Within a week, there are 4-5 recitation times, the recitation content on *Tawheed*’s text, Arabic, reading holy Qur’ān and studying *Fiqh*. In Langsa, there are three Salafi recitation groups, apart from Langsa reciting the Qur’ān at Meurandeh. This recitation community is located near the Sidoarjo Coffee Shop and Paya Bujok Seulemak.

Besides the recitation group Salafi, the recitation group *Jema’ah Tabligh* is also a recitation community of Salafis. The *Jema’ah Tabligh* recitation is closed, meaning that only members become the recitation congregation. Every Tuesday evening, this recitation is typically performed after the Magrib prayer in the Siereget Mosque Langsa. Additionally, there is a different method of *da’wah* for the female congregation Jamaah Tabligh called *Tai’lim Masturah*. As Masdalifah Sembiring states,49 *Tai’lim Masurah* was carried out by women of the Tabligh Community and invited the public to join the recitation in order to gain knowledge and understanding of religious teachings through *bayan*, by reading the reading of the principles of charity and the *fadhilah of amal* by Syeikh Maulana Zakariyya Alkhandalawi and some *da’wah* practices.

The Dakwah Islam board of Indonesia (LDII) in Langsa is also known as a Salafi recitation group due to the closed nature of the recitation and only for the congregation. While

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the Islamic Syari’a Service of Langsa prohibited the research activities, the LDII still exist and takes place in Gampong Geudubang Jawa, Langsa.

3. The Arise of Fundamentalism and Contestation in Urban Recitation Groups

Before discussing the recitation group’s fundamentalist attitude in East Aceh, it is better to understand fundamentalist diversity itself. The religious model of fundamentalism puts everything in God’s name with a set of laws contained in the holy book. More fundamentally, fundamentalist attitudes reflect mistrust of logical abilities and emphasize the emotional dimensions more, question human beings to solve ultimate problems and entrust themselves to the divine agency.

Amin Abdullah said what attracted attention to the phenomenon of diversity and needed to be studied further was when the model or form of human diversity (religiousness) was divided and represented in the formal forum of theology, or a particular religion (as well as an absolute faith, understanding or group). Then, the container demands only the truth which possesses is the highest and the best. This phenomenon is a claim to truth, which naturally implies the creation of a particularistic, exclusive, and sometimes intolerant way of thought.

Langsa and Tamiang are where fundamentalist beliefs and attitudes develop in the largest recitation room to remote villages. The fundamentalism described here by the researchers is not the fundamentalist attitude described by Amin Abdullah, which is particularistic, exclusive, and often intolerant. However, fundamentalism here is an attitude that assumes what they understand is the right thing and judges what others think is not valid, yet respects the opinions of others. Many recitation groups share this fundamentalist mindset, not just the Dayah recitation group, and the modern recitation group also has such a fundamentalist mindset, and the recitation group we identify as salafi, as well as other recitation groupings.

a. Dayah Recitation Group

The Dayah recitation community is the oldest in Aceh. It is not unusual for researchers to study Aceh, both insider and outsider who admire Dayah as the oldest educational institution in Aceh. How can Aceh not be widespread in the world’s eyes because it can produce international-caliber scholars based on Dayah education. Its oldest educational

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51 Imam Sukardi et al., Pilar Islam Bagi Pluralisme Modern (Solo: Tiga Serangkai, 2003), 122.
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institution makes alumni of Dayah spread across the archipelago, especially in Langsa and Tamiang.

Whether known or not, there is a colorful fundamentalist character in Dayah education. It is instilled in their students. The charismatic teachers, ustādz, teungku, abu, abuya, and scholars teach them to pray, grow a sense of admiration, love, and fundamentalism, and fully believe every word and every idea conveyed. There is no other truth but the sincerity of their teachers—that the wrongs they have accomplished are always correct in front of their students.\(^{53}\) In this case, the traditional recitation group, the Dayah recitation group, has listed many phrases against the modern recitation group whose stand comes from alumni from the Middle East as evidence of the assumption that groups other than the group are incorrect.

For example, some of those phrases are:

1) \textit{Lc is Lost Control}

In Langsa and Tamiang, several of the recitation groups are led by Ustādz, whose last name ‘Lc’. This suggests that the Middle East alumni culture offers many colors in recitation groups. However, the Dayah recitation group reacted differently to the presence of this Middle East alumni with the title ‘Lc’. The Lc title obtained by the children of this country in the Middle East has been mocked by the Ustādz and recitation teachers in the recitation community Dayah as ‘Lost Control’. It is an attitude of underestimating knowledge held by teachers of ustādzz and recitation who are not of the Dayah group. This statement does not appear once in any recitation, mainly if there are congregations who ask other than the Syafi’i or Syafi’iyah madhhab, when quoting ustādz or teachers with title of Lc.

Not only underestimating someone’s scholarship from a specific recitation category but also instilling with a single truth, an attitude of religious fundamentalism which is madhhabiyyah in nature. This fundamentalist attitude is usually demonstrated by some community members who follow the recitation group of Dayah, who view this non-Dayah recitation group as a mere compliment. As Dahri, the Dayah recitation group, put it, they prefer to attend the Dayah recitation, since the Dayah recitation group is purer than others.\(^{54}\)

2) \textit{Fiqh is Tauhid, Tauhid is Fiqh}

The madhhab of Syafi’i is the most suitable school for learning faith through prayer. If it does not apply to the Syafi’i madhhab as expressed in recitation by ustādz or teungku, therefore it is misunderstood and refused. The dayah recitation group has no other research or

\(^{53}\)Interview with Mulizar, Dayah recitation congregation in Langsa City, October 6, 2019.
\(^{54}\)Interview with Dahri, Ustadz / Tengku Gampong in Langsa City , September 6, 2019.
analysis in certain schools in thinking. Knowing the school of thought analysis for the Imam syafi‘i is like learning tauhid in understanding Aqidah. Furthermore, the dayah recitation group does not like asking while they have different schools. It is good to create madhhab distinctions, so anyone has to decide or exaggerate his amaliah’s response to the Imam Shafi‘i.

However, some citizens in Langsa decline to worship other than Imam Syafi‘i. He has noticed that anyone will enter the paradise, according to his confession. In urban communities, there are differences between Dayah scholars and Middle East alumni ustādz in the treatment of fiqh (Islamic Law). In essence, Dayah scholars, as well as ustādz from the Middle East, use the views of the madhhab to solve problems in society, for example, Ustādz Awwaluzikri, an Middle east graduate, always answers questions from modern recitation groups by using the opinions of several schools recognized by Sunni. The distinction resides in the mindset of the madhhab itself, the Dayah recitation communities are very stringent regarding the values of madhhab. They are fast followers of the Syafi‘i madhhab in their activities.

However, the modern recitation community continues to use the Qur’ān and the Sunna as the basis in their thought. This condition does not mean that they condemn or oppose the leaders of the madhhab and other imams who succeeded them, but they feel that the fatwas and views of these imams and everyone else should be continuously scrutinized.55

3) Widening the involvement of the Wahabi Issues

The Dayah recitation group is not pleasant if it does not offend the Wahabi. The Wahabi in question is a Salafi recitation group that has begun to color many recitations and educational institutions in Langsa and Tamiang. It is not only offending but insulting, mocking, rebuking every idea, thought, and form of worship they practice.

The Dayah ulama discussed the Wahabi issue in the recitation forum only to criticize the Wahabi group, not to provoke. Dayah ulama primarily discussed these doctrinal differences to avoid communal conflicts between traditional and Salafi groups. This was demonstrated by Dayah scholars, even though they criticized them, and they still emphasized that people respect these differences, not to act harshly and harshly with Wahabi groups. Even when one of the Ustādzs in Langsa City accused the Ustādz alumni of the Middle East of bringing Wahabi’s ideology to Langsa City, the Dayah cleric, along with Ustādz from the Middle East, both

rejected the accusation. This fact proves that although Dayah ulama is quite strict in rejecting Wahabism, they can share and make friends with modern recitation groups in their daily lives. They criticize, but they keep boundaries; they respect different groups.

b. Modern Recitation Group

This modern recitation group is very egalitarian. It is not unusual for the recitation to be followed simultaneously by fathers and mothers. However, there are particular groups for male or female recitation. The recitation is the same as other recitation groups. According to the time, there is the recitation of tafsir, Fiqh, Hadiṣ, al-Qur’ān and thematic recitation.

This group recitation is often faced with questions or answers previously received by congregations during the recitation of other recitation groups, especially the dayah recitation group. The congregation often gets satisfaction with various alternative answers and in-depth studies of various schools of thought. This indicates that the ustādz, who led the recitation, has not grown and cultivated the nature and attitude of fundamentalism. However, as previously, the congregation tends to overdo it.

c. Salafi Recitation Group

The Salafi recitation group in Langsa town is a recent recitation community, possibly in the last ten years. This recitation is beginning to emerge as they wear the traditional Muslim clothes, their identity. Especially women’s full open clothing because it follows the trend and is added with a face cover (purdah / veil). The Salaf community understands restoring the analysis of the Holy Qur’ān and the Prophet’s Sunnah. Returning to the Qur’ān and Hadiṣ, they refer to the lives of the Salaf al-Salih and the ulama dedicated to the Qur’ān and Sunnah application.

The researchers had a little trouble recognizing the Salafi group’s existence. In Langsa town, the Salafi group is divided into three (three) big groups. The first group that we call the Radical Salafi group. This Salafi group’s propensity and dedication are stable and rigid. Furthermore, it can be said that if they do not become role models under the direction of the Qur’ān, the Sunna, and the ulama, then their followers leave the community immediately; this community is also very closed.

The second group is the Salafi Roja. Roja is the name of a television station portraying the Salafi group’s Islamic beliefs. This Salafi Roja group appears to be more liberal than the previous group, but their devotion to religious practice is focused on factual claims and is under the shalafush-shaleh. The third group is the Salafi Khawarij, and this group cannot be interviewed directly, as are the moderate Salafi groups. Apart from this group, the name khawarij was identified from the Salafi group. This Salafi group did not want to join any
Salafi group, so the Salafi khawarij community was renamed. However, this Salafi community continues to participate in the growth of educational institutions. There are two well-known educational institutions which they found in Langsa: 1) SDIT Lukmanul Hakim, and 2) Balee Beut Quran (BBQ).

4. Managing Diversity of Urban Recitation Groups

According to John R. Bowen, the difference between the recitation groups between the traditional, modern, and puritan recitation groups does not guarantee that each recitation group remains in its exclusive territory.\(^{56}\) In other words, the conflict between the traditional recitation group and the modern and Salafi recitation group does not always end with a lose or win relationship. However, a third possible way is adaptation, mimicry, and synthesis values between the three opposing views. Mimicry or reciprocal imitation often leads to a new understanding of diversity. It is a new synthesis of two opposing religious understandings that would not have emerged without competition. The social process that Homi K. Bhabha calls mimicry, in turn, gave birth to the theory of “culture's in-between.”\(^{57}\) A synthetic tradition is the product of negotiations between traditional and puritan recitation groups.

Traditional, modern, and puritan recitation groups frequently participate in public discussion about topics of common concern. Each group seeks to provide its own beliefs and practices with interpretations and arguments. The differences between these two opinions often present a new synthesis in urban societal diversity. The most concrete example of this convergence is the adoption of non-dayah clerics or alumni from the Middle East as holders of new religious authority in urban society in East Aceh. Traditional recitation groups see that the Dayah ulama is the community has only recognized religious authority. In their view, Dayah ulama is more strictly scientific than non-Dayah scholars, which has mixed with other teachings like Wahabi teachings\(^{58}\). Even Dayah scholars sometimes mock Non-Dayah scholars or Middle Eastern graduates with Lc as "Lost Control".

On the other hand, modern recitation groups tend to experience rapid growth in urban populations as if, in addition to the long-standing religious authority, ustāḍz Dayah, the society has found a new religious authority. This new religious authority emerged nationally since the Defend Islam Action in Jakarta on December 2, 2016.\(^{59}\) According to ustāḍz Tabri, the prevalence of recitation groups in Langsa was influenced by the Langsa government's

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\(^{57}\) Bhabha, “Culture’s In-Between,” 54.

\(^{58}\) Interview with Dahri, September 8, 2019.

\(^{59}\) Burhani, “Plural Islam”, 142.
policy, which has a Subuh Safari program coordinated by the Deputy Mayor of Langsa Marzuki Hamid in early 2016.\textsuperscript{60} Moreover, the people of Langsa City and Aceh Tamiang district accept non-Dayah religious teachers or alumni of the Middle East because their recitation methods can be better respond to many challenges of the times, and their delivery is not monotonous and rigid.\textsuperscript{61} Whereas the Salafi recitation community is a closed and even severe recitation community taking on its function. For example, the recitation community at Sidoarjo, apart from being closed and intense, sometimes also gives other Muslims fatwas on kafir, and it is not clear who the shaykh (teacher) is.\textsuperscript{62}

Sunni and Wahabi's discourse has also become an arena of contestation among Islamic recitation groups within East Aceh's urban community. The recitation group Dayah alleged that what the non-Dayah ustādz conveyed was no longer pure and mixed with Wahabi understanding. Only the Syafi'i school of thinking is the right school for the Dayah culture of recitation of understanding confidence in God, and according to them, the Shafi'i school is likely to enter heaven.\textsuperscript{63} Answering this question, Ustādz Awaluzzikri, from Middle East alumni, answered that the accusation of the Dayah recitation group was not valid because the ustādz from the Middle East also uses the opinions of several schools are recognized by Ahlusunnah wal jama'ah in solving problems amid the urban community.\textsuperscript{64} Meanwhile, Salafi groups reject the opinion of the madhhab entirely. In their opinion, people who deserve to be a reference to the truth of Islam are Salaf al-Salih; 'ulama committed to the application of Qur'an and sunnah, instead of madhhab recognized by Ahlusunnah wal jama'ah. This attitude then leads them to a radical group against people who do not, in their view, obey the teachings of the al-Qur'an, the sunnah, and the ulama, who are used as role models.\textsuperscript{65} The contestation does not mean that the relations will be divided into two or more recitation groups in East Aceh, and they are dichotomous. While Dayah ustādz criticizes non-Dayah or Salafi ustādz, they can still engage their daily relations with the Ustādz from the Middle Eastern (alumni) well. It can be seen from their presence, making the management component of the Majelis Permusyawatan Ulama (MPU), it is proof that their interactions and friendship are going well. Furthermore, there is no apparent resistance between the two.

The Wahhabi issue was answered by the Dayah ulama, not for provocation. Dayah ulama took these doctrinal gaps into a debate to prevent communal tensions between

\textsuperscript{60}Interview with Tabri, Ustā of the modernist recitation group, July 27, 2019.
\textsuperscript{61}Interview with Rubema, Traditionalist Recitation Congregation, July 29, 2019.
\textsuperscript{62}Interview with Rudi Iswadi, leader of the Salafiyah recitation group in Langsa City, September 6, 2019.
\textsuperscript{63}Interview with Dahri, September 10, 2019.
\textsuperscript{64}Interview with Awwaluzikri, September 12, 2019.
\textsuperscript{65}Interview with Iswadi, September 6, 2019.
traditional and Salafi communities. Dayah Ustādz's support of Wahabi's indictment of non-dayah ustādz or alumni from the Middle East is proof that the rivalry between the recitation community in Est Aceh has arisen as what Bhabha named 'mimicry'. That is to say, the emergence of a third culture makes them respect one another and foster friendship in their daily lives. While they condemn each other, they still have frontiers and support various communities.

Likewise, conflicts in fiqh (Islamic law) issues do not imply they are undergoing conflict. The difference lies not in the substance of the fiqh but in the necessity of Fiqh itself. The Dayah recitation groups adhere strictly to the principles of the Syafi‘i Madhhab, whereas the modern recitation groups tend to use the al-Qur‘ān and the Sunna as their sources of thought. In contrast, the modern recitation groups tend to use the al-Qur‘ān and sunnah as their sources of thought and use the views of the madhhab at a critical level.

The recitation groups spread across East Aceh, namely Langsa town and Aceh, do not spread the values of hostility in social life. People of the two cities are in a very dynamic and not tense space in daily life. Even over time, the recitation groups continue to grow. Researchers also saw the familiarity of this city community in general recitation. For example, the Regional Government (Regional Government) of Tamiang Regency invited Ustādz Abdul Somad and Langsa; the Municipal Government was most recently invited Habib Smit; joint actions, for example, demonstrations demanding that Ahok be imprisoned, prosecuting tauhid flag burners, many other examples of responding to other social and togetherness issues. During public recitation, presentations like the one above always look stunning and help each other empathy, even though it varies in the recitation community.

## C. CONCLUSION

The above description indicates a breakneck growth in spiritual piety in East Aceh. The phenomenon strengthens Martin Van Bruinessen's and Julia D Howel's views. According to Bruinessen, the diversity of the urban Islamic community has been something thriving in the form of moral piety and consciousness change. Azyumardi Azra also sees the most prominent symptoms and phenomena of contemporary religion in urban Indonesia, notably the ‘religious awakening’ and revitalization expressed in an increase in religious zeal and enthusiasm.

The spiritual piety of urban communities in East Aceh marked by the proliferation of

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66Bhabha, “Culture’s In-Between,” 54.
recitation groups divided into three main classes, namely the traditionalist recitation group represented by the recitation group Dayah, the modern recitation group represented by the recitation group Non-Dayah, and the Salaf recitation group represented by the Salaf groups, Jamaah Tabligh, and the Lembaga Dakwah Islam Indonesia (LDII).

The three recitation groups then both looked for the stage of the Muslim community in the Langsa City and Aceh Tamiang mosques, and there was a dispute between them. Some of the tensions between them have been the advent of new religious authorities, namely non-Dayah religious teachers or alumni from the Middle East whom the urban community has accepted. The emergence of this new authority has more or less disturbed the establishment of religious authority, long in the hands of clerics of Dayah. The dichotomy between Sunni and Wahabi has also become a contest within the urban community in East Aceh for contestation among Islamic recitation groups.

The Dayah recitation group alleged that what the non-Dayah ustādz conveyed was no longer pure and mixed with an understanding of the Wahabi. The accusations made by the Wahabi became more apparent when directed at Salafi groups; even these Salafi groups were very closed and radical. In addition, the emergence of the diversity of contestation, negotiation, and tolerance among the urban community recitation group in East Aceh reinforces the theories developed before. Some of these areas expressed by Homi K Bhabha that antagonistic social diversity will lead to negotiations and reconciliation for points of commonality and mutual adjustment.

In the end, the three recitation groups mediated and preserved harmony among them. However, it was evident that the harmony practiced by the recitation community was redefined and contextualized in line with the situation of a society dominated by the traditionalist group.

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