Political Communication and Social Change of Acehnese Society in Internet Era

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ABSTRACT

This article is expected to be an alternative study for political communication of the first level-governance in village community *(gampong)* springing out from values of the local society and culture. The Acehnese political structure and system are determined by the Acehnese socio-culture. The system and structure is a form of the local treasure in which the *Acehnese* society is developed. Internet program causing political and social change in the culture of the *gampong*. The system of g*ampong* government remained as indigenous people of Aceh. The *gampong* communication process change significantly. *Kechiek* as the head of government, *imeum* as the religious and social leader as well as intellectuals while *Tuha Peu*t (social figures) is a party who gives suggestions and considerations for government, about religious and social issues including economic and political issues in order to resolve conflicts within society.

Keywords**:** ***gampong political communication***, ***local wisdom of acehnese, internet, socio-political change***

1. INTRODUCTION

After Tsunami Acehnese people experienced changes significantly, especially due to the effects coming from outside of Aceh. In reconstruction process after tsunami, Aceh government attempts consistently to keep/maintain Acehnese socio-cultural values   through Aceh *gampong*. Acehnese values maintenance effort starts from *gampong* government headed by a *keuchik* and assisted by *imuem meunasah* for religious affairs and other *gampong* devices called *TuhaPuet*. *Gampong* political structure, social and cultural are regulated in Aceh *Qanun* year 2003. All political process producing*reusam* (rules) organize all *gampong* government/village officials and community.

All devices contained in *gampong*requires proper political communication process in carrying out their duties and obligations. Political communication process regulates and determines information and communication flow in socio-cultural interaction process and even in religion.. This political process is fully supported by the customs and religious values, one of them is *meunasah. Meunasah* in every Aceh *gampong* is as a learning and community center in *gampong* community development.

Gampong government is also confronted with a new program from the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo) that is *Program Desa Pintar* program in*2009* (Smart Village Program 2009). The program aims to build village facilitated with internet. The program is carried out after making of *program desa berdering/gampong kring*.[1]

Smart village facilities are located at village/*gampong* so that people are easy to access information. Internet goes to village shows the changes in social structure of a society where the old social and political relations pattern are shifted by the new social and political relations pattern in a society. This research problem are how is *gampong* devices political communication process (*Keuchiek, imuem, and tuhaPuet*) which is as Aceh local wisdom in community development process in Internet era and what social culture and political values changes occur ?

2. ACEHNESE GAMPONG GOVERNMENT POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Political communication is communication involving political messages and actors, or relating to government, power,and policies. Rush and Altthoff [2] stated that political communication is as a process where relevant political information is transmitted from one part of political system to other parts of political system. Political actors, which in Acehnese *gampong* level consisting of *Keuchiek, imuem*, and *tuha Peut* use direct communication process.This direct communication in face-to-face becomes primary key in managing *gampong* government.

Communication means transforming information to obtain a response, meaning coordination between people, and audiences; sharing information, ideas or behavior/attitude for various elements of behavior or lifestyle through a set of defined rules, namely mind meeting on symbols similarity of in participants minds to understand. According to Dan Nimmo[3], communication occurs from one source devoted to the crowd. This communication is known as mass communication that can be performed by using two forms of channels; face to face channel and mass media channel.

Political communication process takes place in the interaction between all systems and political structure

members. In communication process it appears diverse forms of political message, political symbol and meaning understanding on political message.

Gampong political system at *gampong* Aceh based on its customs is Acehnese wealth or local wisdom that has been used since Aceh kingdom era. The local wisdom is understood as ideas, values, local views having full of wisdom, good-value, embedded and followed by community members. In anthropology term, it is known as local genius. Haryati Soebadio said that the local genius is national culture identity/personality causing the nation able to absorb and process foreign cultures based on their own disposition and abilities [4].

Local wisdom is possessed by every region in Indonesia including Aceh, in the form of *gampong*. *Gampong* in Aceh government system is at the first level. It is a concrete form of local wisdom retained until now. All efforts to maintain Acehpolitical system are recorded in Aceh *Qanun*in 2003. [5] *Gampong* government performs its duties in balance with theroles to maintain and improve *gampong* people welfare openly and to cooperate together. *Kechiek* role is as the head of *gampong* and he is supported by *imuem meunasah* in performing government, social, political, religious and moral formation or rules.

3. INTERNET AND SOCIAL POLITICAL CHANGE

Internet provides access to public in large numbers, in the form of spending/business network and social media, as well as products sale using advertising and promotion. [6]Internet creates new media and social media. The new media is all communication technology devices having same characteristics and allowing the digitization and its extensive available for personal use as a communication tool. [7] Internet technology provides a new thing for the processing, transmission, reception and response as well as the interactive nature between users of new media audiences. The new media has interactive character, giving implication in media management change paradigm and the effect of community/audience. This character causes new media demanded and raises a very strong effect in the community and then gives strong implications for social, cultural, economic, religious and political changes. Downes and McMillian (2000)[8] mention five new media interactivity dimensions, they are 1) Communication direction, 2) Time and roles flexibility are interchangeable, 3) Having a sense of space in the environment, 4) Control level (on the communication environment) and 5) Objectives observed (exchange and persuasion directed).
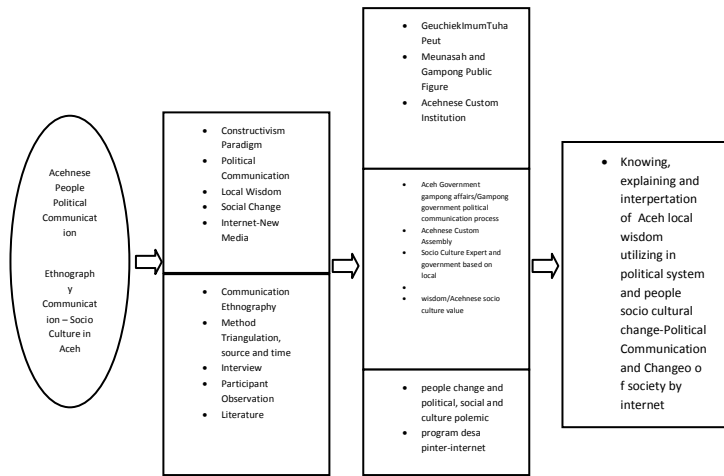
It is presented by Etzioni and Halevy: "*Technological, economic, political, religious, ideological, demographic, and stratification factors are all Viewed as Potentially independent variables influence roommates call now as well as of the course of society*"[9]. Based on Etzioni and Halevy definition, social change is an avoided part in all sectorsin public life, in technological, economical, political, religious, ideological, demographic, and social stratification factors. All of these factors are seen as mutually dependent/affected variable. Internet coming to Aceh *gampong* has brought social, cultural and political changes in Acehnese *gampong* community because basically almostno people are able to avoid internet and new media totally. The question then, if the changes are experienced by the public, what it looks like, in what field, are the people in Acehnese *gampong* government system able to survive or do they adapt because of internet and new media influence?

4. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

According to the framework described, political communication concept *gampong* political system, Aceh *meunasah*, socio-cultural and political changes, new media and internet and Acehnese *gampong* communities and local wisdom are indigenous knowledge systems having empirical and pragmatic characteristic containing in *gampong* people, the traditional institutions in *gampong* government namely Acehnese custom Assembly [10] :

a. *Makin Imeum or Imeum Chik* is the leader with the high knowledge and position, particularly chosen as the imam of a mosque (a mosque take places in every eight or more village or easily said that one habitation is one mosque).
b. *Keuchik* is the head of a village acts as the head of governance.
c. *Tuha Peut*, they are social figures Elected to give considerations and help *keuchik* as well as the supervision of him in terms of implanting the village governance.
d. *Tuhadelapan* are the elders or the social whothe figures are the representatives of the eight *mukim*. They function as the considerations providers in resolving all kinds of problems in Acehnese *gampong* community.
e. *Imam of meunasah*, they are the leaders whothe expertise is the religious field and also become Quranic teacher for lessons and give consideration for conflict reconciliation as well.
f. *Keujreun Blang*, the holders of agricultural reviews such issues as the management of the rice field.
g. *Pang Laot*, the head of maritime issues/sailors responsible to make a good living through sailing
h. The *Pawang Glee,*, the experts of geology especially what relates to mountainous issues.
i. *Haria Peukan*, the head of market affairs responsible to manage and run the local markets
j. *Syahbanda* the head of sea transportation.

- Acehnese People Political Communication
- Ethnography Communication – Socio Culture in Aceh

- Constructivism Paradigm
- Political Communication
- Local Wisdom
- Social Change
- Internet-New Media

- Communication Ethnography
- Method Triangulation, source and time
- Interview
- Participant Observation
- Literature

- GeuchiekImumTuha Peut
- Meunasah and Gampong Public Figure
- Acehnese Custom Institution

- Aceh Government gampong affairs/Gampong government political communication process
- Acehnese Custom Assembly
- Socio Culture Expert and government based on local
- wisdom/Acehnese socio culture value

- people change and political, social and culture polemic
- program desa pinter-internet

- Knowing, explaining and interpretation of Aceh local wisdom utilizing in political system and people socio cultural change-Political Communication and Changeo of society by internet

5. METHODS

This research uses the constructivism paradigm. Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln in *Competing Paradigms In Qualitative Research* (2008), explained that constructivism paradigm approach contains methodological implications namely *dialogic* and *dialectical*. [11]. A qualitative approach with ethnography method becoming researcher choice as the implication from constructivism paradigm. Ethnography aims to describe culture as a whole, all culture aspects, both having material character such as cultural artifacts (tools, clothes, building) and having abstract character such as experience, beliefs, norms, and values system of the group studied. Communication ethnography [12] is simple ethnography application method in a group communication patterns. Collecting data process using primary data collection techniques uses participant observation techniques and depth interviews and it is equipped with secondary data from literature review and documentation.

Research with communication ethnographic methoduses multiple analysis because the research involves more than two analysis units, namely:

1. *Keuchiek* and *Imuem meunasah* or *Tuha Peut gampong* at Meureudu district Pidie regency.
2. Gampong Political Communication System as the smallest government in Acehnese governance structure.
3. Acehnese public figures in, *gampong, mukiem*, district and regency level.
4. Acehnese Custom Assembly (MAA) figures and Acehnese Custom Institutions contained in *gampong* government.
5. People, Aceh gampong members are related to socio-political changes in their social life process.
6. *Desa Pintar* program manager at *gampong* level and superior are required.
7. Daily sociocultural and political process taking place in *gampong*.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All people in the world are affected by communication technology development, even though the village people. Internet creates a new world changing a lot of people reality, both in social, culture, economic, education, politics and even religion. Internet becomes a force in people changes in various parts of the world, internet strengthens people empowerment. Internet goes to village program has opened the access to telecommunication and information in *gampong* which can create new opportunities in social, cultural, economic and political life. *Desa pintar* program in Aceh province is placed in *gampong* so all *gampong* are not closed, isolated and under developed area anymore compared to villages that have been affordable internet access and telecommunication. In *Desa pintar* program implementation process, *meunasah* is as learning/education center, community center and government center.

As a government center, it means that all political decisions affecting *gampong* people's social culture held in *meunasah*. The system of *gampong* government and *meunasah* is part of Acehnese local wisdom and becoming a force in Aceh political process with all tools and the political structure in it. Internet goes to village changes communication and relationships patterns in gampong government system. *Keuchiek* which is as an information center, *imuemmeunasah* as a religious knowledge center, nowadays is not the only source of information, but it appears other information sources that can easily be accessed by *gampong* people.

According to observations and data obtained by researchers, it can be stated that *gampong* political system and processes remain unchanged based on Acehnese *Gampong* Government Structure according to Aceh *Qanun* Number 2, 2003. However, political process and relation are shifted. This shift changes or realistically occurs in a society that accepting new ideas. Appearing *gampong* people conflicts that arise as a result of communication technology/internet development and the advent of new media and social media is more due to unpreparedness of society in facing problem complexity of because of new technology.

The changes occurring in *gampong* social political system are more than on political relations and process and not on political concept and system. The changes can be categorized into two sides, negative and positive.

1. **The changes tending to be negative (local wisdom values are degraded), among others:**
   a. Communication process is faster, but communication quality is not always better and meaningful because it tends to ignore Acehnese character, values and customs.

b. Acehnese language utilization in everyday communication process is reduced, many of them use Indonesian.
c. People spend their time enjoying the internet and communication technology devices replacing kinship and assembled in *meunasah*.
d. More open relationship patterns shift the traditional relation pattern with Acehnese characters, values and customs.
e. Featuring conflicts in community due to differences in understanding and meaning Internet users language and behavior.
f. *Keudaikupi* (Coffee Shops) as a gathering place for Acehnese people, especially young men and fathers are preferred over for a chat-discussion on politics, social and culture tending to be abandoned if it is not complemented by the internet/wifi/hotspot.
g. *Gampong* government officials (*Keuchiek, Imuem* and *TuhaPeut*) are no longer asinformation major source, displaced with information from the Internet.
h. Conflict arising is open and sometimes it spreads rapidly.

2.Changes that tend towards the positive in *gampong* people socio-political development, among others:
a. Information access is broader, faster and cheaper
b. Communities have alternative new information sources from various sources.
c. Bring up the new communication patterns that foster an attitude of wanting to know and learn new things.
d. Growing of new social culture communities.
e. The use of internet-new-media social media for political development in government programs socialization process and other information.
f. In economic field, people use internet for promotion and e-commerce sales.
g. In socio-cultural field, the emergence of new relationships methods in community that is more economies, effective and efficient, including in education field, the student/students use Internet for learning.
h. *Meunasah*is not the only as a forum forproblems settlement through meeting and deliberation, but also as problem resolution that can be done virtually, it is feared that *meunasah* will only be inanimate objects without significant meaning for Aceh social, cultural and political development.
i. The interaction and mobilization changes process tend to use internet, although face-to-face is maintained.
j. Communication means or methods in transformation process of political messages among *gampong* government officials, political elite and society.
k. Information resources increase and are easy to be obtained so it provides new knowledge about activities/programs undertaken by people.
l. The message type is more diverse and in alternative packaging.
m. Kinship relationship tends to decrease due to it is replaced by Internet use.
n. *Gampong* problems or issues solving processarefaster and does not always have to be sealed in *meunasah* or face to face communication between parties.
o. Communities have alternative information
p. People have alternative entertainment provided byinternet/new media and social media, so that Acehnese*gampong*tradition sometimes is overlooked and it tendsto be forgotten.
q. Children education process withmothers or women role in Aceh
r. *zikir/dhalae*, it is like Acehnese story this time tends to be replaced with a variety of internet content/new media such as cartoons, songs, and movies.
s. Tasks, jobs, and *gampong* government officials meeting coordination Process, can be done by utilizing new media/social media.
t. Information transformation about Aceh socio-cultural wealth like Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) birthday celebration (*Muloed*,), going down to the rice field celebration (*keunduriblang*), wedding party (*keundurimeukawen*), *peusijuek* (plain flour), and others, more easily and quickly spread via internet/new media and social media.

Apart from a variety of social change, culture and politics in *gampong* community for communication development of technologies-the Internet, it turns out that *meunasah* function is still there, even though new things inevitably are adopted by the *gampong* elite and society. *Meunasah* and *gampong* governance systems appropriately maintain seriously Aceh wisdom workshop despite the generation change. Its essence is Acehnese society ideology that should not be replaced, but the processes and activities can be shifted in accordance with the times.

Changes in *gampong* society triggering conflict at the level of the individual, the family, with other people because people experience changes in thought and behavior everyday. Such as the time and rhythm of learning, worship to *meunasa*h, the Koran, to the fields or other social life. Process activities that were previously using face to face communication medium transformed into the form of utilization of the Internet and new media.

In connection with the social rules and control in society tends to decrease, led to an attitude that is more about yourself and tend to ignore the village social institutions that have been the foundation of life. The creation of a new community structure and more dynamic than ever before, including a reduction in village communities that had been gathered in *meunasah*, but would prefer to gather in coffee shops because of the internet connection (*hostpot)*. But on the positive side, the internet goes to village creates a community of internet users an opportunity for discussion about knowledge and new information among the elite village government and society. Community uses the internet to improve the economic process with promotions and e-commerce to increase the development of small and medium enterprises,

Gampong governance system has not changed even though the Internet and new media are already familiar to the public that the system of government and political communication political *gampong*. Communication in Aceh *gampong* government system uses Aceh customs and traditions and rules (*reusam)* which is a wealth of local wisdom and the culture.

The system and social structure based on Aceh rules (*reusam)* customs into main force in character development of human resources in Aceh, and all these processes take place in the village as the first level of the social and political structure of the Acehnese who practice under the supervision of *Keuchiek, Tengku Imuem, Tuha Puet* and other gampong officials. One of *gampong* functions and roles is making and deciding*reusam* or rules of the village. Aceh *reusam*is made based on the values contained in the customs and culture of Aceh, which is integral in values of Islam.

All socio-cultural and political process in the *gampong* run by the cumulative tradition of religious life of the people of Aceh which is one of the social forces. It is a wealth of local Acehnese culture that has been passed down and implemented in the life of the system of government/political and social culture of Aceh. As one of the local knowledge of Aceh, *gampong* became an alternative strategy in the development and strengthening of the people of Aceh.

Therefore there is an important safeguard indigenous village as a force in the development of human character, through *meunasah*. The entry of the internet should not eliminate local village wealth of Aceh, it should be maintained as a social, cultural and political power of the future, so the Acehnese still grow from *meunasah* as the center of government, education, community, conflict resolution, community economic planning wheel as well as a place of worship for the people of Aceh. *Keuchiek, Tengku Imuem, Tuha Puet* and other gampong officers play an important role in the *gampo*ng political forces to maintain the balance between the Aceh customs value and the internet as a new technology in the development of gampong communities in Aceh.

7. CONCLUSION

Political communication system in Aceh government has not changed despite the internet goes to village through 'smart village' program. Aceh Government is still using the system and the structure of village governance as embodied in the regulations *Qanun* No. 2 of 2003 on the Village Government. Internet as part of the development of communication technology cannot be refuted contribute to social, cultural and political changes in the community as part of the village community adaptation process may not reject new technologies and the implications of the presence of new technologies such as new media and social media.

Changes that occur in the government village mainly deal with the implementation of daily administration, which previously used face to face communication media in the form of community meetings in *meunasah, a*fter their internet political process is assisted by utilizing the internet. *Gampong*government officials as *Keuchiek, Imuem meunasah* and *Tuha Puet* and other village officials are as the main sources. The internet's role shifted position as alternative sources of information for the community. People begin to use the internet n economic development and promotion for e-commerce. However, village officials still have control, supervise the process of internet development to the village as a form of responsibility as the 'guardian of Acehnese socio-cultural values/*reusam*'.

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