

## The Role of Islamic Universities in the Harmony of the *Madhhab* (Resolution of the Aswaja and Wahabism Conflicts in Aceh)

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### Abstract

*The friction between madhhabs in Aceh, especially between the Ahlīsunnah Wal Jamaah (Aswaja) and Wahabi have become increasingly sharp in recent decades. Religious tolerance in Aceh has suffered a setback with the existence of various religious incidents such as the expulsion of preachers, seizure of mosque control, burning of mosque foundations. The Aswaja party is dominated by ulama Dayah (Islamic school scholars) and their followers, while the Wahabi party is aimed at campus Islamic scholars, especially those with Middle Eastern backgrounds. In response to these findings, PTAI (Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam/ Islamic Higher Education) in Aceh offered various solutions. UIN Ar-Raniry seeks to bring together Ulama Dayah and campus scholars to carry out dialogue and consensus. LAIN Langsa prefers not to be involved in the Aswaja and Wahabi conflicts because they consider the friction of madhhab in Aceh is not purely a religious issue, but rather a political one. STAIN Dirundeng Meulaboh is more inclined to the Aswaja and so is the Al-Muslim Bireuen Campus considering having leaders from the Muhammadiyah circle.*

Keywords: *Aswaja, Wahabi, Friction of Madhhab, Aceh*

### Abstrak

*Gesekan bermazhab di Aceh khususnya antara Aliran Ahlīsunnah Wal Jamaah (Aswaja) dan Wahabi semakin meruncing beberapa dekade ini. Toleransi bermazhab di Aceh memiliki rapor merah dengan adanya berbagai insiden kerukunan bermazhab seperti pengusiran penceramah, perebutan penguasaan mesjid, pembakaran fondasi mesjid, dan lain sebagainya. Pihak Aswaja didominasi oleh para ulama Dayah dan pengikutnya, sementara Pihak Wahabi ditunjukkan terhadap para sarjanawan Islam kampus khususnya yang beralmamater Timur Tengah. Konflik bermazhab di Aceh semakin meruncing, khususnya ketika pihak otoritas keagamaan di Aceh mengklaim bahwa Wahabi, Syiah, dan Salafi sebagai aliran Islam yang sesat dan dilarang eksist di Aceh. Menyikapi temuan ini, PTAI di Aceh bervariasi dalam memberikan tawaran solusi. UIN Ar-Raniry berupaya mempertemukan Ulama Dayah dan Sarjanawan kampus guna melakukan dialog dan mufakat. LAIN Langsa lebih memilih untuk tidak terlibat dalam konflik Aswaja dan Wahabi sebab bagi mereka, gesekan bermazhab di Aceh bukan murni kasus beragama, namun lebih kepada gejala politik. STAIN Dirundeng Meulaboh lebih condong terhadap Aliran Aswaja sedangkan Kampus Al-Muslim Bireuen lebih condong kepada Aswaja sebab dinilai memiliki pimpinan dari kalangan Muhammadiyah.*

Kata kunci: *Aswaja, Wahabi, Gesekan Bermazhab, Aceh*

## INTRODUCTION

Aceh province has a culturally diverse tribes or ethnicities, which have different cultures and even languages. It has eight sub-tribes namely Acehnese, Alas, Gayonese, Aneuk Jamèe, Kluet, Simeulu, Tamiang, and Singkil. The eighth sub-ethnicities are culturally varied from one to another. For instance, the Gayonese and are the tribes that exist and inhabit the highlands of Aceh, Southeast Aceh and Central Aceh. Based on the above variations, Aceh has been a culturally diverse region and each tribe can coexist regardless of ethnicity and customs since the beginning. The obstacle occurs when the differences in *khiblafiah* (differences of opinion among Islamic scholars on a legal issue) in *madhhab* take part in Aceh with teachings that are considered different from their Islamic school. The friction of *madhhab* in Aceh seems to be born and every concept of *madhhab* other than *Aswaja* experienced strong rejection. there are several cases related to this, such as the decline in preachers at the Al-Makmur Grand Mosque (known as Oman Mosque), the mechanism for holding sticks during Friday prayers, and the taking over of mosque management rights which were initially held by *Wahabi* to *Aswaja* in Bireuen.<sup>1</sup>

*Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam/*Islamic Higher Education (PTAI) is one of the most crucial media in introducing and broadcasting tolerance of differences of Islamic *madhhab* to the society.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it is tremendously alarming if the friction between adherents of Islamic sects is discovered due to excessive intolerance. Islam is a religion of *rahmatan lilalamin* (a mercy to all creation), which embraces diversity as His word means; “O mankind, indeed We created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most pious among you.”<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, the meaning of Wahabi itself which is claimed to be *bid'ah* (innovation in religious matters) or heretical by the *Aswaja* is still in the definition phase. Tolerance of different sects is interpreted as radical without any consensus that brings the two parties together in a familial way. Aceh needs an agent to bridge the case of friction between various sects in order to avoid a prolonged conflict.<sup>4</sup> Religious institutions such as MPU (Islamic Scholars Consultative Assembly) and the Department of Islamic Shari'ah should be fair mediators, but so far they tend to be subjective based on the considerations of the more dominant *Aswaja* masses.

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<sup>1</sup> Mulyana Idris dan M. Sahlan, *Antara Salah Paham dan Paham yang Salah: Pandangan Teungku Seumeubent Terhadap Wahabi*, Jurnal Substantia, Volume XX, No.1, April 2018, hlm. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Faturrahman Rauf, *Peran Perguruan Tinggi Islam dalam Mencerdaskan Bangsa*, Jurnal Al-Turas, Volume XIII, No. 2 Mei 2007, hlm. 197.

<sup>3</sup> Departemen Agama RI, *Al-Quran dan Terjemahannya*, (Bandung: PT. Syamil Cipta Media, 2002), hlm. 1301.

<sup>4</sup> Zulkarnain, *Dinamika MAzhab Sfa'i dengan Cara Aceh: Studi Tentang Praktik Mazhab di Kalangan Tokoh Agama*, Jurnal Ijtihad, Volume 15, No. 2, Desember 2015, hlm. 159-176.

On this occasion, Islamic universities can be the right resolution bodies, considering they have students and professors from the two *madhhab* groups (Aswaja and Wahabi). As the points contained in the Tri Dharma of higher education (education and teaching, research and development, community service) make the institution an effective means to promote the harmony of *madhhab* in Aceh, especially the polemics of the Aswaja and Wahabi schools.

## METHODS

This article is a field research with a qualitative approach, the method used is a phenomenological study of cases of conflict between Wahabi and Aswaja *madhhab* at the Aceh Islamic Higher Education Institutions. The study population data were taken from 4 different campuses, namely UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, IAIN Langsa, STAIN Dirundeng Meulaboh, and Al-Muslim University Bireuen. Informants in this study were campus leaders, lecturers, students, and figures in charge of Aswaja and Wahabi discourses.

## DISCUSSION

### *Aswaja Adherents in Aceh*

*Ablussunnab wal Jama'ah* is one of several schools of *Kalam* (Islamic Scholastic Theology). The expression Ahl al-Sunnah (also referred to as Sunni) can be divided into two meanings, namely general and specific. Sunni in a general sense is the opponent of the Shia group. In this sense, the Mu'tazilah, like the Ash'ariyah, is included in the ranks of the Sunnis, while Sunni in a special sense is a *madhhab* that is in the ranks of the Ash'ariyah and is the opponent of the Mu'tazilah. This second definition is used in this discussion.<sup>5</sup>

According to KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari, *Ablussunnab Wal Jama'ah* is a group that holds tightly to the *sunnah* (the traditions and practices of the Islamic prophet, Muhammad: May Allah exalt His Mention, that constitute a model for Muslims to follow) of the Prophet, the companions, and follows the inheritance of the pious scholars. Specifically, the *Ablus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah* that developed in Java are those who follow Imam Shafi'i *madhhab* in fiqh, Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Asy'ari *madhhab* in *aqidah* (creed), Imam al-Ghazali and Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Syadzili *madhhab* in Sufism.<sup>6</sup>

Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani (471 - 561 H) a great legendary Sufi figure explained, *Al-Sunnah* is what has been recommended by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH including his speech, behavior, and decisions, while *al-Jama'ah* is everything that has become the consensus of the Prophet's

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<sup>5</sup> Abdul Rozak dan Rosin Anwar dkk, *Ilmu kalam*, (Bandung: Cv. Pustaka Setia, 2010), hlm. 119.

<sup>6</sup> Zuhairi Misrawi, Hadratussyaikh Hasyim Asy'ari, *Moderasi Keumatan Dan Kebangsaan*, (Kompas: Jakarta, 2010), hlm. 107.

companions at the time of the fourth *kebulafaur ar-rashidin* (Islamic leader after the Prophet), who has been given guidance.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, *Aswaja* are people who consistently follow the deeds of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and his companions. They do not distort the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad nor discredit some of the Companions or the entire Companions of the Prophet. This understanding can be strengthened by several hadiths of the Prophet narrated by several narrators with hadith editors.

Substantively, *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah* covers three aspects of Islam, namely the aspects of theology, *fiqh* and morals. Although the discourse of Islamic scholars often discusses the aspects of *aqidah* (creed) and shari'ah (*fiqh*), it does not mean that there is no moral aspect. According to this view, the practice of the first two aspects contains aspects of morality or *tashawuf*.<sup>8</sup>

Another source explained that *Aswaja* have been widely known and popular since the existence of the *Mu'tazila* who initiated rationalism and were supported by the Abbasid rulers. As a government *madhhab*, the *Mu'tazila* used violent means in dealing with their opponents.<sup>9</sup> This sect forced officials and religious leaders to argue about the existence of the Qur'an. As a result, this school carried out *mihnah* (inquisition) as a test of faith to officials and Islamic scholars. The subject matter being tested was the problems of the Qur'an. The purpose of *the mihnah* was to free people from shirk (the deification or worship of anyone or anything besides Allah).<sup>10</sup>

The number of scholars who had been tested was 30 people, and among the scholars who resisted against him persistently was Ahmad bin Hanbal. This incident finally gave rise to the term "Ahl al-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah".<sup>11</sup> The *Mu'tazilah*, which became the *madhhab* of the government, did not last long. After the caliph al-Makmun died, gradually, the *Mu'tazilah* sect weakened considerably as al-Mutawakkil abolished it as a school of government. Furthermore, the jurists and scholars who were Sunni took their place, and their efforts were supported by prominent scholars and caliphs at the time.<sup>12</sup> In particular, the *Aswaja* adherents in Aceh are an Islamic group dominated by the *Dayahs* (Islamic boarding schools). This identity became clearer around the time of the elections for the Governor and Deputy Governor of Aceh in 2007, as almost all *dayah* scholars in remote parts of Aceh came out to demonstrate at the Baiturrahman Mosque because

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<sup>7</sup> Shayh' Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani, *Al-Ghunyah li Thalib Tariq al-Haq*, (Mkatabat al-Shab'iyah: Beirut, th), hlm 5.

<sup>8</sup> Nawawi, *Ilmu Kalam dari Teosentris Menuju Antroposentris*, (malang: genius edia, 2014), hlm. 82-83.

<sup>9</sup> Munawir, *kajian hadis dua mazhab ...* hlm. 13

<sup>10</sup> Nawawi, *Ilmu Kalam dari Teosentris Menuju Antroposentris...*, hlm. 87.

<sup>11</sup> Munawir, *kajian hadis dua mazhab...*, hlm. 13.

<sup>12</sup> Imam Muhammad Abu Zarah, *Aliran Politik dan Aqidah dalam Islam*, (Jakarta: logos, 1996), hlm. 189.

they considered it to be inhabited by Wahabi who were considered to deviate from Islamic teachings.

According to Hasbi Amiruddin, the majority adherents of Aswaja in Aceh are *dayab*-based Islamic sects. The limitation lies in the principle of the *dayab* basis in applying traditionalist Islamic teachings and values.<sup>13</sup> Meaning, the moderate alumni of *dayab* in the sense of accepting Islam are adapted to the times (contextualization). In short, they are not the Aswaja in question.

The same thing was also conveyed by Zulkarnaini, the director of IAIN Langsa Postgraduate School. According to him, Ahlisunnah Wal Jamaah has two definitions, the first one is a value of Islamic teachings that adhere to the Qur'an and Sunnah, and the other one is an Islamic group (sect) that uses the naming Aswaja as the name of its sect. In fact, according to Zulkarnain, Muhammadiyah, NU, and Salafi are also included in Aswaja since they originate from the same Islamic law as well.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Wahabi in Aceh***

The origin of the name Wahabi is derived from its sect or teachings named "Wahabiah". The name is associated with its founder's name, Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab (1703-1787 AD) to distinguish it from other ideologies.<sup>15</sup> The founders and followers of Wahabi are called *muwabbhidun* or *muwabbhidin* which means the unifier and the system or *tareqa* (a school or order of Sufism, or specifically a concept for the mystical teaching and spiritual practices of such an order with the aim of seeking *haqiqa*, which translates as "ultimate truth") is called *Muhammadan*. This last word can refer to Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab as the founder, but it can also refer to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. They claimed to be Sunni, followers of the Ahmad bin Hanbal *madhhab* of Ibn Taimiyah's version, which in his writings attacked a lot of excessive worship of the sheikhs' *tariqa*.<sup>16</sup>

The teachings of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab are purification teachings that aims to restore Islam as taught by the Prophet Muhammad after Islam was judged to have suffered various dangerous deviations, especially faith in monotheism or the oneness of God, such as the cult of pious individuals and *sheikhs' tariqa*,<sup>17</sup> worship of sacred trees, offerings at the tombs of pious individuals and sheikhs. Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab felt that the practice of superstition that

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Hasbi Amiruddin (Professor at UIN Ar-Raniry), 2 March 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Zulkarnain (Director of IAIN Langsa Postgraduate School), 23 March 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Ahmad Hanafi, *Pangantar Theology Islam*, (Jakarta: Mutiara Sumber Widya Jakarta, 1995), hlm. 149.

<sup>16</sup> Harun Nasution, *Ensiklopedi Islam Indonesia LAIN Syarif Hidayatullah*, (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1992), hlm. 974.

<sup>17</sup> Harun Nasution, *Ensiklopedi Islam...*, hlm. 974.

befell the Muslims in his country, was not only limited to worshipping the graves of the pious and taking vows in the graves, but also extending to the worship of inanimate objects.

From the country where he was born, namely Yamamah or Riyadh today, some children worship date palm trees and consider the trees can give them a mate. Furthermore, many residents of Dar'iah city where he started his *da'wab* (the act of inviting or calling people to embrace Islam), visited a cave which was considered sacred there. This act was seen by him as *shirk*. Therefore, he called for visiting graves to look for examples, not to seek intercession and *tawassulat* (seeking nearness to Allah through performing good deeds by the means of one's *dua*/supplication).<sup>18</sup>

Historically, the influence of Wahabi teachings extended to Indonesia, especially in Padang and Java. However, the existence of Wahabi as a religious movement has never really existed in Indonesia, especially in Aceh. Therefore, it is a little surprising when the phobia of Wahabi occurs in Aceh recently. Friction between religious-based groups has actually occurred between religious organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU).<sup>19</sup>

Muhammadiyah is an Islamic movement organization that carries out *da'wab amar maruf nahi munkar* (command the good and forbid the bad). This organization never called itself a follower or part of Wahabism even though some of the Wahabi teachings were adopted by Muhammadiyah such as purification of Islamic teachings from superstition, *bid'ah* (innovation in religious matters) and *churafat* (erroneous beliefs or superstitions that are made up are based on actions and natural events that occur). The history of Muhammadiyah's birth cannot be separated from efforts to stem Christianization in Indonesia. Meanwhile, NU is an Islamic school based organization. Both of these organizations initially developed in Java and were both followers of the teachings of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah. Muhammadiyah organization is growing rapidly in urban areas, while NU is developing in rural areas. On average, mosques in urban areas are controlled by Muhammadiyah, while mosques in rural areas are controlled by the NU group.<sup>20</sup>

However, in general, *Tengku* or *dayah ulama* (Islamic scholars) in Aceh understand that some Wahabi teachings deviate from Islamic teachings.<sup>21</sup> Such as the prohibition on visiting graves, the prohibition of *talqin* (the activity of whispering or mentioning the *shahada* to a person who is about to die or mentioning it in the form of a prayer for a newly buried dead body) to dead bodies, the

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<sup>18</sup> Syahrin Harahap dan Hasan Bakti Nasution, *Ensiklopedi Aqidah Islam, cet.1*, (Jakarta: Prenada Media, Cet, 1, 2003), hlm. 433.

<sup>19</sup> Mulyana & M Sahlan, *Antara Salah Paham...*, hlm. 88.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Fuad Muhammad Fachruddin, *Pemikiran Politik Islam*, (Jakarta: Pedoman Ilmu Jaya, 1988), hlm. 127.

implementation of the eight *rakaat* tarawih prayers, the prohibition of praying for the dead, the prohibition of celebrating the Prophet's birthday, the prohibition of *tawassul*, the prohibition of the call-prayer in a loud voice, the prohibition of singing Al-Qur'an, prohibition of singing *qasidah* (songs contain Islamic value), prohibition of *dzikir* (remembrance of Allah), prohibition of *dalail khairat* (famous collection of prayers for the Prophet Muhammad, written by Moroccan scholar Muhammad al-Jazuli), *sifat 20* (the 20 characters) is considered not obligatory, Allah has a place in *ary* (the throne), there is no interpretation of *mutasyabihat* verses, and forbids the construction of a dome over the grave.<sup>22</sup>

According to Firdaus, there is no Wahabi in Aceh if it is viewed from the understanding as Wahabism itself objectively. So far, there have only been accusations by Aswaja's elements against the sect of Islam which is different in *kebilafiah* from their *fiqh* practice. The most frequently targeted (as Wahabi) are Muhammadiyah groups and graduates from the Middle East.<sup>23</sup>

Contrary to this, the Aswaja circles themselves claimed that Wahabi and Shia are deviant sects. Shia is not fully obvious because this group is still running underground (hidden), so the issue is not so hot considering they are still in small numbers. Even so, the Shia can infiltrate the Sunni just like the Wahabi who hide in the Muhammadiyah.<sup>24</sup> Responding to this difference, indicates that the Wahabi followers are still at the definition stage. This can be seen from the accusations against the Wahabi and the absence of acknowledgment from the accused that they are the Wahabi in question.

### ***The Existence of Madhhab Friction in Aceh***

In general, the plurality in the perspective of *Ulama Dayah* (Islamic school scholars) is a *sunnatullah* that cannot be avoided but it must be in the corridor of the Shafi'i *madhhab*. Laws can indeed change when time changes. For example, The MPU and the Islamic Shari'a Service in Aceh prohibit the existence of Islamic sects such as Shia, Wahabi, and Salafi. According to the top Islamic authority, the three sects are considered *bid'ah* and heretical. This reality is in line with the opinion of the *ulama dayah* in Aceh, who in fact are of the Shafi'i school of thought, and are *maturidi* Sufism. Likewise, regarding the discourse of Islamic schools in Aceh, differences are a necessity that cannot be abolished, yet social phenomena shows different fact. For example, the construction of a church near the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque during the reign of Illiza Sa'aduddin Jamal caused strong protests from Acehnese Muslims. Subsequently, the construction which had received permission from the mayor of Banda Aceh was halted.

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<sup>22</sup> Mulyana & M Sahlan, *Antara Salah Paham...*, hlm. 84.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Firdaus (Head of department, Aqidah dan Filsafat Islam), 2 March 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Tu Bulqaini, 4 April 2020.

In the context of the government in Aceh, non-Muslims really want the establishment of houses of worship in Aceh. Therefore, if they truly demand it then it should be an urgent need as a place to carry out worship, otherwise it would be taken as disrupting the harmony between religions. As the result, the number of places of worship is not directly proportional to the number of worshippers. Even though there are regulations from the government, each house of worship will be established based on the number of religious communities. The most important thing in this life should be how to fulfill the wishes of each religious community. In fact, nowadays they tend not to heed the rules of the idea, there are those who turn shops into places of worship and this, according to Tgk Tarmizi Daud, violates the intended rules.

Another case that characterizes the problem of *aqidah* plurality in Aceh is the estrangement between the Islamic sects that exist in it, such as the Aswaja and Wahabi polemics. The discourse of friction between the sect of *Ablisunnah waljamaah* (Aswaja) and Wahabi has actually existed in the Acehnese community based on *dayah* (Islamic boarding school) for a long time. This issue became even stronger during the reign of Muzakir Manaf (Mualem) as the deputy governor of Aceh, who was promoted to be the next governor.<sup>25</sup> The massive demonstrations that took place at the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque on 11 September and 1 October 2015 were held with religious motives, but actually indicated the unity of the two (political) interest groups for Aceh in the future.

The meeting of these two interests was thickened in recent months. Aswaja had an interest in being the holder of religious authority, while Mualem had an interest in being the winner in the 2017 election. Apart from the political embellishments, the conflict between Aswaja and Wahabi did not stop in that realm. Evidently, even though the turbulent period of politics was over, the disharmony between the two dominant sects in Aceh has not yet found a common ground. Muslims in Aceh are divided into two major ethnic groups, the *dayah* group which is the basis of Aswaja and the UIN Ar-Raniry group which is claimed to be the center for the development of the Wahabi group.

In October 2017, a mosque foundation in Bireun, Aceh, was burned down by a group of people. The forerunner of the building engulfed in flames was the Muhammadiyah mosque. It was built in the morning, but was scorched at night. Sadly, the arsonist has not been arrested so far. The most frequently cited reason is that the burning was the aftermath of a dispute and competition between Muhammadiyah and *Dayah* who belonged to the Aswaja sect. When two camps were at odds, a compassionate and wise third party should be present to intervene. In Aceh, the third party

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<sup>25</sup> Mulyana Idris dan M. Sahlan, *Antara Salah Paham dan Paham yang Salah: Pandangan Teungku Seumeubeut Terhadap Wahabi*, Jurnal Substantia, Volume XX, No.1, April 2018, hlm. 80.



is the Islamic Scholars Consultative Assembly (MPU). MPU Bireuen issued a decision: Muhammadiyah must stop building their mosque.

The problems of Aswaja and Wahabi did not stop there, on October 2015 Aceh was stirred up by the case of differences in the way of worship, especially at Friday prayers. Many preachers who did not comply with Aswaja's concept of *Fiqh* were asked to come down from the pulpit even when giving a sermon. These differences, which are actually *khilafiah*, were claimed to be Wahabi's shoots that must be eradicated to the roots. This phenomenon made a special body that holds the highest Islamic authority to take part, and again the results of the MPU Muzakarah and the Aceh Islamic Sharia Court issued a *fatwa* which again favored Aswaja's side.

Unfortunately, the meaning of Wahabi itself which is claimed to be *bid'ah* or heretical by the Aswajas is still in the definition phase. Tolerance of different sects is interpreted as radical without any side of consensus that brings the two parties together in a familial way. Aceh needs agent to bridge the case of friction between various sects so that it does not become a protracted conflict.<sup>26</sup> Necessarily, religious institutions such as the MPU and the Department of Islamic Shari'ah should become a fair mediators but instead they so far tend to be subjective on the basis that Aswaja mass are more dominant.

### **Solution Offered from PTAI**

*Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam/*Islamic Higher Education (PTAI) have various ways to mitigate the friction of sects in Aceh. This all is entirely done based on the interests and objectivity of the problems in the field. The leaders of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh have tried to bridge the polemic of friction between sects in Aceh. Even though it is not a direct action, at least UIN tried to respond to this dynamic or issue in accordance with the corridor. The efforts made by UIN were to hold meetings with various representatives of *dayab* and *ulama* (Islamic scholars). Afterwards, there was a dialogue and discussion suggesting that this conflict of sects was resolved with a cool head and consensus.<sup>27</sup>

This was different from the resolution offered by Farid Wajdi as a professor at UIN Ar-Raniry. He suggested that related parties could revise or add curriculum in Islamic boarding schools that support the creation of high tolerance for sects.<sup>28</sup> This is in line with what Hasbi Amiruddin had to offer. He considered that there was something wrong with the curriculum of the *dayab* institution in Aceh. For example, in the History of Islamic Civilization (SPI) lessons,

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<sup>26</sup> Zulkarnain, *Dinamika MAzhab Sfai'I dengan Cara Aceh: Studi Tentang Praktik Mazhab di Kalangan Tokoh Agama*, Jurnal Ijtihad, Volume 15, No. 2, Desember 2015, hlm. 159-176.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Gunawan Adnan (UIN Ar-Raniry), 2 March 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Farid Wajdi (UIN Ar-Raniry), 2 March 2020.

the *dayah* curriculum usually ends at the *khulafaburasyidin* (the caliphate) period. In fact, discussing the development of Islam is completely long but it is essential to discuss up until now, because it will lead students to understand the meaning of diversity in *madhhab* and religion.<sup>29</sup>

According to Abdul Wahid, the ways to deal with the friction of *madhhab* in Aceh is through the *Dayah* Department which is under the authorities of the Aceh government. Through the *Dayah* Department, a curriculum teaching the Islamic dimension of *Wasatiyah* (Islamic Moderatism) will be provided so that future students will not only understand Islam traditionally but also contextually.

Regarding the role of UIN itself, in fact, various seminars have been held on the importance of religious tolerance in Aceh. However, events in the field often triggered further friction between sects. Based on the *dayah* perspective, UIN is Wahabi since it contains many teachers whose educational background comes from the Middle East. Therefore, changing one's religious ideology will be difficult to do instantly, converting it from the basics starting from education with the *wasatiyah* curriculum will be the most effective way.<sup>30</sup>

The actions taken by the leaders of IAIN Langsa were preventive measures, since there was no real upheaval related to *madhhab* friction. Prevention was carried out by holding religious seminars in order to increase religious tolerance. Not only that, long before the issue of friction between Wahabi and Aswaja developed, the central government always disseminated information to create an agenda of activities in order to counteract radicalism in Indonesia. Thus, everything is in line with what IAIN Langsa will do in the future.<sup>31</sup>

As a figure who has served as the leader of IAIN Langsa, Zulkarnaini assessed the need for socialization related to tolerance for *madhhab* in relation to political maturity. For him, students or the public must be educated so that they are more objective in perceiving the reality of today's *madhhab*. Thus, the campus through its various authorities has frequently approached students so that they engage with healthy politics without having to involved in religious symbolism.<sup>32</sup>

In the faculty level, mediation efforts for each party are always encouraged so that friction between the *maddhab* at IAIN Langsa does not materialize. The mediation was conducted in various ways, such as personal advice from the leaders, religious seminars, as well as publishing books on the discourse of *madhhab* and religion tolerances.<sup>33</sup> As a faculty having a 'Comparative

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Hasbi Amiruddin (UIN Ar-Raniry), 2 March 2020.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Saifullah (UIN Ar-Raniry), 9 March 2020.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Basri Ibrahim (Rector, IAIN Langsa), 22 March 2020.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Zulfikar (Dean of Sharia Faculty IAIN Langsa), 23 March 2020.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Zulfikar (Dean of Sharia Faculty IAIN Langsa), 23 March 2020.

*Madhhab'* department, mediation or resolution in solving problems of *madhhab* friction in the Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Law is certainly more coordinated. This is because the Sharia faculty has already possessed competent lecturers in their field.

According to Zulfikar, a number of *madhhab* frictions in Islam actually come from the thinking concepts of the lecturers who tend to be subjective. Luckily, the lecturers in the Sharia environment are very open and tolerant so that friction between sects in the FSH (Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Law) environment can be maintained better.<sup>34</sup>

Mahyuddin believes that mediation in bridging the problem of friction between *madhhab* at IAIN Langsa is done by involving the role of the government and existing religious elements. Therefore, it is reasonable the Regional Government and the MPU write to various religious elements other than Aswaja to respect the officially recognized authority of the Islamic *madhhab*.<sup>35</sup>

According to Husni, the mediation carried out by the institution is to conduct religious studies in mosques in Langsa and its surroundings. The mosque should not only be filled by one group of *madhhab*, but must undergo rotation so that the understanding of students and the public is open. Especially in understanding how tolerant Islam is in responding to differences in *madhhab*.<sup>36</sup>

Meanwhile, according to student representatives, mediation was conducted by making a written agreement. "It is not permissible to carry religious embellishments in organizing and competing". In addition, mediation is done by student leaders by carrying out student extracurricular activities such as religious debates and socialization of plurality in religion.<sup>37</sup>

The universities in Bireuen offered different solutions. According to Abdul Ghani, the solution can be reached by bringing together various top *madhhab* leaders throughout Indonesia, particularly representing NU and Muhammadiyah leaders. So far, Al-Muslim University has been indifferent in responding to the *madhhab* friction in Aceh, especially Bireuen, which has occurred in an applicative way to a matter of concern.<sup>38</sup> According to Abdul Ghani, this is because the current leader of Al-Muslim University is from Muhammadiyah circle itself, so he prefers to remain silent to not be caught up in the heated *madhhab* friction. In fact, the campus has an obligation to bridge the *madhhab* friction in Aceh, especially how to spread the existence of its alumni to spread

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Zulfikar (Dean of Sharia Faculty IAIN Langsa), 23 March 2020

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Mahyuddin (IAIN Langsa), 23 March 2020.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Husni Mubarak (Lecturer at IAIN Langsa), 23 March 2020.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Hasdinal Putra (Student at IAIN Langsa), 20 March 2020.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Abdul Ghani (Al-Muslim), 4 March 2020

*da'wab* with the vision of peace and tolerance.<sup>39</sup> In addition, Ghani also deeply regrets the decision of Governor of Aceh which was very contradictory and considered racist since Aceh does not only consist of NU but also has other Muslim communities such as Muhammadiyah whose population is tremendously large.

Slightly different from what Mulyadi offered. According to him, the Aceh leader and religious authorities in Aceh have taken the right action, because it is not a matter of tolerance only, but rather a consideration so that the peace of *madhhab* in Aceh remains conducive. If this policy is not taken, Aswaja as the dominant Islamic sect in Aceh will take to the field to enforce its symbols. In order to avoid this worst possibility, various rules and policies have been issued in favor of Aswaja's side so that they remain calm and not take the law into their own hands.<sup>40</sup>

Mulyadi placed more emphasis on solutions in teaching aswaja studies for followers of the Wahabi *madhhab*. For him, the Wahabi must also recognize and study the Aswaja Islamic concept which is more ideal and compatible with the Islamic culture in Aceh. Even so, Mulyadi disagreed if the circular letter issued by the Aceh leader immediately dropped the existence of the Muhammadiyah party. There should be better communication, even though the leader clearly sided with NU circles.

Especially for STAIN Dirundeng Meulaboh university, STAIN leader assessed that a solution between Aswaja and Wahabi should involve gathering all the elements with the intention of finding a solution instead of raising new issues. The representatives of the elements must be really mature in terms of thinking and respected by their circles. So far, what has happened is that the leadership of an Islamic sect has injected the values of anger into its congregation to reject the presence of Wahabi physically.<sup>41</sup>

There was no concrete policy that directly brings together the two elements of Islamic sects at STAIN Dirundeng. It was not that STAIN did not have the capacity for that, but rather it was not the right authority because the role of universities is only focused on the student environment only. Campuses are responsible of their students as long as they are on campus grounds, but once they go out of the campus it is the authority of the Aceh government, especially religious institutions in Aceh to find a solution.<sup>42</sup>

Muhammad Faisal also thought the same, according to him if STAIN interferes in the polemic of friction between *madhhab* in Aceh, then it will become a ticking time bomb for the

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Abdul Ghani (Al-Muslim), 4 March 2020

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Mulyadi (Al-Muslim), 5 March 2020

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Inayatillah (STAIN Dirundeng Meulaboh), 9 March 2020

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Syamsuar (Lecturer at Stain Dirundeng Meulaboh), 9 March 2020.

educational institution itself. In the other word, one day STAIN or other Islamic universities will certainly become a mass rage since they are already considered to have a clear understanding of Wahabism when socializing solutions of *madbhab*. Therefore, universities have quite a role to play in educating the students because even if the concept of *Wasatiyah* Islam exists in universities, it will naturally be rejected since it is not in accordance with the ideals of the common people's *madbhab*.<sup>43</sup>

### Aswaja's Response

As the chairman of the Banda Aceh MPU as well as a lecturer at UIN Ar-Raniry, Damanhuri assessed that the government was right in issuing a circular letter which favored the Aswaja *madbhab* in Aceh. Damanhuri considered that Aceh as a model city of sharia must have a strong order in determining the model of *madbhab* within it. This is important because the Wahabi concept is disguised behind Muhammadiyah, while the Shia concept also plays under the Salafists. Avoiding this underground turmoil, Damanhuri agreed with the provincial MPU's decision to ban the existence of Shia, Wahabi, and Salafi in Aceh. All of this is feasible to commit so that Islamic law in Aceh is truly clean without the intervention of those who act clandestinely.<sup>44</sup>

Similarly, Mahyuddin said that the Aceh Government was doing the right thing and so were the MPU and the Department of Islamic Shari'a. They understand that Aceh has an identity that must be protected, and must not be damaged by outsiders.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, Tu Bulqaini asserted, "We still do not want to tolerate anything, or all deviant sects from the teachings of Islam and this must not be allowed to develop in Aceh, if they neither obey nor listen, we will expel them if necessary. The point is, it has been our responsibility to maintain the purity of Islam in Aceh."<sup>46</sup>

Concerning many people who study outside of Aceh or even overseas, Lem Faisal felt regretful and even half condemns their existence along with their worship practices. "Just because you have just returned from abroad and have never read and understood the understanding of *aqidah* in *madbhab*, or do not want to understand the religious conditions of the people in their place, do not bring up the issue of prohibiting in religion", he said. As the case in Sibreh Village, Aceh Besar, Muhammadiyah used to develop there and now carrying out the *maulid* (The Prophet's birthday) and *tarawih prayers* (*sunnah* prayer conducted at night during fasting month) of 20 *rakaat*.

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<sup>43</sup> Interview with Jon Faisal (Lecturer at Dirundeng Meulaboh), 9 March 2020

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Damanhuri Baasyir (Chief of MPU Banda Aceh dan Lecturer at UIN Ar-Raniry), 9 March 2020.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Mahyuddin (IAIN Langsa), 23 March 2020.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Tu Bulqaini, March 2020.

Basically there is no need to blame each other, but accepting one another for the common good to be better.<sup>47</sup>

According to *Ulama Dayah*, differences in *madhhab* in the current context can still be solved with the principles of *fiqh* in the *arba'ab madhhab*. But if there is no solution in the Shafi'i *madhhab*, later a new *ijmak* (consensus among Islamic scholars) will be made again. Regarding the existence of the Ulama Consultative Council (MPU), according to Lem Faisal, there are three major authorities. *First*, to issue a legal *fatwa*. *Second*, to recommend rules to the government and *third*, to train cadres of Islamic scholars.

Syafi'iyah *madhhab* is the most powerful *madhhab* in Acehese society, although they also practice other *madhhabs* in their daily social activities, such as Hambali *madhhab* or others. Lem Faisal gave an example, as in our daily life at a coffee shop, we drink and eat before we pay. According to the Shafi'i *madhhab*, we have to pay for the food first before we can consume it. That is a miniature model of the *madhhab* application in Aceh. This all has been influenced by the lineage of knowledge and no area in Aceh is untouchable from the Shafi'iyah *madhhab* since each region has its own lineage of *madhhab*.

In the context of the existence of other *madhhab* in Aceh and its relation to the seizure of the Beureunuen mosque, for instance. Lem Faisal emphasized that friction between these *madhhabs* tends to exist in the present and not in the past because there are certain groups who use some Aceh government actors. However, the issue of pluralism in Aceh began to be disturbed after the tsunami. The development of *madhhab* in Aceh consists of two groups, *first*, the lower middle class who are still consistent with the belief in the *madhhab* they believe in. *Second*, the upper middle class that no longer practice *madhhab* because they have already considered the practice of *madhhab* intersects with scientific issues. Unlike the lower middle class, they are able to understand practical and scientific understanding.

Meanwhile, according to Tu Sop; *Ulama* must be able to provide understanding to the people about the values that lead to goodness, and if necessary they must also be able to color it into the system of *madhhab* and *aqidah* within the scope of Aswaja. So, the Islamic scholars can be an example as the Prophet brought Islam into the Arabian Peninsula. Thus, the *ulama* must love people, not as a figure who messes with people.

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<sup>47</sup>Interview with Lem Faisal, 24 April 2020.

### **Wahabi's Response**

Since the researchers did not find Wahabi objectively in this paper, the researchers took responses from sources that were claimed by the Aswaja as Wahabi. That group consists of graduates from the Middle East or who are intensively socializing the concept of *Wasatiyah* Islam in the campus environment in Aceh.

Basri considered the government to view the Aswaja and Wahabi conflicts as political turmoil, not religious turmoil. It is not surprising that the decision taken by the Acting Governor of Aceh is more inclined to side with Aswaja as the biggest mass adherent. However, the decision taken seemed rushed by issuing a circular letter that only the Syafii *Madhhab* (Aswaja) were allowed to operate in Aceh. This decision also received a response from the central religious officials (MUI) that regretted the circular letter of the Aceh Government.<sup>48</sup>

Contrary to what Basri said, Mawardi believes that there is no *madhhab* on campus because *madhhab* is a matter of belief, not an institutional area. Mawardi assessed that the Aceh government and the religious institutions within it were too short-sighted in understanding the pattern of *madhhab* in Aceh. Even though Aswaja dominates Acehnese Muslims, it does not necessarily mean that this *madhhab* is correct and excludes the existence of other *madhhabs*. Society is literally plural, in fact problems will arise when variations with different *madhhabs* are forced to become one color.<sup>49</sup>

Lukman Hakim agreed with what Mawardi initiated. The diversity in Islam is a blessing. If God wanted, then He could make all the entire Muslims (or population) in this world to have one belief or even one *madhhab*. But that did not happen, because the wisdom of diversity teaches fellow human beings to know each other, to understand, and to accept differences in togetherness.<sup>50</sup>

Zulkarnain agreed with Basri that the polemic between Aswaja and Wahabi was indeed raised by political issues. It was not surprising if the Acting Aceh governor took a policy that strengthened his position. Otherwise, it is feared that the mass will be turbulent and that will harm the long-established political dynamics. Even so, there should be other alternatives to the circular letter which was highly subjective.<sup>51</sup>

To Zulfikar, The Acting governor was wrong in responding to the friction of *madhhab* in Aceh. His decision was too subjective and did not view the existence of other religious sects in Aceh in high regard. In fact, the circular letter deserved to be issued if other Islamic sects were

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with Basri Ibrahim (Rector of IAIN Langsa), 22 March 2020

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Mawardi (Lecturer at UIN Ar-Raniry), 10 March 2020.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Lukman Hakim (Dosen UIN Ar-Raniry), 10 March 2020.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Zulfikar (IAIN Langsa), 23 March 2020.

indeed proven to be heretical and guilty. The reality today, what is understood by the public is a one-sided misguided claim and there should be a better solution deserves to be taken.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, Husni added that the government should have not be carried away by the quantity of mass. It is necessary to pay attention to various aspects because the people of Aceh are not *Aswaja* even though they are the majority. Leaders should be wiser and more careful of how their decisions can be accepted properly.<sup>53</sup>

Hasbi Amirudin explained that Aceh is considered as a strategic area in the context of Islam, almost all regions in Indonesia are aware that Aceh has more Islamic qualities than other regions. This phenomenon caused Aceh to be in the spotlight regarding the rising issue of the caliphate in Indonesia. In order to avoid that, a handful of unscrupulous stakeholders tried to preoccupy Aceh with disputes between *aqidah* and *madhhab*. This was done so that Aceh's Islamic style and other Islamic sects would never unite.<sup>54</sup> History has proven that so many deviant sects entered Aceh in variety of ways. Currently, fellow sects of Islam in Aceh such as Muhammadiyah, *dayah ulama*, salafi and other Islamic ethnicities continue to experience *madhhab* friction which makes it difficult for unity of Islam in Aceh to occur.

Some observers also considered Aceh cannot be categorized as a safe area for understanding plurality of *aqidah*, some people still easily assume that other people are not from their group, or even can easily accuse someone or a group of people as infidels, even though the accusations made are full of certain motives such as personal grudges. Regarding the problems, certain groups may use such way to make chaos. As history has recorded, many Acehnese people have lost their lives in conflicts just because of a slander. This should also not happen as Aceh is hit by various issues such as the deviant sects, *takfir*, Shia, Wahabi, and differences in *madhhab*.<sup>55</sup>

### **PTAI Policy**

According to Bastri, the campus does not have to be the mediator of the friction between *madhhab* which is currently escalating. In his opinion, the *madhhab* issue is a sensitive matter and must be addressed wisely. One of the 'wise' thoughts is by ignoring the issue until it reaches a saturation point and ends by itself. This is because the campus institution accommodates various variations of Islamic styles, mediating for *madhhab* friction between *Aswaja* and Wahabi is

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<sup>52</sup> Interview with Zulfikar (IAIN LAngsa), 23 March 2020.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Husni Mubarak (IAIN Langsa), 23 March 2020.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Hasbi Amiruddin.

<sup>55</sup> Khairil Miswar, *Syari'at dan Apa Ta'a, Fenomena Sosial Keagamaan Pasca Konflik Aceh*, (Banda Aceh: Padebooks, 2017), h. 34-36.



like getting involved in a problem. Because people tend to be subjective as they cannot force them to understand the religious tolerance awareness of the teachers at IAIN Langsa.<sup>56</sup>

It is similar to Zulkarnaini's opinion. According to him, the campus is not required to be a mediator for the *madbbab* friction in Aceh. This is because it is not the campus' authority to deal with such problems. In this case, the governments along with the existing religious institutions are more appropriate to deal with this issue. Moreover, if the government is not neutral in responding to *madbbab* friction, it will be a boomerang for the campus for getting involved in this problem. Essentially, campuses must be neutral in the teaching and educating according to their respective scientific fields. The campus has no right to decide which school of thought is right or wrong as the campus only offers education and the rest is the students themselves who make decisions.<sup>57</sup>

According to Zulfikar, the campus should play a role in bridging the problem of the *madbbab* friction in Aceh. This is because the campus has qualified teachers to contribute to finding solutions. One of them is the *madbbab* comparative study program at the Faculty of Sharia and Law (FSH). Even so, the path taken must also be smart, because talking about the *madbbab* friction nowadays is not enough by counting on scientific capacity alone, but one must understand both the social and political map of the community. That way, the campus will not become a scapegoat if it is involved in the resolution of the *madbbab* friction in Aceh.<sup>58</sup>

This is different from Mahyuddin's opinion. According to him, the campus cannot be a mediator in addressing the friction between Aswaja and Wahabi since it is dominated by Wahabi thinkers. If the campus is given the authority to bridge this problem, it is feared that the campus will lean towards Wahabi and will harm Aswaja's side. Therefore, it is a wise decision the Aceh Government and the Aceh MPU are given the authority to deal with this this problem.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, Husni argued that the campus should be responsible for responding to the *madbbab* friction that exist in Aceh, especially that of in their own environment. The other problem is not on the campus but with Aswaja that is more dictating so that other Islamic sects recognize it as superiority on the basis of the largest and oldest people in Aceh. Therefore, even if the campus makes a study or brings together Aswaja and Wahabi parties, Husni believed that there will be no solution. The only way out is to involve government authorities that are now clearly in favor of the majority group.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Basri Ibrahim (Rector at IAIN Langsa), 22 March 2020

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Zulfikar (IAIN Langsa), 23 March 2020.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Zulfikar (IAIN Langsa), 23 March 2020.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Mahyuddin (IAIN Langsa), 23 March 2020.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Husni Mubarak (IAIN Langsa), 23 March 2020.

It is not much different from what Hasdinal understood. According to Hasdinal, it is inappropriate for the campus to mediate the problem of religious friction in Aceh since the campus is often claimed as the Wahabi group by Aswaja. Thus, we need a more neutral party, which in this case is an outsider other than Aswaja and Wahabi.<sup>61</sup>

Especially at UIN Ar-Raniry, the leader considered that the campus had tried to bridge this problem by bringing together Aswaja and Wahabi. The two of them discussed today's reality and how to react to it. At the meeting, it was also discussed how to be peaceful towards differences, not accusing each other, elbowing each other, and involving physical contact at the worst scenerio.<sup>62</sup>

In Hasbi Amiruddin's opinion, the campus has done its best in preventing the *madhhab* friction in Aceh. Starting from writing literacy about tolerance in *madhhab* to opening studies on the existence of Wahabi term which has been misunderstood. However, there are still Aswaja parties that are against the term as they do not acknowledge the theory of UIN Islamic scholars because they assume the UIN alumni are Wahabi themselves.<sup>63</sup>

Fauzi Ismail assessed that the campus is very intense in making studies about solutions of *madhhab* in Aceh. Representatives from various elements of *madhhab* were also invited in discussions. The aswaja often accepted the differences and tolerance during the discussion, but when their representatives consisted of *dayab ulama* returned to their environment, they did not agree with the results of the discussion and kept exclaiming that Wahabi was heretical and *bid'ah*.<sup>64</sup>

In the Bireuen area, the Al-Muslim campus is considered to prefer silence to interfering in the friction of *madhhab* which is increasingly prevalent in Aceh. This was done by the leader of Al-Muslim to maintain the stability of the campus so that it remains safe and conducive. Especially if the leader of Al-Muslims himself is in Muhammadiyah circle which is claimed as the Wahabi's group by the *dayab*.<sup>65</sup>

The same thing happened at STAIN Dirundeng Meulaboh. The leader preferred not to be too involved by the *madhhab* friction in Aceh. According to the STAIN leader, the Aswaja and Wahabi cases are not essentially religious issues but rather political ones. Therefore, in order to maintain the integrity of the campus, STAIN prefers to hand over the phenomenon to more appropriate institutions such as the government and the MPU of Aceh.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Interview with Hasdinal Putra (Student at IAIN Langsa), 20 March 2020.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Gunawan Adnan (UIN Ar-Raniry), 2 March 2020.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Hasbi Amiruddin (Professor at UIN Ar-Raniry), 2 March 2020.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Fauzi Ismail (UIN Ar-Raniry), 09 March 2020.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Muhammad Yusuf (Al-Muslim), 4 March 2020

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Inayatillah (STAIN Dirundeng Meulaboh), 9 March 2020

## CONCLUSION

The forms of *madhhab* friction between Aswaja and Wahabi are completely varied, some are limited to friction of thought but some are even more extreme such as expulsion or burning of mosque foundations. According to Aswaja circles, Wahabism is a disturbing sect and bothers the comfort of the Islamic *madhhab* in Aceh. Many worship practices are judged not to be in accordance with Islamic principles so that decisive action is needed to suppress the Wahabi movement which is believed by Aswaja are derived from Middle East Alumni teachers at Islamic universities in Aceh. Aswaja circles also claimed that Wahabi hides behind the identity of Muhammadiyah while Shia hides behind the shadows of Salafi. So it is not surprising, through the Aceh MPU, Aswaja agreed to claim that Wahabi, Salafi, and Shia are deviant sects of Islam and should not be circulated in Aceh.

According to the Wahabi, the claim of Wahabi attached to them is considered misguided. The party accused of Wahabism by Aswaja never considered and admitted themselves to be Wahabism, even this party argued that the Aswaja did not understand what Wahabi identity and the indicators were. The claim of Wahabi addressed to teachers at Islamic universities today is more about Aswaja's disapproval of the concept of moderate Islamic teachings (Wasatiyah).

PTAI has a variety of way in responding to the *madhhab* friction between Aswaja and Wahabi in Aceh. This matter is inseparable from how far the existence of friction in every existing campus is. Especially at UIN Ar-Raniry, the campus is looking for a solution by bringing together representatives of Aswaja and of Wahabi discussing diversities in *madhhab*. There will be a religious dialogue about the existence of Wahabi and whether UIN circles are appropriate to be called deviant Islam based on the contextualization of the Sunnah Wal Jamaah (Aswaja).

Especially in the PTAI in Langsa, Bireuen, and Meulaboh, the solutions offered by the campus are not very implementable to the community. They only conducted a small study related to tolerance of *madhhab* without bringing the frills of Aswaja and Wahabi which were claimed to be completely sensitive. The PTAI leaders also preferred not to be directly involved with the Aswaja and Wahabi polemics because according to them, this conflict is not a religious upheaval but rather a political issue and the struggle for authority. For them, this kind of business is more appropriate to be bridged by parties with more capacity such as local governments or leaders of high Islamic institutions, either at the provincial level or directly from the center.

The response of Islamic institutions in Aceh such as the Aceh MPU and the Department of Islamic Shari'a in Aceh, including the Department of Aceh Dayah, was more inclined and sided with Aswaja's side. This happens because the people behind the institution are Aswaja oriented. On

the other hand, this partiality occurred in order to maintain the stability of the situation and conditions, because the religious institutions in Aceh realized that if Aswaja's party was not supported, it was feared that physical contact would be concerning.

Furthermore, in terms of the Aceh government itself, almost all parties regretted the decision of the Acting Governor of Aceh regarding the prohibition of other *madhhab* besides Aswaja from holding religious studies in Aceh. According to sources, it was a political decision and certainly not a wise decision. The effect of the Acting Governor response has ignited the fire so that the *madhhab* friction in Aceh is getting bigger. Evidently, after the issuance of the circular letter, Aswaja's party was increasingly daring to expel the preachers from the Middle East by mobilizing a crowd.

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