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The Dialectics of Islam and Custom in the *Kenduri La'ot* Tradition  
of the Coastal Muslim Community of East Aceh

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## THE DIALECTICS OF ISLAM AND CUSTOM IN THE KENDURI LA'ŌT TRADITION OF THE COASTAL MUSLIM COMMUNITY OF EAST ACEH

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### Abstract

*Religion is a sensitive issue for the Acehnese Muslim community. However, the practice of religion and culture of marine safety for coastal communities, primarily fishers, is significant, although sometimes it cannot be separated from magical things. This paper aimed to describe how the religion and customs of salvation run in harmony among the people of East Aceh are solid with the tradition of Islamic law. This research results from an empirical study with a phenomenological approach that seeks to see people's behavior in celebrating marine safety. The source of the data was obtained from the coastal communities of East Aceh who were directly involved with the practice of the kenduri laot tradition. Empirical research was conducted on a coastal Muslim community located in the eastern part of Aceh. This paper argued that the phenomenon of maritime security carried out by coastal Muslim communities is a tradition that previous people have practiced. However, the coastal Muslim community of East Aceh is very thick with Islamic teachings. However, the marine safety tradition is important because it contains a philosophical aspect still maintained today. The Islamization of the kenduri la'ot practice wrapped in Islamic events eliminates the mystical impression. This illustrated that there is a dialectic shift from a naturalistic tradition to a theological tradition; the belief that is built by the community is that there is a compromise between tradition and religion to create harmonious conditions, religion becomes the spirit and supporter in the celebration of marine safety, and this is what makes the practice of kenduri la'ot (sea safety) survive.*

**Keywords:** *Kenduri La'ot; Religion; Custom; Coastal Muslim Community.*



## A. Introduction

The integration of religious law and customary law in Aceh is a form of the characteristic of the Acehnese Muslim community. However, if it is studied further, empirical studies of traditional rituals often intersect with Islamic teachings. The motto states; *Adat bak po teumeureuhom, hukom bak syiah Kuala* (Custom is guarded by the king, and law is guarded by (cleric) Syah Kuala). From this expression, it is difficult to say that customary law in Aceh is not sharia law, especially when religious stakeholders carry out customary hegemony. Values are assimilated with standard procedures in practice, both in salvation events, *peusijek*, and other traditional activities (Srimulyani, 2010). Culture and religion for the Acehnese people are essential and complement each other; this is illustrated in the Aceh saga, which reads, "*agama ngoen adat han jeut cre, lagee zat ngoen sifeut*" (Salim, 2021). Strengthening customs is one of the goals where culture becomes part of the behavior of the Acehnese people (Salim, 2010). Tradition becomes sacred and cannot be ignored in every community activity. Likewise the coastal Muslim community of Aceh considers sea salvation an essential ritual and has a philosophical aspect without compromising Islam (Arifin & Hambali, 2016). In specific contexts, the custom has a vital role in society, and there is even a motto that the Acehnese firmly holds that tradition can increase and strengthen brotherly relations (Kasim & Nurdin, 2020).

Sometimes tradition is considered by some traditionalist societies when it is not in the teachings of Islam then it is said to be shirk or against sharia. But not all traditions are opposed to Islam when understood from its philosophical aspects. *Kenduri la'ôt* (Sea Salvation) is part of the community's custom in expressing gratitude to the creator for the abundance of marine products obtained. Various rituals are served to celebrate sea salvation by coastal Muslim communities. Coastal communities consider sea salvation a theological value, but sociological and philosophical values have a psychological impact on fishers who live on the sea coast. The sea salvation is well expressed and wrapped with theological matters to add to the sacredness of every salvation celebration. It is interesting to review how the coastal Muslim



community in Aceh creates harmonization between culture and religion without creating a negative impression of belief.

Research on the relationship between custom and religion has undoubtedly been written and researched a lot, such as Robin's research (Roibin, 2013) which describes the condition of salvation at wedding celebrations where there is a shift from theological to rational-formalistic. The tradition becomes formal and forms the social awareness of the local community to hold a salvation celebration of every wedding, ng, which has become a Javanese custom. Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad (Bustamam-Ahmad, 2017) in his research on traditional institutions in Aceh, explains that the *Panglima la'ot* metamorphoses into a state institution not only representing fishers but also helping to maintain and preserve cultural heritage amidst the political and economic dynamics that occur in Aceh. John F. McCarthy (McCarthy, 2005) explains that Sumatra has revived traditional institutions in Indonesia after the struggle for local resources. Likewise with the research of John R. Bowen (Bowen, 2003) states that customary law in Gayo-Aceh is powerful and even has its uniqueness, even though Aceh has implemented Islamic law. Amirul Hadi's research (Hadi, 2004) confirms that Aceh was powerful with traditional traditions before Islam came. After Islam came to Aceh, traditional ceremonial rituals were very tightly practiced by the Acehnese people.

This paper focuses on studying the traditions of the coastal Muslim community of East Aceh, the majority of whom work as fishermen. In practice, they often hold events in the form of a *kenduri la'ot*. This paper also discusses the debate between religion and custom in which these two things have been assimilated. This is important to study where the discussion of traditions and religion occurs. They run harmoniously without dominating each other and even bring many benefits to the surrounding community. Faith is felt as a supporter in the *Kenduri la'ot* custom and is followed by Islamic values.

## **B. Method**

This research uses a qualitative method. This method is used because the object of this research is an empirical study that examines the traditions of



the coastal Muslim community of East Aceh (Wati et al., 2022) *Kenduri la'ot*. In the social sciences, descriptive studies rely on observations of humans in their area and relationships with these people as a naturalistic inquiry, wherein this type of research, researchers are not required to form certain conceptions or theories in advance about the aspects being studied. Still, researchers can focus their attention on natural events as they are (Kholil, 2006). The reality of one of the specifics of this research is that it aims to collect data or information to be compiled, explained, and analyzed (Margono, 2005). Later, it will explain the dynamics and dialectic between religion and *Kenduri la'ot* customs, which are practiced by the coastal Muslim community in the East Aceh part.

This research uses an anthropological approach (Nata, 2016). To strengthen the analytical power in this research, we use the naturalistic paradigm (Kasiram, 2010). The naturalistic paradigm is based on a phenomenological view basically, phenomenology is an attempt to answer the question of how the structure and experience of a symptom in a group of humans with observations that have been seen so that there is a relationship between the researcher and the object to be studied so that this pattern can be formulated by taking into account the phenomenon that happened. The data was obtained from interviews with several figures, *Tengku* (local religious leaders), *Toke Bot* (shipowner), community leaders, and shipbuilders. Each of them provides information about traditions and customs related to coastal fishing activities.

## C. Result and Discussion

### 1. Result

Religion from the sociological aspect cannot be separated from symbols that can define the characteristics of a religion. This symbol attached to a religion does not always have to be the same as the reality manifested in real life in people's lives. The teachings of any religion the human conception of reality do not originate from knowledge but belief in absolute authority, which differs from one religion to another. In Islam, the image of reality comes from the revelations of the Qur'an and hadith. These two sources' basic concept of reality is seen as absolute and therefore transcendent from



social reality (Azra, 1999). However, religion is also a social reality, it lives and is manifested in society. Religion cannot be separated from normative and historical elements; culture actually occupies a historical position that is in direct contact with religion (Faidi, 2022). The religious doctrine which is a concept of reality must deal with objective reality, customs are often clashed with religion and vice versa. This has been illustrated in the legal journey in Indonesia known as the “*Receptie*” theory, which in the end was refuted by the “*Receptie in Complexu*” theory.

The people of Aceh have their views on customs and religion. This is reflected in the proverb “*hukum meunyo hana adat tabeue, adat meunyo hana hukum bateue*” (law without custom is tasteless, custom if without the law is invalid) (Muhammad & Sumardi, 2011). It can be understood that custom and Islamic teachings have interacted and assimilated harmoniously in Acehese society for hundreds of years. The concrete forms of customs and culture in the lives of the Acehese people are applied in the social, economic, and political fields and the legal field (Nurdin, 2013). Therefore, Islam as a way of life that crystallizes in Acehese culture and customs seems inseparable. Even in historical glimpses the implementation of customary law in Aceh was in effect before Islam came to Aceh (Muhazir, 2021).

The understanding and practice of Islamic teachings in Acehese society are very thick with the concepts of integration and accommodation. According to Badruzzaman Ismail, Aceh’s customs are very wide with Islamic colors. Islamic values such as humanism, equality, peace, togetherness are applied in the traditions and culture of the Acehese people. For example, conflicts were reconciled with a traditional approach known as *suloh*. *Suloh* comes from Islam, namely *islāh*, meaning peace (B. Ismail, personal communication, 2020). In line with that, at the *Panglima Laot* customary institution (a familiar institution dealing with marine matters), there is a prohibition on going to sea and catching fish on Fridays. This is based on the fact that, fishers are focused on Friday prayers (Warulwalidain, personal communication, 2020).

Religion and culture are integrated into the life practices of the Acehese people, both in the form of social systems, culture, and Islamic values. From



the cultural context, the fishing tradition becomes a religious practice that is thick with religious and customary values that are interrelated with one another. The fishing communities of East Aceh have an Islamic tradition that is not much different from other Acehnese coastal communities. The Islamic tradition is combined with the habits of the local community, which is very visible in the connection with local rules combined with adaptive Islam towards human values (Muhazir, 2020). The integration of custom and Islam is practiced in various fishing activities in their search for fish and their relationship to marine activities.

#### a. *Kenduri la'ôt* Practice of East Aceh

For coastal communities, being a fisherman is a hereditary profession in meeting the necessities of life. Maintaining and preserving traditions, norms and customs is part of the pattern of life of coastal communities usually, they carry out rituals as a procession of customs and habits in society. This ritual is called *kenduri la'ôt* or *kenduri troen u laôet* "down to the sea," which is performed every year. This annual ritual is carried out from generation to generation which is continuous because it cannot be separated from the life of fishers and leaves something special in the lives of fishermen.

If the *kenduri laeet* is not carried out, the fishermen feel guilty and feel that something is not perfect in their lives. Meanwhile, the purpose of this ritual is to give alms and ask Allah SWT for prosperity in catching fish and protecting fishers from dangers at sea. *Khanduri laeet* has a secret relationship and has determined the ease of obtaining a livelihood and the security that can be obtained from the sea, because fishers have the belief that if the ritual is not carried out, there will be misfortune and disaster in their lives in the fishing process. This will cause the livelihood of fishers to be cut off (Warulwalidain, personal communication, May 19, 2020).

Field observations observed in the coastal area of East Aceh, before the *kenduri laeet* was held, the *Panglima Lae* together with the management structure, the trawler and ship captains, as well as several fishermen held a meeting called a *rapat laôet* or "meeting for sea feast" as



an effort to decide when a feast will be carried out. The meeting is sometimes held at the nearest mosque or *meunasah* as a gathering point. The meeting will discuss the day, month and date when the ceremony will be held, how much money should be spent and collected from each trawler, boat, canoe, fisherman, and related sources. The funds will then be used for all purposes in the *kenduri laeot*, such as buying certain animals to be slaughtered. These animals can be cows, goats, or buffalo, depending on how much funds are collected.

*Kenduri laeot* is held at least once in three years at the beginning of the west or east monsoons, *kenduri laôet* is held on the seaside or beach facing directly to the sea. According to *panglima laeot* who was met on the coast of East Aceh, there was a *kenduri laôet* in the past which was held about once every five years, depending on the agreement in the sea area. It is held every five years because the *kenduri laôet* can cost a lot of money in one ritual procession. While in the feast, several cows or buffalo will be offered to be enjoyed together. In this procession, the whole community is invited to enjoy the feast, not specifically for the internal fishing community. They invited the entire village (*gampong*) to eat together. Then, the head of a buffalo or cow is floated into the sea as an offering (alms) to the inhabitants of the sea in order to get blessings and ease in the process of catching fish. This tradition of giving buffalo or cow heads seems magical and mystical, because it is very thick with animism and dynamism understanding (B. Ismail, personal communication, 2020).

Currently, the *kenduri laôt* procession in the coastal area of East Aceh is carried out once a year, namely at the end of the year in December. This marks the start of fishing the following year and the end of last year's fishing. According to the handler Birul Walidain, the feast is uncertain, it may also be carried out in various ways depending on the agreement between the *panglima laeot* and the fishing community. However, after the agreement of the last few years, many *kenduri laôet* are carried out at the end of the year, namely in December. Previously *kenduri laôet* was done in July and was uncertain, sometimes in September. Initially there was no definite form of stipulation when the feast was held, but in recent years all elements of the



East Aceh fishing community have agreed to hold a *kenduri laôet*, namely in December (Warulwalidain, personal communication, May 19, 2020).

In the coastal areas of East Aceh, the tradition of *kenduri laôet* in the *sedekah laoet* procession by floating the heads of buffalo or cows, especially in the Idi area as a fishing center, has ceased to be carried out in the last ten years. However, according to one of the sources, Panglima Laoet of East Aceh Regency, the implementation of the Lhok feast, Sungai Raya District, said that this tradition is sometimes still carried out, but the *sedekah laôet* offering is replaced by floating away the head of the goat or cone-shaped rice (*bulukat*) or sticky rice (Warulwalidain, personal Communications, May 19, 2020). Meanwhile, the goat meat should not be touched and eaten before the worship procession is completed. This process is escorted by a religious figure (*tengku*) who leads the feast and reads certain prayers. This event lasts one full day and it is forbidden to catch fish for a minimum of three days after the *kenduri laôet* (W. Abdul, personal communication, May 17, 2020).

The fishing communities of East Aceh are no longer apathetic to existing traditions. The marine leader or Panglima Laoet invites coastal fishing communities to re-understand the Islamic religious concept of how the marine ecology arrangement is in accordance with Islamic law rules. Panglima Laoet and his staff consulted with middlemen and clerics in the East Aceh region to ask for advice and input for the *kenduri laôet* and *sedekah laôet* process (Husein, personal communication, May 16, 2020).

According to the handler Sulaiman, especially in the Idi region and its surroundings, there are no longer any *sedekah laoet* processions using the above methods. This is because according to the clerics and the existing middlemen will lead to an attitude of shirk, heresy, and superstition. This has led to an ideological shift from being mystical and dynamic to being more Islamic in accordance with the law without eliminating existing cultural and traditional elements (Sulaiman, personal communication, May 16, 2020). With the guidance of clerics and middlemen in the Idi region and its surroundings, in the last ten years, there have been no more processions of worshiping the heads of cows,

buffalo, goats, *bulukat*, which are floated into the sea. Currently, only *khanduri laoet* is left by existing customs and guided according to Islamic law (Sudirman, personal communication, May 17, 2020).

By the agreement, the Panglima Laoet, which consisted of fifteen (15) people, agreed to replace the tradition of *kenduri laôet* and *sedekah laôet* with a feast for orphans and several members of the community and invited clerics. The *kenduri laoet* process no longer boasts and costs a lot of money, but instead asks for donations in accordance with the agreed terms for holding the feast procession. Usually the amount of donations that have been set is around Twenty Thousand Rupiah (20,000) to Thirty Thousand Rupiah (30,000). Currently the amount of money according to the handler Sulaiman is not enough because the currency is already minimal with increasing needs. The result of the meeting was then changed to a nominal value of Fifty Thousand Rupiah (50,000) as the maximum number for one fisherman household. These donations and gifts will be given to invited orphans. The orphans were invited from various villages located in the Idi region and its surroundings. Usually *toke boet* and *toke bangku* agree together and collect money to give special envelopes as gifts to orphans as alms to them. It was given sincerely and voluntarily without a nominal amount being determined (Sulaiman, personal communication, May 16, 2020).

Meanwhile, in terms of consumption, the fishing communities of East Aceh agreed to bring food and side dishes from their respective house. The food must be complete as when the birthday tradition (*mouloed*) arrives. The food must at least consist of side dishes in fish, shrimp, chicken eggs, salted eggs, and other vegetables. However, this must be done with a sincere heart and adequate financial capabilities. The food and side dishes are then brought and collected by the sea to be consumed together. There is no longer a procession of the heads of buffalo, cows, and goats being floated into the sea; there is only the tradition of *kenduri laôt* and gathering together for a feast and reading prayers led by the invited *tengku* and clerics. This prayer and gathering together is a ceremonial of *kenduri laôt* as the beginning of the annual fishing and thanksgiving so that it is easy for fishers to catch fish.



In the procession of the *kenduri laôt*, there is a prayer ritual by the invited clerics. The cleric led the prayer together and was followed by several clerics representatives who were brought together. The handler Sulaiman said that sometimes ten to fifteen clerics were invited, depending on the agreement. There were also clerics from specific Islamic school (*dayah*) and their students. Each cleric who was present to read the prayer was given the Al-Qur'an by *toke boet* or *toke bangku* to read the Al-Qur'an until the finish. The present clerics were allotted several chapters to be read to completion. In this case, the community is not obliged to follow this because this is specifically for the invited clerics. After the reading of the Al-Qur'an is complete, it is continued with prayer together, remembrance, and reading some verses of Al-Qur'an. According to the handler Sulaiman, the prayer that is often said is to refuse reinforcements and ask to be away from disaster and ease of blessed in going to sea (Sulaiman, personal communication, May 16, 2020).

The clerics and the orphans received special treatment because they were considered representative aspects of Islam's practice in fostering love and respect for religious humans. Therefore, the change in views from unfounded animistic and magical beliefs by floating away offerings from some animals or sacrifices was changed to become more religious and by Islamic teachings in protecting the ecology of coastal communities. The practice of *kenduri laôt* will continue with this method today in the coastal areas of East Aceh. This tradition is an annual activity that must exist in maintaining ecology and preserving indigenous and cultural ecosystems as part of the habitus in society. The existing rules can change according to the times. However, the understandings, concepts, and ideas inherent in the fishing communities of East Aceh will not be lost and will continue to be maintained for environmental sustainability.

#### **b. *Peusijek Perahoe* and *Peutren Kayee Boet* Rituals**

Knowledge and the birth of the rules of customs and habits of the people in Aceh can at least be seen from the factors that influence them,

namely the environment in the form of empirical facts from community activities, both those that have been preserved from generation to generation and those formed later. Furthermore, it is seen from the religious factor, namely the religion of Islam, where spiritual elements cannot be separated from every daily activity and practice habits carried out by the community. Likewise with the activities of fishermen and the profession as a fisherman. In all fishing activities, fishers have various local customary rules, each of which is the same but slightly different. Customary laws depend on the region and the customs and traditions in the environment. The practice in the fishermen that must exist is how the habit of making boats, doing boat safety ceremony, and giving thanks for the ship.

The coastal area of East Aceh is filled with fishers as the primary profession, namely to find fish. The life process of fishermen is very closely related to customs, culture, and other processes such as boat safety ceremony (*peusijuek boet*), boat safety ceremony to the boat's maker (*peusijuek utoeh perahu*), and flouring the boat's wooden ship (*peusijuek kaye boet*) with all the existing rituals. Although they do not act directly as fishermen who catch fish, they are closely related to fishing activities. In Acehese society, the means of transportation to the sea to find fish is called a boat or *boet*. At the same time, the creator or boat maker is referred to as *utoeh*. So the boat maker is called "*utoeh perahu*" or "*utoeh boet*" as a provider of transportation facilities for fishermen (Husein, personal communication, May 16, 2020). The choice of *utoeh* to make a boat is not just anyone; it must have experience and focus on the field that is occupied. At least this *utoeh* has made several boats and is proven to sail well.

There are two contexts to the study of the coastal fishing areas of East Aceh that are monitored namely, there is a separate procession tradition in *peusijuek perahu* and *peusijuek utoeh*. Each has a ceremonial to take the blessings of the process. If a boat owner that wants to find fish per year, he must prepare the customs for *peusijuek kaye boet* and *peusijuek utoeh* first before building a boat or ship. This tradition is carried out as a custom and habit from generation to generation as a pick-up procession thanks to the *cok beureukat*



of Islamic beliefs, believed by the community to be self-serving to Allah SWT (W. Abdul, personal communication, May 17, 2020).

Before building a ship, there used to be a tradition where some shipbuilders and their assistants looked for wood in the forest as the primary material for making ships. The wood used is selected wood such as sembaram wood, laban wood (*bak manee*), and sea resin. When they want to cut the wood, they must hold a ceremony first as a request for permission to those who inhabit and at the same time place the *pulot kuneng* in the corners of the tree. After the wood is cut, the ceremony will be carried out again before the wood is lowered to the ground (Sudirman, personal communication, May 17, 2020). According to Tengku Sudirman or Abu Pulo Iboh, this ceremony is carried out to ignore the supernatural beings who have long inhabited the big wood as a place for him to dwell. So it must be neglected by reading the Qur'an and praying to the prophet and failing him by giving a little food in the form of *pulot kuneng*.

This *peusijuek kaye boet* tradition must be carried out because, according to his knowledge and experience of the religious, metaphysical spirit that if it is not carried out, the creatures that inhabit the big wood will follow the wood until it sails later. The supernatural creature will transform into a large fish which will then appear when fishing is carried out. The crowd of fish will be divided and disturbed by the incarnation of the genie in the form of a large fish, causing fishers to fail to catch. This will affect the lack of fishing in the sea and make fishermen not achieve maximum results in catching fish. For this reason, it is necessary to have *peusijuek kaye boet* before building the ship and before the wood is lowered to the ground (Sudirman, personal communication, May 17, 2020).

To build a ship, some taboos must be obeyed, namely, it is forbidden to take wood that is on a tomb or human grave. According to *utoeh boet* Husaini that this is prohibited because it is related to religious, ethical values and culture, which are seen as something taken from dead humans. In addition to this, the wood can damage the tomb if it is cut down



because it will fall on top of other graves around it. The thing that is very influential about the prohibition of taking wood on the grave is that the right to the wood in *utoeh* Husaini's view is the inviolable right of the tomb's occupants (dead people). If it is also cut down, it is believed that there will be disasters and inauspicious for the loggers and the ship to be built (Husein, personal communication, May 16, 2020).

Meanwhile, according to Husaini, the best wood used to make ships is laban wood (*bak mane*). Besides being strong, the wood is believed to attract fish to approach the boat. At the present time, *bak mane* is challenging to obtain because it is scarce and there is no reforestation of laban tree seedlings. Then the wood that became an alternative later was sembaram wood and sea resin. However, nowadays, the wood is coated with fiber for more extended durability. According to Husaini, fiber is an alternative because of the scarcity of the main material for wood as the primary material for shipbuilding. In addition, fiber is not easy to flex when hit by waves. Fiber material is also easy to obtain because it is made of chemicals to coat the ship's outside.

When the wood is about to be arranged into a ship, the next process is *Peusijuek utoeh*. The selection of *utoeh boet* is selected reliably and then contracts the boat maker first. If this deal comes to fruition, then a boat can be built. But there is something unique, before the boat is made *utoeh*, there must be a ceremony in line with the traditions and customs of the people from generation to generation. This procession is carried out where the *boet* will be made. The location can be on the beach (*bineh pasi*) or close to the settlements where fishers live. The boat can also be made at the *utoeh's* house, with the reason that it is easy to store tools and store raw materials for shipbuilding. However, note that the *utoeh's* home is close to the sea so that when the ship is finished it is not far from being lowered into the sea (Sulaiman, personal communication, May 16, 2020).

Before the *peusijuek utoeh* procession is carried out, the boat owner first calls a cleric or Village Priest (*imum gampong*) to lead the *peusijuek utoeh* parade. It is this priest who will later pray, and do the ceremony to the *utoeh*. The *peusijuek utoeh* procession itself is solemn and slightly sacred. In this



*peusijuek utoeh* tradition, craftsmen will provide and bring tools to make ships such as crowbars, drills, hammers, and others in front of the craftsman. Then the priest will sprinkle the water from the ceremony all over the craftsman's equipment while praying and accompanied by remembrance (Sudirman, personal communication, May 17, 2020). The *utoeh* also sprinkled the ceremonial water on the *utoeh*, the boat owner, and several prospective workers on the ship. After that, it was followed by eating together and making friends.

The ship owner fully funds the traditional shipowner because the ship will later become his. If the boat is made on several ship owners, the funds issued are based on an agreement with the ship owners. The food served also seems adequate and luxurious because this is also part of the dignity and tradition passed down from generation to generation in the life of fishermen. There is also a shipowner inviting some orphans to be given alms and as a symbol of taking blessings. In the next procession some ship owners are inviting some clerics to recite the Al-Qur'an and read some verses of Al-Qur'an together on the beach. After all, this procession is complete, the next day, the ship can be made to completion (Warulwalidain, personal communication, May 19, 2020).

After the *boet* is finished, there is still a traditional procession to be carried out which is called the *peusijuek boet* or *peusijuk perahu*. There are two versions of *Peusijuk*, depending on the region and depending on how the instructions of the ship owner. According to the handler and sea commander, Sulaiman, who is in the Idi region, he said that in one particular area there was a *peusijuek boet* twice, namely on land and at sea. When on land, the finished *boat* will be guided by a ritual that is not much different from that of *peusijuek utoeh* (Sulaiman, personal communication, May 16, 2020). The tradition of the *peusijuek boet* procession is carried out by inviting clerics, orphans, and some residents to attend the traditional procession. Then food, side dishes, and drinks are provided by the ship owner as a complement to the thanksgiving in the *peusijuek boet* custom. However, what makes the difference is that previously the prayer, remembrance, and read some verses of Al-Qur'an was carried out on land by several religious leaders and village priests, this time it was carried out in a ship or on the deck of a boat.

Inside the hull of the ship will gather several clerics to pray and do other rituals. However, the Al-Qur'an will usually be read up to 30 chapters. The Al-Qur'an is distributed by the ship owner and is to be owned or donated to the clerics who are present. Each clerics will read several chapters depending on the number of clerics invited. There are also those who invite the Islamic school (*dayah*) and some of its students. It is believed that the *dayah* is a place to study and the students are clean from worldly desires and disobedience. Then it is also not left behind, namely inviting orphans and giving alms to them. After the *peusijuek boet* traditional procession is over, the invitees are welcome to go home but the clerics who are still in the hull of the ship remain and recite the Al-Qur'an and some verses of AL-Qur'an until it is finished. They will also be given sincere alms by the ship owner and gifts in the form of food and side dishes to take home (W. Abdul, personal communication, May 17, 2020).

Meanwhile, after the *boet* is carried out by the traditionan ceremony on land, there is a further *peusijuek* procession which is carried out when it is lowered into the sea. This kind of *peusijuek boet* tradition is known as *peusijuek peutroen boet* or *peuleupah boet* (ceremony to sink the ship into the sea). In this case, a traditional procession is carried out precisely the same as the *peusijuek boet* on land. However, according to Commander Sulaiman, the *peusijuek boet* at sea is slightly different from when dropped off on ground. *Peusijuek peutroen boet* is only attended by clerics who are invited to conduct recitations and read some verses of Al-Qur'an in the hull of the ship or on the boat. The ship owner provides food to them and alms sincerely according to the capacity of the shipowner. They usually pray against reinforcements, prayers for safety, and remembrance of Allah. However, some invited community leaders and some invited orphans. The invitation is erratic often only the clerics are invited to perform the recitation and read some verses of Al-Qur'an rituals (Sulaiman, personal communication, May 16, 2020).

When the *peusijuek boet* is finished, the invited cleric usually writes something on certain ship parts. The writing sometimes cannot be read or



understood. This writing is believed to be an antidote or talisman from the cleric for the ship's safety. In addition, leaflets of the throne verse, the letter al-Fatihah, and the Al-Qur'an were also found which were placed above the ship's handler. Leaflets bearing these verses are believed to ward off demons and devils (*bambang kuneng, kangkang kuala*) that disturb fishers in fishing.

The *peusijuek boet* and *peusijuek utoeh* traditions are traditions and rituals in the form of taking blessings from the activities that will begin the fishing process. This *peusijuek* to obtain blessings from Allah SWT by reading certain divine words. In addition, this tradition is a form of gratitude in the form of giving to orphans, along with alms to the community in the form of food and drink sincerely from the ship owner. If we look more deeply, the religious influence of Islam has had a major effect on the implementation of this tradition. This can be seen in every practice, both *peusijuek boet* on land and when it is lowered into the sea (*peutroen boet*) and *peusijuek utoeh*, cannot be separated from the readings of *kalām Ilāhiyat* (Al-Quran), remembrance, and also prayer together. It is seen that Islam is a key part of customary practice in every activity empirically. The theological aspect is clearly visible and the empirical aspect is a practice towards greater power (Husein, personal communication, May 16, 2020).

## 2. Discussion

The custom is not always understood contrary to Islam, this kind of understanding is very wrong when looking at a tradition with a textual point of view. not all traditions are contrary to Islam, philosophical aspects are essential in maintaining the dialectic between Islam and custom (Sofia, 2015). especially with the condition of the Acehnese people who are very thick with custom. Islam makes custom one of the sources of law when a rule is not in the sources of Islamic law (Setiyawan, 2012). 'urf in Islam is a manifestation of customary legality which is recognized as law as reads the method "customary law can be spelled out by law" this shows that custom and Islam support each other in maintaining pluralist indigenous people.

The harmonization of religion and custom is a benchmark that the customs carried out by the community are integrated even though Islam does not accommodate all customs that contain elements that are contrary to Islamic values. the most important thing in seeing harmonization is the value and philosophical aspects of each ritual (Jb, 2015).

The closeness of humans to the environment is an undeniable fact. Since the existence of a community in an area, it is certain that the signs and natural characteristics have been understood and studied by the group. For traditional communities, both coastal and inland, signs that come from nature are even applied in various forms of rituals and traditions. Humans living in this world will interact and adapt to nature. Humans do this to develop culture so that ecosystem changes occur. The discussion between humans and nature tends to be complex and complicated. The complexity of interaction and adaptation between humans and nature cannot be separated from the influence of biotic and abiotic elements in the surrounding environment (Hilmanto, 2010).

Coastal communities are defined as people who live and carry out socio-economic activities related to coastal and ocean area resources so that coastal communities have a high dependence on the potential or condition of coastal resources (Satria, 2015). Coastal communities in particular have different behaviors and cultural patterns from other communities, as a result of their interaction with the environment and the surrounding resources. Moreover, coastal communities have various unique traditions because they are related to the livelihood of many people, namely marine products. Thus, the uniqueness of this tradition sometimes makes some people have strange perceptions, making it up and even misleading (Siregar, 2022). It is very naive to directly justify certain traditions against Islamic law and its fiqh provisions. The potential of coastal community traditions must be mixed in such a way as to be accepted and become part of the discourse and practice of Islamic law.

The practice of salvation carried out by the Muslim community of coastal Aceh illustrates that there has been a transformation of the



tradition which is identified with Hinduism (Muqoyyidin, 1970) filled with the Islamic tradition of the Acehese people by reviving Islamic values in the salvation event. Cultural reconstruction efforts can be seen from the changes in the substance of the traditional event. At least there has been a dialectic between custom and Islam in all *kenduri la'ot*, *Peusijuk* activities carried out by coastal communities. Hurgronje in his writings explains that customs and Islam in Aceh run in harmony, even customs in Aceh's history have played a major role in controlling the problems that occur in Acehese society (Hurgronje, 1906), and this is still true today.

There are two processes of religious and customary dialectics carried out by coastal Muslim communities in East Aceh; first: the occurrence of adoptivity carried out by the coastal Muslim community by maintaining the traditional *kenduri la'ot*, *peusijuk* and others. Because this tradition is part of the activities of coastal communities in respecting ancestral traditions which are continuously carried out and even felt incomplete when not implementing them; second : Dialectic is manifested in a shift from naturalistic practices to philosophical theological ones, meaning that at first the mythical and mystical nuances of practice changed by infiltrating philosophical theological values by adding normative elements so that it seemed Islamic. These theological values are built with the concept of blessing, gratitude, almsgiving and followed by prayers offered to the creator. This concept is believed to bring blessings and goodness to coastal Muslim communities, the majority of whom depend on marine products for their livelihoods.

The impression that is built is that the *kenduri la'ot* tradition is part of the Islamic tradition. This illustrates that the shift in tradition following religious beliefs does not mean that Islam deconstructs tradition, but that Islam with humanist values practiced by the people of coastal Aceh is compromised so as to create the impression of harmony. When integration occurs between tradition and Islam, it forms a new tradition (Ramdhan, 2019) namely *kenduri la'ot* and can even present other new traditions.



Islam also recognizes customary studies and even recognizes custom as a form of law when it does not violate Islamic principles, the term used in Islam, namely '*urf*', in fiqh literature '*urf*' is defined as a habit acquired and developed by individuals or groups (Shabana, 2010). This shows that Islam is not an obstacle in preserving custom, even in some interviews obtained from Acehese clerics not blaming the custom practiced by coastal communities. The link between religion and custom cannot be separated, custom for the people of Aceh is an identity and religion is a form of belief, religion responds to culture as a manifestation of the character of self-identity. In social studies where cultural development is growing so rapidly but religion is still one of the important pillars in determining the identity of each individual (Wekke, 2013).

In Indonesia, Religion occupies the first point in the state, so religion enters all lines, both in the political, cultural and economic context (Nugroho, 2017), as well as in Aceh which has established itself as an area that implements Islamic law. In social studies, religion in Aceh constructs social society so as to form patterns that characterize Acehese Islam, even Islam in Aceh is included in things that are substantive in the world of government, culture (Feener, 2013) and even beliefs are also regulated. Custom has its own portion in social transactions, as well as Islam as the majority religion in Aceh which forms the emotional and psychological dimensions of each individual in carrying out traditional rituals. This has implications for the Islamization of culture and ultimately shape customs by presenting philosophical values in every traditional ritual. Religion is defined as a belief system related to sacred things (Durkheim, 2008), religion contains noble values that are prohibited and commanded while custom is a habit (Wulansari, 2010) that has been carried out continuously and is formed based on social value.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Religion and customs are an inseparable relationship for the coastal Muslim community of East Aceh, because every activity is often followed



by customs which are considered very important in living life. This is illustrated by how the various dimensions of custom are expressed in social interactions. Religion is used as a guide for living in worship, while custom is used as a guide in social activities, this condition does not mean that custom overrides religion, instead religion has lived in the soul and is applied in traditional rituals. This concept was built as a form of dialectic between religion and custom, the shift in traditional rituals from mystical to theological nuances is an effort to renew customs into "Islamic customs" or can be called the Islamization of customs. The purpose of the Islamization of customs carried out by the coastal Muslim community of East Aceh is to reduce religious values in traditional rituals.

When religion is strengthened by custom, it will form an Islamic model with local characteristics, this does not mean forming a different Islam, but an elaborative Islam so that when Islam has become part of custom, the strengthening of Islam in the applicative level will be stronger and maintained. This has at least been described in the tradition of coastal Muslim communities who present Islamic values in every celebration of *kenduri la'ot* and *peusijuk* events by inviting orphans, religious leaders and the community to celebrate. The event further strengthens the brotherly relationship between the community and not only that, it even adds to the belief that the existence of this event will increase the blessing in seeking sustenance at sea.

This condition illustrates that harmonization between Islam and custom carried out by the people of East Aceh. This harmonization occurs because traditional celebrations are wrapped in Islamic values so that the existence of custom values is maintained.

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