



# The Political Communication Ethics of Traditional Dayah Ulema in Bireuen Regency, Aceh Province

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## **Abstract:**

*The political journey of Aceh's traditional dayah ulema before, did not succeed in gaining public support in the two election periods, namely the 2009-2014 period and the 2014-2019 period. Supposedly, the politics of the Dayah ulema had the full support of the people of Aceh which incidentally were a majority Muslim. This phenomenon is influenced by various factors, including political communication. Regarding scholars as political communicators, ethics is the most important thing in determining political success. Therefore, it will be examined regarding the ethics of political communication of traditional Acehese dayah scholars. This study uses a qualitative approach with reference to ethnographic principles. The purpose of this study is to reveal the ethics of political communication in Aceh's traditional dayah ulema in Bireuen District. The results showed that the ethics of political communication of Aceh's traditional dayah ulema in the district of Bireuen generally referred to efforts to preserve their religious status as heirs of the Prophet in the morality of al-karimah. The spirit of the cleric who made them a public figure and public opinion to attract public empathy, is considered to have used religion for political purposes. The assumption of using da'wah pulpit as a campaign media indicates that there is justification for the absence of ethical communication politics.*

## **Keywords:**

*ethics; political communication; traditional dayah ulema*

## **I. Introduction**

In Indonesia in general, the political system can be distinguished in several periods, namely the government of the old order, new order and reform era. Each era has its own differences and uniqueness in carrying out its political strategy. Likewise, in Aceh in particular, in addition to being strongly influenced by the political policies of the Indonesian government, it also has its own political character that distinguishes this province from other provinces. Finally reached through the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement in Helsinki.

One of the political icons in Aceh (the Veranda of Mecca) is the ulema, where in the view of the Acehese people they are better known as the dayah ulama. The ulama, besides focusing on spreading religious values, are also pro-active in responding to various political issues of their time through the educational institution they manage, namely dayah. The involvement of ulama in the political world has made a significant contribution in all aspects of Acehese people's lives.

Observing the political journey of dayah scholars related to the political policy dimensions of the region and nationwide, it becomes interesting when exploring the political role of dayah ulama in maintaining political parties. As illustrated earlier that the local parties established by dayah scholars did not succeed in gaining public support in the two election periods, namely the 2009-2014 period and the 2014-2019 period. This defeat caused the ulama

party to experience degradation, not fulfilling the requirements to be able to re-participate in the next election and eventually had to be merged.

Ideally, the *dayah ulama* received full support from the community, because in general the people of Aceh, which in fact are predominantly Muslim, place the *dayah ulama* as role models in all aspects of life. Likewise in the political sphere, the community should support the *dayah ulemas* who play a role in them. Among the indicators that the community does not support the politics of *dayah scholars* is seen from the results of the party's vote carried by the *ulama* in the election.

The patterns of political communication that take place tend to follow the dynamics of politics. That is, the political system that is built always colors political communication. Galnor and Pye expressed that a political system would not be formed without political communication and mutual influence. Talking about the figure of the cleric, that ethics of political communication becomes very important. The color of *ulema* always attracts people's attention to pay attention to their attitudes and behaviors to be emulated and followed. That is, the ethics of political communication of scholars also become a part that determines the political success of traditional Islamic *dayah scholars*.

This then becomes the question, namely how the ethics of political communication of traditional *dayah scholars*. Given the failure of previous scholars who are strongly influenced by the ethics of political communication. This research was conducted in the Bireuen District of Aceh Province on the grounds that the political atmosphere in this district was more emergent and hot.

## **II. Review of Literatures**

### **2.1 Ethics of Political Communication**

Communication is the main means that is often used both verbally and non-verbally, communication is used both in personal interests and in common interests, and in an organization communication is also always used to achieve satisfaction and achieve common goals. Communication can be interpreted as verbal and non verbal conversations or between one more person and another. According to Hovland, communication is a systematic effort to formulate rigorously the principles of delivering information and the formation of opinions and attitudes (Hasbullah, 2018).

Ethics is a branch of human science. Ethics comes from the Greek language *Ethos* which means habit. Ethics talks about habits (actions), which are based on the essence or basic human nature; good and bad. So thus ethics is a theory of human actions weighed according to the pros and cons. In terminology ethics according to Franz Magnis Suseno is a philosophy about the field of morals, ethics is a science or systematic reflection on opinions, norms and moral terms. According to M. Amin Syukur citing the opinion of Robert C. Soimon, ethics is a discipline that studies the real values of human life and the laws of behavior.

Ethics is a type of moral decision making (Englehardt, 2001), and determines what is right or wrong is influenced by the rules and laws that exist in society. Ethics transcends all ways of life and transcends gender, race, social class, sexual identity, religion and beliefs. In other words, we cannot avoid ethical principles in our lives. Donald Wright (1996) argues that ethics is a part of human development, and as we grow older, our moral code also undergoes a change towards maturity. Elaine Englehardt (2001) observes that "we do not create our own

ethical system", which means that we usually follow cultural codes and morality. From a communication point of view, ethical issues come to the surface whenever messages have the possibility to influence others.

Communication is a social process in which individuals use symbols to create and interpret meaning in their environment. Five (5) key terms in a communication perspective, namely: social, process, symbol, meaning and environment. Social communication is communication that always involves humans and interactions. Communication as a process, means that communication is continuous and has no end. While the meaning also plays an important role in the definition of communication that will have cultural consequences. The environment (environment) is a situation or condition in which communication takes place consisting of time, place, historical period, relations, and cultural background of the speaker and listener.

Discussing ethics in political communication can be seen from the perspective of communicators, messages, channels, communicants, effects, feedback and noise (communication) from the communication process that can describe ethics in communicating in the political sphere. At least the study will look at the five components of the communication process that occurs, ranging from communicators, messages, channels, communicants and their effects and feedback (feedback). Ethical links between components turned out to be deliberate noise.

Ethics is also a moral standard that regulates human behavior, and is a dialect between freedom and responsibility, between the goal to be achieved and the way to achieve that goal, between good and bad. Ethics are: (1) a set of values or moral principles; (2) a collection of principles / values relating to morals; (3) the value of right and wrong held by a group or society; (4) norms, values, rules, or measures of good behavior. In the context of communication, ethics is the basis of communication between individuals or groups.

According to Dedi Irawan there are four values of political participation that will add weight to political participation, namely:

#### 1. Initiative Level

This initiative is defined as the awareness of individuals or groups to carry out their own political participation activities without factors from other groups (for example, pressure, influence or coercion)

#### 2. Tolerance of Differences of Opinion

The reflection of democratic life is a tolerant attitude towards all the differences that exist in the political environment. There is a tendency in a period of political transition, an attitude of tolerance is a difficult attitude to carry out.

#### 3. The level of togetherness (consensus)

Consensus is the value of participation that requires togetherness in solving political problems that arise. As with tolerance to difference, consensus is also difficult to carry out in periods of political transition.

#### 4. Success Rate (Output)

This value is the end of a participation process. The magnitude of the success of participants is very much determined in many ways, including how the intensity of participation is carried out.

## **2.2 Ethics of Political Communication According to Islam**

The ethics of Islamic communication can be interpreted as good and bad values, between what is appropriate and what is not appropriate, between what is useful and what is

not useful, and between what must be done and what should not be done when conducting communication activities that originate from the Koran and Hadith. The ethical values of Islamic communication include: (1) being honest, (2) maintaining the accuracy of communication messages, (3) being free and responsible, and (4) being able to provide constructive criticism.

#### **a. Be Fair (Fairness)**

In the Koran, honesty is synonymous with mandate. A communicator is required to maintain the mandate. Do not convey things that should not be informed. Then the nature of honesty in the Koran is known as the *siddiq* which literally means true. In the context of Islamic communication, lying is despicable because it can mislead individuals and society. Communicators must not convey things that are not known with certainty the truth, vague, or hearsay that the source is unclear. The situation is explained in the Qur'an Surat al-An'am verse 108: "And do not curse the worship of those they worship besides Allah, because they will later curse God by exceeding the limits without knowledge".

#### **b. Strength of Information**

The information submitted must be truly accurate, after first carefully and thoroughly researched. The Word of God in Sura al-Hujurat verse 6: "O you who believe, if you come to the wicked bring a message, then examine it carefully so that you do not inflict a disaster upon a people without knowing the circumstances that cause you to regret the actions mu that". Someone who is involved in communication activities, must check and recheck the truth of information received before it is conveyed to others. This situation is hinted at in Surat an-Nur verse 19: "Surely those who want to (news), the most heinous acts spread among those who believe, for those who suffer a painful punishment in the world and the hereafter".

#### **c. Free and Responsible**

In Islamic communication, the communicator has the freedom to receive and convey information and cannot impose his will on others (the communicant).

#### **d. Constructive Criticism**

Constructive communication messages are strongly emphasized in Islamic communication. Constructive criticism delivered by the communicator or the communicant, can be material for improvement in the future, and can avoid repeating mistakes. This situation is hinted at in the Qur'an Surah al-'Arr verses 1-3: "For the sake of time, the truth is that humans are truly at a disadvantage, except for those who believe and do righteous deeds and advice to advise them to obey the truth and advice to advise so as to keep patience".

In addition, there are several things that must be avoided by communicators in Islamic communication, namely: condemning others, looking down on others, divulging people's secrets, cursing, praising excessively, greeting unbelievers, fighting, saying dirty words, whispering between two people, and saying heathen to a Muslim. This is in accordance with the Qur'an Fushilat verse 33: "Who better words than those who call on Allah, do righteous deeds, and say: "Surely I am among those who surrender themselves? "

Some basic principles of Islamic communication, namely:

##### 1. The principle of sincerity

*Ikhlās* means work done by the heart to purify itself of various motives that are not true. Not willing to convey or receive messages means that there is no sacred desire to convey or receive messages. The sincere principle of Islamic communication will make the main purpose of communication as worship.

## 2. Principle of Reward and Sin

This principle explains that every message or statement that comes out that has consequences or rewards of sin. So Islam guides humans to take the following steps: (1) Islam forbids saying dirty and rude; (2) provide motivation to always say good.

## 3. The Principle of Honesty

Oral can kill a person's character, even a community can fall apart. As described in the hadith: "There will be a slander that makes Arabs die lying dead. The oral at that time was much sharper than a sword".

## 4. Cleanliness Principle

Islam strongly emphasizes the principle of cleanliness in everything, including in conveying messages. Someone who expresses good words will make his heart calm. Allah says: "Those who believe and their hearts are at peace with remembrance of Allah. Remember, only by remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction". (Surah Ar-Ra'd (13): 28)

## 5. Say Positive

Positive messages are very influential for one's happiness in whatever condition he is in. A communicator who often sends positive messages to the communicant will save a lot of capital to make positive ones.

## 6. The principle of the package (heart, oral and deeds)

Humans are creatures created by God in a complete package. There is an element of the soul and an element of body. Exercise in the concept of Islam is strongly influenced by the heart or soul, meaning that verbally will speak well when his heart is good, and verbally will not be able to speak well and smoothly without the control of his soul, what he says will feel bland.

## 7. The principle of two ears one mouth

Retelling all that is heard is a sign of carelessness. Not all information that arrives at someone is understood correctly, or understood correctly, but the news is not true, or the news is true but not worthy of being consumed by the public. Retelling all that is heard will risk having a lot of mistakes. In religious terms it is called sin (itsm).

## 8. Supervision Principle

The principle of supervision arises from the belief of believers who believe that God is All-Hearing, All-Seeing and All-Knowing. In addition, they also believe that every word spoken will be recorded by a recording angel. Allah says: "And verily we have created man and know what his heart whispers, and We are closer to him than his jugular vein, (ie) when two angels record their deeds, one sits on the right and the other sits on the left. There was not a single word he said but there was a guardian angel who was always present nearby. (Surah Qaf (50): 16-18)

## 9. The Principle of Selectivity and Validity

Talking with accurate data and information is a quality personal trait. In addition to adding credibility, accurate information prevents us from falling into mistakes that lead to regret. The principle of selectivity and validity in Islamic communication is not only aimed at giving satisfaction to the communicants in this world, but their main goal is to be able to account for what they say when asked for accountability in the afterlife.

#### 10. The principle of mutual influence

Communication between humans is the activity of conveying and receiving messages from and to others. When communication takes place, the process of influencing influence occurs. In addition, communication also aims to get to know each other, relate, play, help each other, share information, develop ideas, solve problems, increase productivity, arouse work spirit, convince, entertain, establish status, anesthetize, and create a sense of unity.

#### 11. Privacy Principles

Every person has a privacy room that should not be revealed on the public stage, as well as organizations, institutions and so on. Leaking secrets is about exposing people, organizations and institutions and making them ashamed. Allah forbids believers from searching for information about issues that enter the privacy space. Allah says: "O you who believe, stay away from most prejudices (suspicions), because some of the prejudices are sinful. And do not look for bad people and do not gossip with one another. Is there anyone among you who likes to eat meat his brother who is dead? Then surely you feel disgusted with him. And fear Allah. Surely Allah is the recipient of repentance, Most Merciful" (Surah al-Hujarat (49): 12).

### **III. Research Methods**

This research uses a qualitative approach. A qualitative research approach is a type of research that produces findings that cannot be achieved using statistical procedures or other methods of quantification. This primary data is sourced from direct research in the form of interviews or explanations about the ethics of traditional Aceh dayah scholars in the process of political communication, policy making in Bireuen District, Aceh Province. This data is in the form of interviews and documentation obtained by researchers at the time of research (fieldwork). Interviews were conducted with traditional Aceh dayah scholars in Bireuen District. In addition, data is also collected from supporting library materials and / or information obtained through third parties that are considered to be related to the problem being investigated, such as books, regulations and documents as well as laws relating to this research

This research is more about ethnographic research. Ethnographic research proposed by W. Lawrence Neuman, with the following steps: Establishing Informants, Interviewing Informants, Making Ethnographic Records, Asking Descriptive Questions, Conducting Analysis of Ethnographic Interviews, Making Domain Analysis, Asking Structural Questions, Making Taxonomic Analysis, Asking Contrast Questions, Make Component Analysis, and Find Themes.

### **IV. Discussion**

#### **4.1 Ethics of Political Communication of Aceh Traditional Dayah Ulema in Bireuen District**

Dayah Ulemas in Aceh have a tendency to continue in the footsteps of their teachers (predecessors) to guide the community in the field of religious practice (worship) through dayah education institutions or pesantren. Specifically in the Bireuen Regency, at least 30 Islamic Boarding Schools or Islamic Boarding Schools have been established and developed throughout the regency. Some dayah scholars did not involve themselves in political affairs. But many traditional Aceh dayah scholars are involved in politics. the involvement of traditional Aceh dayah scholars in Bireuen District, such as providing Political Support. Not directly involved in the political game, but running behind independently. Both personally

and collectively provide support for certain political groups. The presence of ulama has the potential to increase the credibility of individuals or political groups.

There are also dayah scholars who join practical politics in the district of Bireuen, Aceh Province and even nationals such as Abu Sheikh H. Hasanoel Bahsry (Abu Mudi), Abu Tu Muhammad Amin Blang Bladeh (Tu Min), Waled Nuruz Zahri (Waled Nu), Tgk. H. Muhammad Yusuf A. Wahab (Tu Sop Jeuneib), Tgk. Nurdi Judon (Abi Nas Jeunieb), and others. Organizationally, some Islamic scholars participated in certain political parties, and even became strong candidates in political parties in legislative elections such as in the Golkar Party, PPP, PDIP, Democrats, Gerindra, Nasdem, PKS, PKB, and other national parties. Some are in local political parties such as Aceh Party (PA), Aceh National Party (PNA), Aceh Peace Party (PDA), and others. Also a line of traditional dayah scholars who politically individually nominate themselves as candidates for regent and deputy regent such as Tgk. H. Muhammad Yusuf (Tu Sop Jeunieb) and Tgk H. Ruslan M. Daud in the 2017 elections.

Regarding the ethics of political communication, ethical norms about something can differ between one group of people and another. The influence of ulama is on the charisma element attached to the dayah ulama. In this context, the political line of the Dayah ulama leaves a potential wickedness, even though it produces benefits.

Tu Sop Jeunieb often echoes in his campaign a concept called the "stream of goodness". This means that politics must be pursued with good activities. Politics is basically not bad, but it is political actors who make politics "unhealthy". As religious people we are required to follow the religious advice to always do good, including in political activities. Tu Sop's political message is conveyed to everyone without distinguishing certain parties. This means avoiding mentioning the ugliness of any party.

The dayah scholars strongly emphasize the principle of cleanliness in everything, including in conveying political messages. A good political message will bring psychological comfort to those who receive it, while messages that are sarcastic, dirty, bloody, quarreling, and the like will have an impact on the turbidity of the heart. This calm is not only for the dayah ulama as a political communicator, but also has a good impact on the communicant, in this case the general public and other politicians. For example Tu Sop Jeunieb, in every meeting, he always emphasized not to bad-mouth other groups and always avoid verbal clashes, especially physically.

Positive messages are very influential for one's happiness in whatever condition he is in. A communicator who often sends a positive message to the communicant will save a lot of capital to make a positive one. The old days of Aceh in Aceh as ministers of religion in the context of spearheading the defense of religion. As individuals, the ulama are able to solve problems in society, and collectively the ulama become a reference to give insight when there are problems in the community. Examples of problems *ibada furu'iyah*. People who have different perceptions in the practices, the ulama group give fatwa.

The people of Aceh are people who are very fanatical about religion, the insights given by dayah scholars can provide solutions related to beliefs, as well as practice. Dayah scholars also foster relationships with the community, not wanting to clash in social conflicts. The ulama's political attitude ethically uses *ahlussunnah waljamaah*. The ethics of the scholars is always based on the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Apostle is a main thing in the teachings of Islam. Both are central things that become the "heart of the Muslims" because the whole building of Islamic doctrine and scientific sources is inspired by these two main things,

because it is very reasonable and logical if the attention and appreciation of the two exceeds the attention and appreciation of other fields. These principles are the dayah scholars in conveying something to the public in order to form Islamic communication

Talking with accurate data and information is one of the personal qualities of quality. In addition to adding credibility, accurate information prevents us from falling into mistakes that lead to regret. The principle of selectivity and validity in Islamic communication is not only aimed at giving satisfaction to the communicants in this world, but their main goal is to be held accountable for what they present at the time accountability is required in the afterlife.

Communication between humans is the activity of conveying and receiving messages from and to others. When communication takes place, the process of influencing influence occurs. In addition, communication also aims to get to know each other, relate, play, help each other, share information, develop ideas, solve problems, increase productivity, arouse work spirit, convince, entertain, establish status, anesthetize, and create a sense of unity. In addition to these good goals, communication can also be used to compete with one another, weaken spirits, tear down status, make people sad, and make people fall into the black world.

Ulema always instill strong aqidah, if aqidah is correct and strong then Islam will be right and strong. Education becomes the main lesson, scholars have the obligation to teach knowledge about sharia to the public. Perform prevention by instilling aqidah and provide knowledge to the community more quickly to bring public awareness to avoid damage and religious restrictions.

If we look at the dedication of the ulema, the way to convey it is soothing but we are very surprised why when the ulama in politics do very few appear (win), if the problem of the ulama's fame is more popular, because each preaches at least 2x a month, not during the political years, for example every Friday, the majelis ta'lim teach in dayahs.

Exploring the causes of Islamic dayah scholars is starting to fade in its role in politics, as Law No. 44 of 1999 concerning the involvement of dayah scholars was marginalized in the roles performed by executives and the judiciary. In this case the dayah ulama was not involved when preparing the Sharia qanun in the form of material law and formal law. Here also the role of the dayah scholars becomes weak and helpless who assume the dayah scholars do not have the capacity to compile the draft qanun, the reason being the dayah scholars do not have academic capabilities. By publishing the above elements by state officials in this matter including political figures, this is what must be considered by Islamic scholars.

Among the important functions of Islamic communication is a convincing function. Convincing function means making ideas, opinions, and ideas that we have can be accepted by others with pleasure and not forced. Not even just accepting voluntarily those who feel confident with the explanation can be supporters of the idea.

Dayah scholars try to convince by the methods of dialogue, debate and audience. Dialogue is carried out in a relaxed atmosphere, mutually expressing opinions, maybe there is also a tug of war and finally it leads to an agreement to support a shared idea or one of the better ideas. The debate is usually more exciting, sometimes until it's hot and each insists on his opinion. Using this function to convince people to accept the values of truth is very important.

There are four main focuses of the political communication activities of dayah scholars, namely: (1) Guiding people to do good deeds, and deter them from doing negative deeds; (2) repair or restore the condition of those who have been damaged; (3) directing people to discover their potential; and (4) developing human potential to be more maximal.

Delivering a problem both in the context (political, religious, and cultural) of the scholars do smart and wise so that people are not coated with emotions. Weak in delivering problems in the community firmly in government as outlined in the Qanun Act. Orientation is inseparable with the provisions of religious and cultural values. Because the intention to do charity, then because it is based on Islamic principles.

The ulama in conveying a problem, both in matters of religion, culture, politics, are discussed in the pulpits of majelis ta'lim, cultural assemblies so that the intended purpose is achieved. In the present context, ulama always write in the form of books and bulletins on ethical issues, the ulemas always hold to the morality of the karimah order. Likewise in terms of politics, we see in one area even the environment there is a difference in ownership, but the scholars do not give an assessment, or weaken the other.

In responding to the political upheaval, the ulama in this case be patient, even though within a party there are several ulama involved in it. It is a natural thing in political parties, differences do not mean that the scholars are broken, but the scholars are still in demand by politicians even if only as a companion.

As a cleric who has become a role model in Acehese society, especially in the Bireuen region, such as Abu Tu Min, in his daily life it is known as a dayah scholar who is very familiar with the community. Aside from his busy schedule of guiding and teaching santri in his dayah, he also provides a special time for the community to ask for guidance in various problems encountered. So that in his days Abu Tu Min provided a special time for the community on Friday and Saturday. The people who come to Abu Tu Min are generally looking for solutions to the problems they face, be they religious, social and family issues. All of that is served by Abu Tu Min with pleasure. As a very influential cleric in Aceh Abu Tu. Min also gave his views on Aceh in post-peace conditions.

## **V. Conclusion**

From the results of research on the ethics of political communication of traditional Acehese dayah scholars in Bireuen District, a conclusion needs to be drawn. The conclusion of this research is that the ethics of political communication of Aceh traditional dayah ulama in the district of Bireuen generally refers to several principles, including: Adhering to the concept of sincerity, the principle of reward and sin, honesty, cleansing from fighting sheep, religious material as a basis for speaking, harmony between words and deeds, do not attack, and maintain local wisdom. From that it can be ascertained that the ethics of political communication are more dominant to preserve the status of scholars as heirs of the Prophet in the morality of al-karimah.

On the other hand, the spirit of the ulema makes them a public figure and public opinion that is obtained through charisma and the influence of scholars. The use of influence and charisma to attract community empathy is also considered to have used religion for political purposes. This argument continues to be rolled up to form the principle of worldly-ukhrawi sorting.

Also because of its ulama status, it is also considered to use the da'wah pulpit as a media campaign that indicates the existence of improper justification and the absence of ethical communication politics. This justification is strengthened by the existence of some majelis assemblies whose substance as an institution of religious studies is used as a forum for conveying political aspirations and bringing down opponents. This lack of or no communication ethics is triggered by the attitude of the ulema (communicator) that is not adaptive.

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