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## Jihad from the perspective of ulama dayah (sociological study on the concept of jihad in aceh)

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**Abstract**

Jihad is basically *Qital* (fighting) which is upholding the religion of Allah SWT to achieve victory in the world and the hereafter, jihad is a command from Allah that is *naskh* (abrogated) in the Qur'an, in the context of Islam fighting does not mean jihad; instead jihad is fighting. This paper describes the concept of jihad from the perspective of Dayah scholars (Ulama Dayah) which are then examined from sociological point of view. The qualitative method is used to find the data by conducting in-depth interviews with 13 informants, consist of Dayah ulemas who have important roles and positions in Aceh, such as the Chairperson of the MPU, members of MPU and Leaders of Dayah institutions in Aceh and the dayah students. In conjunction with current global development, ulemas in Aceh conclude that jihad is not only interpreted as war, there has been no reason for Muslims to initiate a war. Therefore, anyone can conduct jihad, but that does not mean going into battle. From the ulama dayah perspective, the term radicalism and terrorism is a label or derivative from anti-Islam groups. Islamic is a religion which encourages people to learn peace and harmony; suicide is not a concept of Islam, suicide is a deviated (sacrilegious) act in the name of Islam. The formulation of jihad that was built by the dayah ulemas is jihad against evil in accordance with the provisions of Islamic law. There are no dayah ulemas who teach radical jihad because the current dayah system is a derivative from the elements of the previous charismatic ulama of Aceh. Nowadays, the essence of jihad constructed by ulama dayah is jihad against lust, jihad against Satan and jihad against ignorance by encouraging the younger generation to always remind themselves to gather knowledge.

**Keywords:** Jihad, ulama dayah, sociology

### 1. Introduction

No religion or at least no major religions favor or encourage armed struggle and violence as the first and final resort. But in September 11, 2001 (terrorist attack in Washington DC) it was shown that the relationship between religion and terrorism became more evident. Although it may be seen as a new phenomenon, in reality religious terrorism is centuries old. However, the intensity of the attacks and increase in the numbers of religiously motivated terrorist groups is a new development. This has led to the stereotype of Islam to the Western countries. Armstrong (Nurdin, 2014) <sup>[6]</sup>, a Roman Catholic nun says the West continues to suppress old prejudice (against Islam) with their own stereotypes. They say that Islam is in fact a religion of violence spread by the sword. That is the myth that continues to be propagandized when Christians declared the innocent holy war. This stereotype portrait was born from a hidden anxiety towards the West itself, which was then diverted and directed to Islam.

The concept of jihad and radicalism is then always linked to Islam. The concept of jihad appears to be the most fearsome menace and induces concern from the rest of the world about radical actions, which the terrorists supposedly mastermind hence being accused by certain religious groups. M. Quraish Shihab (Nurdin, 2014) <sup>[6]</sup> says that *Jihad Fisabilillah* (fighting in the path of Allah) derived from the word *jahd* that means tired or difficult, is indeed arduous and challenging. Jihad is a way that God designates to test humans. Broadly speaking, jihad can be interpreted as an exclamation, demanding the virtuous and preventing evil, assault, murder, war, conquest, and confining lust. Thus, it is not true, that jihad is interpreted into a meaning that aims to run terrorism. Meanwhile, the word 'radical' can be defined as "pertaining to, constituting, proceeding from, or going to the root". The word

'radical' could also mean fundamental, original, intrinsic, primary and primitive. Too many conflicts and contradictions within the social order is certainly a factor conducive to radicalism and when the society (in this case the Muslim society) is experiencing division between values and experiences which they are unable to overcome, than radicalism will surface. This is what instigates the radical fundamentalist movement that unilaterally justifies the behavior of its own group; this disorder causes many people being agitated with the truth so the ulama must return to their role of rejecting the misunderstanding of the meaning of jihad by deconstructing the current misconceptions, through formulating the meaning of jihad without the form of violence so that it can be accepted by all people.

Kamaruzzaman (Ahmad, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup> says Dayah is the center of science. The education system that is interconnected with the community and the activities that surround it, makes the education of Acehese integrate the realm of science with the needs of society. Ulama Dayah (Dayah ulema/scholar) have a central role in ruling *fatwa* or interpreting a law for the *ummah*. It includes how to interpret the meaning of jihad and neutralize the radical fundamentalist movement. The process of transferring knowledge and attitude becomes two sides of the same coin that cannot be separated, thus the Dayah graduates at that time was truly acknowledged by the community. Some prominent scholars then wrote the book that was used as a guideline. Moreover, they are also actively involved in Jihad in the meaning of Jihad against lust, jihad on the realm of knowledge, as well as social and political life. The infiltration process of Dayah alumni can get in to the entire community. Regarding the interpretation of jihad, there are still variety of views among the Dayah Aceh ulama themselves, the Acehese ulemas agree on conditions where society tends to be affected and easily provoked by the interests of some groups, therefore a common understanding of the perspective of jihad is required, exclusively the edicts of the ulema have never concurred jihad being conceptualized as source of violence. The development of religious movements in Aceh unsettles the whole community and adds to the importance of the ulemas' presence in order to oppose their movements.

## 2. Methods

This paper narrates about the concept of jihad in the perspective of Dayah ulema in Aceh. The topic is then studied through a descriptive qualitative approach, where qualitative information is described theoretically and analytically. The writing explains the perspective of Dayah scholars on jihad and radicalism. In addition to these aspects, it is also explained whether there is a connection between the understanding of jihad and the attitude of radicalism for Acehese people. The information available on this paper was obtained from 3 Regencies / Cities in Aceh which included Lhokseumawe City, Bireuen Regency and North Aceh Regency, Aceh Province. The reason for choosing these locations was due to several things. First, compared to other regions in Aceh, the three locations are the centre of Ulama Dayah dispersion in Aceh; in addition there are still many charismatic ulema leaders and Dayah reformist ulemas during this decade. Second, the development of dayah education centers are still dominant with tradition, such as learning the classic Islamic literature (*kitab kuning*), and using the old-fashioned dayah curriculum as an act of preserving the tradition while still

applying critical thinking. Third, there is one dayah which is led by Abi Muslim At-Tahiri, who was the Aceh region Chairperson of Islamic Defenders Front (FPI). He had conducted military training for students sent as jihad volunteers to defend the Palestinian people.

## 3. Jihad in Sociological Perspective

In the history of mankind, objectivity, internalization, and externalization are three processes that run continuously. With the existence of an objective social world that forms individuals, in a sense human is the product of their society. Some aspects of this world exist in the form of laws that reflect social norms. Another aspect of objective reality is not a reality that can be immediately perceived, but it can affect everything, from the way someone dresses to the way they speak. This objective social reality is reflected by other person who is quite meaningful to the individual itself (even though the reality received is not always the same on one individual to another). Basically humans are not entirely determined by the environment, in other words the process of socialization is not a complete success; humans have the opportunity to externalize or collectively shape their social world. Externalization results in a social change (Poloma, 2010) <sup>[7]</sup>.

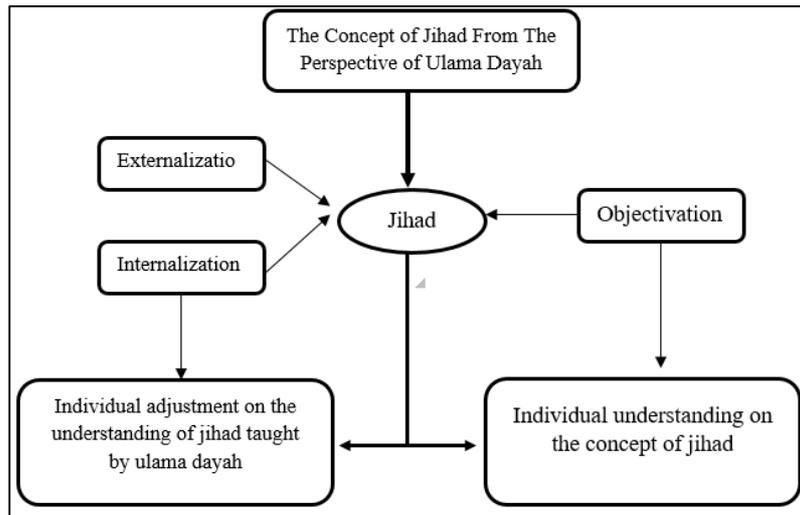
In this case jihad is analyzed in the perspective of the Dayah ulema using Berger's framework which refers to three important points. Externalization shows that a social reality can be formed through individual actions which are established through a social interaction. For its realization, in this social interaction individuals make symbols and objects made by them. Therefore, in externalization a special characteristic of social interactions is formed, which are these individuals themselves. Second, objectivation. In this process, an event occurs that shows the change of a conceptual process that is established in reality that will become part of an individual's life. This will be a habit that will be done repeatedly by individuals in the group. This action will become a habit of their part and will be a permanent part of their reality. Third, internalization, is a process of socialization of the objectivation process. The process of internalization is more of a re-application of the objective world into consciousness so that the subjective individual is influenced by the structure of the social world. Various elements of the world are objectivated to be captured as an expression of reality beyond its consciousness as well as an internal phenomenon for consciousness. Through internalization, humans are the product of society (Bungin, 2008) <sup>[3]</sup>.

The Muslim community aspire to be in heaven as a form of devotion to Allah SWT. Fourteen centuries ago, jihad was internalized by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), for anyone who strives in the path of Allah, they will find their place in heaven. Since then jihad has become a social phenomenon in the Muslim world; how people dare to commit the Islamic endeavour at the expense of all wealth, belongings, souls, minds and lives. Jihad has become the civilization history of the Arabs therefore Muslims outside the Arab region do not need to translate jihad into their mother tongue. This is because Muslims see that jihad has become a part of the knowledge and social reality of religion.

In line with Peter L. Berger's social construction theory, the reality of jihad is preserved with the mention of it in the Qur'an and Hadith. It does not stop there, Islamic authors write about the story of jihad in books and manuscripts of

reformist scholars who have been preserved to this day. As time goes by, the socialization of jihad continues as long as humans learn and socialize about the Islamic teaching. Jihad is continuously being internalized by Muslim individuals, thus it becomes a subjective reality of Muslims themselves. Jihad is internalized to be the weapon of Muslims in fighting for everything whether it is against the enemy, against the urge of shaitan and the urge of lust. The concept of jihad can be used anywhere and anytime for the value of worship. But, on the other hand, jihad becomes a reality that is relatively subjective with a closed understanding and it tends to justify its will, which is usually dynamic, therefore the concept of deviant jihad is born. The role of fundamentalist movements in the name of Islam spreads radical ideologies that are very influential in the

action of "jihadist" groups with extreme ideology. It only takes a matter of minutes to indoctrinate the target into sympathizers and from sympathizers into martyr for every radical action. The process of indoctrination is so quick and it does not take long, just around 15 and 25 minutes, to make someone ready to become a 'bride' (suicide bomber). This radical fundamentalist action is heavily associated with society under the pretext of jihad. This deviant concept of jihad is the one conceived by some people in order to commit acts of violence and radicalism. Therefore, the writer wants to express an intention to know jihad from the view of Ulama Dayah in Aceh in externalizing the teachings of jihad into the forms of jihad which occur in the society nowadays.



Source: Results of research, 2018

Diagram 1: The Framework of Jihad From Ulama Dayah Perspective

The diagram above explains that there are three dialectic processes in Peter L. Berger's theory, namely externalization, objectivation and internalization. The first process was the externalization to see individual's adjustments to the meaning made by Acehnese dayah ulemas about the concept of jihad. The second process is the objectivation in order to see the tradition of meaning done by the ulama of the dayah based on the real meaning of jihad. Then the last process is internalization, individual understanding of jihad that has developed in the community so far.

**4. Jihad from the Perspective of Ulama Dayah**

In conjunction with the current global development, jihad can no longer be interpreted as jihad *qital* (war). Even though the true meaning of jihad is Allah's command to fight against infidelity. There are still many problems of the nation at this time that have not been resolved and still become dilemmas and responsibilities for Muslims as a whole, ranging from economic, political and social problems that are not carried out in accordance with the elements of religion. So, it is only natural for the younger generation in the future to commit jihad in order to improve those aspects of life. All the scholars or ulemas agree that in line with global development, Islam Washatiah (moderate Islam) has been chosen as a neutral Islam that does not lean to the left and right, Islam teaches us not to be *Ghuluw* (transgressing), for example in assessing something, so it is

forbidden to label someone as *'kafir'* easily or justifies bloodshed between religious communities to the level of violence and radicalism. However, Islam also does not encourage us to be *Tafriid* (easy) in behaving towards all religious matters because it will shape a person into a liberal.

In conducting warfare, Islam has its own purposes which are defending themselves from enemy attack and spreading the religion (*da'wah*), while *da'wah* itself is included in jihad but excluded from *qitâl*. That is *qitâl* in the scope of the *fi sabilillâh* which specifically leads to battle and is only part of the jihad. Therefore, jihad cannot be interpreted as *qitâl* (war) or vice versa, *qitâl* interpreted as *jihâd*.

**5. The Substance of Jihad, Fighting Against Ignorance**

The term 'ignorance' here is the ignorance of those who do not want to have faith. For example, jihad after the Prophet Muhammad pbuh died, The Companions led the people or *ummah* by resolving the most crucial problems at the time, namely ignorant people and people who refused to believe in Islam. This precedent was made by companions so that Muslims were not divided and would still have faith in Allah, even though the Messenger of Allah had passed away. If they are willing to believe, then there is no need to conduct jihad *qital*. The story tells an analogy, that Islam is not as extreme as being alleged in taking a decision to initiate war. Because, warfare could not be conducted without going through several stages; if even one aspect is

overlooked then Islam considers it wrong to carry out the war. The most fundamental foundation built in Islam is the level of knowledge as a determinant of people to avoid being radical.

The meaning of jihad is far beyond war, and the various types and categories of jihad show that jihad is not an aim, but a tool and a means. The purpose of jihad is to stand for Allah SWT so that the Islam can be upheld universally. Therefore, in the modern era there are new banners behind the word jihad, such as jihad da'wah, jihad tarbiyah, which say the spirit of jihad can be actualized in the form of da'wah and education. Likewise, the writer intends intellectual jihad as the substance of jihad by gathering knowledge. This study itself is an attempt to bring the spirit of jihad in the form of developing intellectual potential and science, which then acts as a means to convey *hidayah* (guidance) and to build civilization, especially in Aceh.

The obligation to conduct jihad is the obligation of means, not the purpose and qital (war) signifies guidance; killing infidels is not the goal of jihad at all. If the guidance or *hidayah* can be conveyed through argument or conversation without using violence, it is even better. Nowadays Muslims need a lot of references to resolve the problems of *ummah* which destruct the Islamic order and cause Islam to be reflected as religion that damages peace. However, it is difficult to create a new discourse in repelling Western perceptions towards Muslims.

## 6. Jihad, Upholding and Restoring the Religion of Allah

The externalization process is an anthropological necessity. Thus, the social order is something that already exists preceding every development of individual organism. This continuous and repeated social order is a pattern of activities that can experience a habitualization process. The actions that are used as habituation maintain their meaningful nature for individuals and are taken for granted. This habituation brings psychological benefit because choices are narrowed down and there is no need for any situation to be redefined step by step. Therefore, it will free up the accumulation of tensions caused by undirected impulses. This habituation process precedes every institutionalization. Humans, according to our empirical knowledge, cannot be imagined to be separated from their continuous outpouring into the world they occupy (Berger, 1991) [2].

At the phase of externalization it is shown in this paper by the early view of the lay people on jihad, where anyone out of Islam community are obliged to fight to uphold the religion of Allah. This initial view known to all the lay people in Aceh is obtained based on the information they received from previous generations, that everyone who fight against the infidels will get the reward as martyr and will live among the angels in heaven. People from ancient times believed this, that if a person commit jihad then he or she will die in God's way and will surely go to heaven; and if jihad is conducted than the person will be remembered as an Islamic warrior who defends himself against the infidels. However, since that time until present the decision of jihad has remained within the agreement among scholars or ulama.

In the next phase, the objectivation of culture was created by humans in dealing with the Creator as something beyond their reach or became an objective reality. In this case, a human being or a society that creates a discourse will experience and feel what is their own discourse. Through

this phase the community becomes an objective reality. Objectivation is the result that has been achieved, both mentally and physically from human externalization activities. The reality of daily life is objectivated by humans or understood as objective reality. Objectivation in society includes several elements such as institutions, roles and identities.

The objectivation process in this paper is jihad from ulama dayah perspective in accordance with the initial knowledge of the community about jihad which later turns into objective reality. In this process of objectivation, the views of dayah ulemas in Aceh have never been different about jihad; their views are based on the knowledge and experience they later gained, where the knowledge and experience that each individual finds differ from one to another.

At this phase some of the same views of informants are also found and it has been classified into three parts, namely:

- Objectivation of ulama dayah whose view is jihad does not only mean war
- Objectivation of ulama dayah who view jihad as a battle to achieve victory in the world and the hereafter
- Objectivation of ulama dayah who view jihad as a mean to uphold and restore the religion of Allah
- Objectivation of ulama dayah who view the substance of jihad as a fight against ignorance

People from ulama dayah background and students in dayah have been receiving traditional socialization from their previous teachers; this community no longer considers jihad in a radical form. The people of this group have understood the concept of jihad correctly; they get this information from the process they have taken with the long sequence of teaching and learning based on the correct references in dayah, not from social media such as television, newspapers, books and the internet in which the information is not always valid. The information they get is not only from the public's opinion about jihad. Moreover, they refer to the Hadith and Al-quran, which they do according to the interpretation of the ulemas.

The next phase is internalization. In this paper, it is found that the subjective reality of dayah ulemas and students towards the concept of jihad has varied on each individual, and it is influenced by the phase of objectivation they have gone through. Although, in the beginning the understanding among the Acehnese people was the same, that jihad was *qital* (war). It was influenced by the historical jihad of the Acehnese in the war against the Dutch. But eventually, after getting a variety of information through the objectivation phase experienced by each different learning front at Dayah, the subjective reality was obtained at the internalization phase. This subjective reality is different from their initial view of the concept of jihad. However, there are still some Acehnese people who still belief in the beginning reality, that the concept of jihad is only fighting or war, but it does not extent to doing radical action.

## 7. Radicalism from the Perspective of Ulama Dayah

The community according to Berger is understood as a subjective reality, which is carried out through internalization. Internalization is an individual's direct understanding or interpretation of objective events as meaning expression. Berger and Luckmann (Manuaba, 2008) [5] stated that in internalization, individuals identified

themselves with various social institutions or organizations in which the individuals are members. Internalization is the re-infiltration of reality by humans and transforming it back from the structure of the objective world into the structures of subjective consciousness. In this context, the Acehese ulemas stated that the term radicalism was only a global design, which was constructed

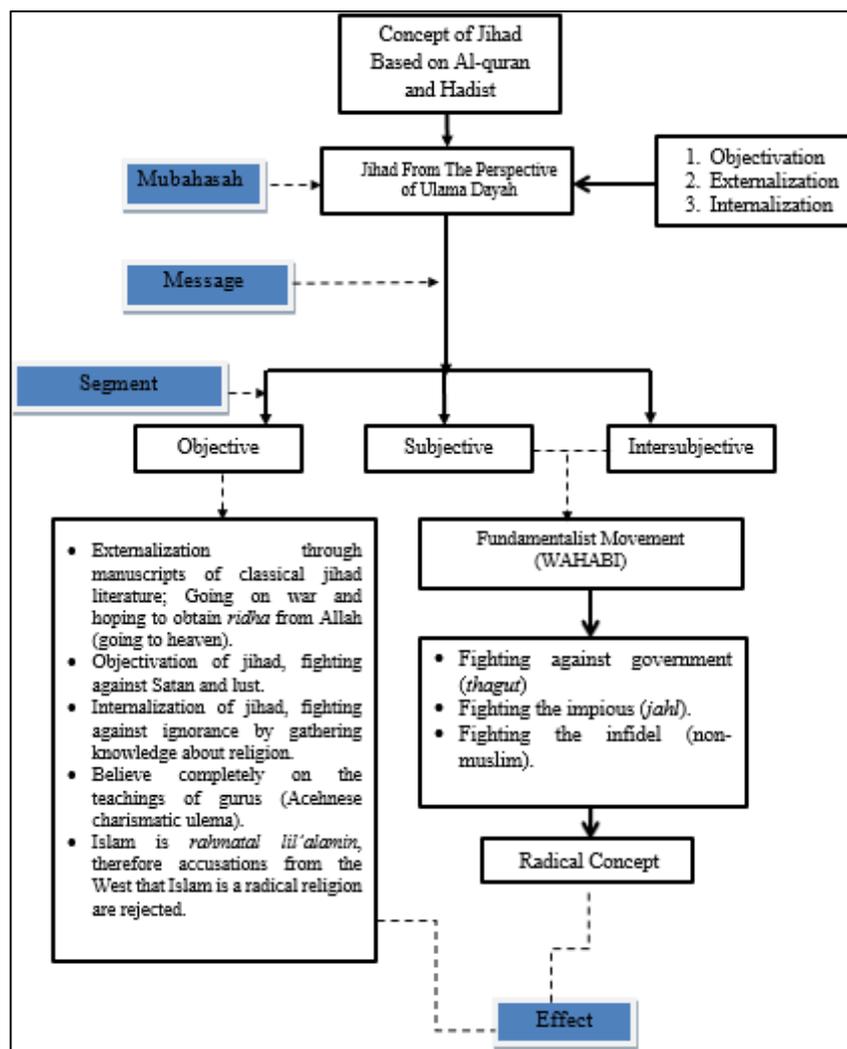
into an objective reality through deviations made by a group of adherents or sects in the name of Islam. The constant attacks intensified by those groups hinder the role of the ulamas to restore the image of Islam, and threats that were launched obstruct the effort to rebuild the ground of thinking that radicalism is not a teaching originated from Islam.

**Table 1:** Islamic Groups in Aceh

Islamic Group	Main Feature
Ulama Dayah, Traditional Dayah and Integrated Dayah Groups	a. Still preserving traditional teaching and learning system among Dayah group and still referring to classical Islamic literature b. Avoiding the use of violence in Islamic movement agenda; Being accomodating to modern nation state concept; Organizations are open and cooperative on helping Acehese traditional and religious activity c. On doing interpretation or <i>ijtihad</i> on a law, Ulama Dayah always do “ <i>Mubahasah</i> ” or conducting in-depth review
Islam <i>Pesantren</i> Group (Non-Dayah)	a. Supporting changes in social and political system; Avoiding the use of violence in Islamic movement agenda; The movement is more ideological; Organizations are open and not bounded over countries b. Less accomodative on traditional ceremonies like <i>maulid</i> , seventh-day ceremony of the deceased and the tradition of <i>suluk</i> and <i>fidiyah</i> because they consider it as <i>bid'ah</i> or blasphemous c. Opposing the view of ulama dayah easily and accusing some of them as ‘kafir’; Rejecting the <i>da'wah</i> from groups outside of them

Source: Results of research, 2018

**Formulation of Jihad Taught By Ulama Dayah in Aceh**



Source: Results of research, 2018

**Diagram 2:** Construction Process of Jihad by Ulama Dayah

The social construction process described above can be explained as follows:

1. The social construction process of jihad by ulama dayah described above can be explained as follows, Jihad is basically the command from Allah SWT which originates in the Al-quran and Hadith. Basically, jihad has been externalized and internalized since the Prophet Muhammad era in fighting against infidels. Since then jihad has been populist among Muslims until now; jihad is interpreted by the ulemas through writings and books so that it can be easily understood by all Islamic community. Through the classical literatures or books, the concept of jihad in Islam constantly flowed into the veins of community life in general, before it arrived and became an understanding of jihad for the Acehese ulama dayah. For the Acehese people, jihad undergoes objectivation process as war, which was the war against Dutch colonizers. But all this time the ulemas have given understanding of jihad beyond war.
2. The understanding of ulama dayah in Aceh regarding jihad is built not only on references and previous jihad documentations. If the sources and references available are overviewed, the interpretation difference in the meaning of jihad itself resurfaces. For the dayah ulemas, classical literature (*kitab gundul*) has always been reference in studying the law in Islam. However, it does not mean that a conclusion can be easily drawn to avoid subjectivity and intersubjectivity of the community. Therefore, other initiative is carried out by the ulama dayah, which is doing *mubahasah* or an attempt to see how far the interpretation of jihad has an impact on the advantage and disadvantages for the people.
3. Misconception on the meaning of jihad all these times, according to ulama dayah, occurs due to the absence of *mubahasah*. Unilateral interpretation in describing the meaning of jihad has been based on subjectivity and intersubjectivity of individuals, while the agreements of the ulemas have been neglected. These two segments of society continue to be confronted by ulama dayah in interpreting jihad.
4. From the perspective of ulama dayah, the one who gives guidance must be among the ulemas who really understand and comprehend jihad; they act as a media that can be trusted to deliver messages about jihad. In the next phase, the ulemas must give direct emphasis through their charismatic attitude on *ikot peutuah gure* (following the teacher's orders) as a belief, so that the community accepts and obeys whatever is conveyed to be objective. Overall, those components will affect the attitude and constructive reality that they do.
5. In this segment of society, there are two influences of community groups. There are people who accept objectively and believe that jihad does not only mean war by externalizing the whole meaning of jihad in a positive perspective. But, on the contrary, there are segments of society that objectively reject and interpret jihad subjectively and intersubjectively as individuals; these individuals tend to be heretical and radical. This affects all Muslim society, on how to interpret jihad perfectly.

## 8. Conclusion

This paper contains an interpretation analysis of jihad from the perspective of ulama dayah, radicalism studies in Aceh and a construction of reality that was built by the Acehese

ulemas. In the theory of social construction jihad has become externalized meaning, objectivation and internalization into the individual who consciously accepts the meaning of jihad. Based on the perspective of ulama dayah, topic of jihad is not only in the context of war alone; gathering knowledge in order to eliminate ignorance is also part of jihad, thus the ulemas take a stand for the sake of *ummah* and choose the middle ground, which is *Islam Washatiyah* (moderate Islam) which does not lean towards the left and right as a ground of thinking in order to have a true Muslim attitude. The ulemas encourage people not to be *Ghuluw* (transgressing). However, the ulama also forbids being *Tafrid* (permissive) in solving religious issues because it will lead to liberal attitude. Furthermore, it is stated that the act of radicalism is not the principle of jihad, on the contrary the act of radicalism is carried out by a deviant movement that abuses the name of Islam and interprets the Qur'an text in a narrow-minded manner. Ulama Dayah emphasize that radical action and terrorism are not conducted by the Acehese ulema; all this time it is the Wahabi group who has been developing themselves and they are being confronted and criticized by the Ulama Dayah. Thus, it makes no sense for Islam to be radical. The term radicalism and terrorism are labelled by the anti-Islam group. Islam is a religion that teaches peace and harmony among religious people. Jihad with radicalism in Aceh seems to be a reality based on Western propaganda about Islamophobia towards Islam, distorting jihad as a radical understanding, so that the shift in the meaning of jihad is near the climax and negative. The formulation of jihad was made by ulama dayah in Aceh, constructed to fight ignorance and evil in accordance with the stages. It is not true that Acehese ulemas are the one who teach radical jihad because the dayah system in Aceh is now a derivative of the previous Grand Teacher (*peutuah gure*) or charismatic ulemas and there has been no radical activities. The first thing taught in the dayah is jihad against ignorance, jihad against lust, and jihad against the Satan. In Islam, it is considered foolish to accuse someone as the infidel while the accuser cannot confirm that their faith is legitimate and their way of worshipping Allah is correct. So, the most important thing is fighting against ignorance.

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