

Community Identity and Resilience as a Psychological Response to Converts on the Aceh Border

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ABSTRACT

It cannot be denied that since Aceh implemented Islamic Sharia as the main discourse of identity for this province, there have been cultural clashes between communities with different beliefs, especially in Aceh border areas such as Singkil Regency. This social problem has incited the emergence of the identity of converting to Islam for some people on the Aceh border, especially those who come from Nias and Pakpak. This study is an attempt to understand and explain the existence of the Muslim community on the Aceh border using the concepts of social identity and community resilience. This study was carried out due to a lack of studies on groups of converts who are influenced by socio-political conditions, not just psychological-spiritual experiences, as in several previous studies that looked at the phenomenon of religious conversion. The phenomenon of converting to Islam on the Aceh border was triggered by social identity and survival strategies among the majority by negotiating identity as a convert. This descriptive research applied a grounded research approach and a cultural paradigm. Data collection techniques began with library research, observation, and interviews with several informants related to research data. The results of the research showed that social identity as a convert to Islam at the border cannot be read as limited to religious conversion due to belief but rather as an effort to negotiate social identity as a form of psychological resilience of the community in responding to the dynamics and socio-religious problems in the Aceh border community.

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INTRODUCTION

Friction related to religion in one of Aceh's border areas, specifically Singkil Regency, has yet to reach a consensus. Several studies have indicated that there are gaps in the rules and regulations regarding permits for the establishment of places of worship that are not agreed upon by Muslims and non-Muslims (Al-Fairusy & Abdullah, 2020; Fairusy, 2016a). The religious conflict in Singkil Regency can be considered one of the worst cases in the history of Indonesian religious tolerance. This incident also disrupted the social networks within the local community (Aritonang, 2020; Miswardin, 2019; Nurjannah, 2017).

According to various records, religious friction and conflict often revolve around issues of identity. The impact of the conflict has greatly influenced the identity of the people living on the Aceh border. This situation has contributed to the emergence of a wave of identity transformation through conversions. The phenomenon of converting to Islam has been increasing in the past few years due to local, social, and political conditions (Al-Fairusy & Abdullah, 2020; Aritonang, 2020; Nurjannah, 2017; TEMPO, 2015). This identity conversion leads to several new conditions, such as the emergence of inter-faith families and the issue of adaptation as a convert. However, the new identity as a convert can be seen as a form of identity negotiation. This situation arises from growing suspicion towards the existence of non-Muslims. Of course, the conditions for religious conversion can vary depending on the social circumstances of the individuals. Compared to the Akit tribe in Riau, the conversion to Islam was driven by the widespread emergence of formal religion (Santoso et al., 2019; Afandi et al., 2021).

In the context of Singkil society, the initial assumption of identity transformation into converting to Islam appears to be influenced by structural factors rather than cultural issues (Al-Fairusy & Abdullah, 2020; Ansor, 2014; Fairusy, 2016a, 2016b). The conflict over religious identity in Singkil began when the DI/TII incident broke out in Aceh in 1953. Aceh has aggressively implemented Islamic Sharia throughout its territory and formalized it in 2002, a practice that continues to this day. Identity politics has become increasingly acute, leading to a dichotomy among the Singkil population, with terms like "they" for non-Muslims and "us" for Muslims (Al-Fairusy & Abdullah, 2020).

The excess focus on strengthening religious identity has resulted in an increase in conversions to Islam, as well as the emergence of interfaith families in Singkil. For instance, some residents have changed their faith, especially by becoming Muslims and forming new families. However, even after converting, many of the families and relatives of these converts still hold on to their original beliefs (Christianity and the Pambi belief). Sometimes, only the parents, children, or immediate relatives of the converts choose to change their beliefs, while their extended families continue to adhere to their old beliefs. A study on community resilience conducted by CSRC UIN Jakarta in 2020 reveals that the patterns of community resilience within Islamic boarding school communities are diverse.

The resilience capital built by each community depends heavily on their trust in the social capital they possess.

The converts to Islam in the Aceh border area are a result of the historical journey and social contact that cannot be avoided between this district and the neighboring province of North Sumatra. The flow of migrant people who choose to convert is driven by socio-political and economic factors in Aceh. After converting to Islam, their citizenship is usually more widely accepted, and it opens up opportunities for them to settle comfortably in Singkil. However, the lack of guidance for converts to Islam has led some of them to return to their original religion, as expressed by several converts during initial observations of the preparation of this study proposal. The study of the Muslim community in Singkil, regarding their identity and resilience, was carried out as part of social development in the context of socio-religious studies, with the aim of contributing to the future of a multicultural society on the Aceh border. Additionally, it is hoped that this study will produce research-based lessons learned and a policy brief in the context of the identity and resilience of the Muslim community in the socio-religious domain.

METHODS

This study collected data regarding the identity and resilience of the Muslim community on the Aceh border, especially Aceh Singkil, one of Aceh's border areas. This study used qualitative research methods. The data collection technique used observation and in-depth interview techniques to see how aware the identity of the converts was. This study also examined various literature related to identity and the phenomenon of religious conversion in society. Referring to Strauss & Corbin's statement, this research also used a grounded approach that attempts to explain phenomena in the field (Spradley, 1997).

Data collection in this research began with a literature study by reading several articles and journals related to converts to Islam and identity. Next, observations, in-depth interviews with ten informants, and documentation were carried out. Next, all data was analyzed simultaneously with data collection (Mariam, 1998; Marshall and Rossman, 1989; Creswell, 2010). To reach the research location, researchers traveled overland for nine hours from West Aceh to the Aceh border. The converts do not live in one location but are spread across several points in Aceh Singkil Regency. Furthermore, in order to enrich the data, researchers crossed to Nias from Singkil, which required an eight-hour sea journey. While collecting data, researchers settled and lived with a community of converts to Islam in the Aceh border area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dynamics of Converts to the Aceh Border

From several previous studies, the culture of the Aceh border region tends to be different from Aceh in general. Here, cross-ethnic religious, cultural, and

community meetings often occur (Aritonang, 2020; Fairusy, 2016a; Khairuddin, 2021). Singkil Regency, as part of the Aceh border area, is one of the zones that produces the identity of Muslim converts in Aceh. The existence of converts to Islam in Singkil began a long time ago. In historical records, since the Dutch began to control the Aceh border, they brought in many workers from North Sumatra, especially the Batak and Nias people who adhered to animism, and some of them converted to Christianity. Nias and Batak people were widely used by the Dutch as plantation workers when they were first brought to Singkil.

The Pakpak Batak ethnic group mostly lives in mountainous areas, while the Nias ethnic group generally lives on the coast, especially in the Banyak Islands. From records regarding the Banyak Islands, this archipelago has indeed been occupied by Nias people for a long time, who started gardening work long before the community became familiar with fishing as a livelihood as it is now (Fairusy, 2019). The location of the Nias Islands and the Banyak Islands are close together, and this geographical condition allows the migration of the Nias population to Singkil. Apart from that, several Nias people who recently converted to Islam in Singkil were also deliberately brought in by the people of Banyak Island to work in their gardens when cloves became the mainstay of the people's livelihood (Fairusy, 2012).

The presence of Nias and Batak people, who are still Christian and animist, makes Singkil Regency one of the border areas in Aceh with a multicultural identity. Indeed, for a long time, the Singkil area has been one of the oldest cities on the West Coast of Aceh (Syamsuar et al., 2023). This area adjacent to Barus has been known as a transit and meeting area for people from all over Sumatra (Al-Fairusy et al., 2023; Zed, 2017). Therefore, in the Singkil Regency, there is a cross-ethnic community of Malay, Minang, Pakpak, Alas, Javanese, Acehese, and Nias descent. Not only ethnicity, but in Singkil, three community beliefs are also developing: Islam, Christianity, and animism-palbegu.

Aceh's status with Islamic Sharia is seen as an area with the strongest Islamic identity by immigrants from Nias and Pakpak. It is not surprising that many policies aim to protect Islamic identity (Ibrahim, 2002). These include placing religionists on the Aceh border, known as the "border preacher" program. The main task of these religionists is to develop the faith of converts to Islam so that they have a strong Islamic identity.

In the development of Singkil as a district in Aceh, some Pakpak and Nias people who are Christians and animists tend to choose to become Muslims. This condition appears to be influenced by the status of Aceh, which has an Islamic identity (Zubir & Ahmad, 2022). Waves of religious conversion continue to occur today. In fact, in Singkil, there are villages for converts to Islam, such as Napagaluh Village and Lake Paris District. The term "village of converts" is based on the recognition of the local community due to of the high influx of converts there.

When the research was conducted, there was a 26-year-old convert to Islam who had just married a local resident from North Sumatra. Previously, this man from Pakpak was a Catholic, then chose to become Muslim after marrying a Singkil resident. At the Napagaluh village mosque, he was seen wearing a sarong and cap and participating in prayers like a normal Muslim. In fact, he had only been Muslim for three months. From the information provided, he admitted that he chose Islam because of awareness, not solely because of social factors such as marriage. Increasing his knowledge of the Islamic religion, he admitted that he had started learning to read the Koran and pray regularly. In Christian diakonia, Catholic adherents are actually more radical in their basic beliefs. However, in Singkil, there are several Catholics who choose to change their faith due to marriage factors and other social forces.

Transformation into converting to Islam in Singkil Regency tends to be a varied process. In the Banyak Islands District, a local community leader named Mustafa (73 years old) is a descendant of the Nias people with the surname Zai, and his grandfather has been a Muslim since his ancestors settled on West Banyak Island (Haloban). As a Nias man, he has converted many Christian immigrants from Nias to become Muslims. Mustafa is a former clove farmer with a large garden. In the 1970s-1980s, he often brought in workers from Nias who were still Christians and employed them in his clove plantation. At that time, transportation from Nias to Banyak Island could only be done using a sailboat without an engine. Almost every year, Mustafa brings dozens of workers from Nias to Banyak Island. Most of them chose to settle in the Banyak Islands and converted to Islam, although some others still stuck to their basic religion, such as Christianity. Those who persisted with the basic religion have now formed a new settlement on Banyak Island, known as Mata Air village. The location is across the sea from the Muslim settlement of Banyak Island.

Workers from Nias who had become Muslims would usually be given a plot of land by Mustafa to live on. After the clove harvest, they sailed to Sibolga together. From Sibolga to Banyak Island, they usually bring home basic necessities such as rice, and the rest is used to buy gold which is saved later in bamboo mugs as a tradition passed down from the Banyak Island people. Family relations between Nias people who have become Muslims and their relatives who are still Christians are still going well, according to the Muslim converts interviewed. This relationship becomes the social cohesion between the residents of Singkil and Nias. Singkil Regency is the only district in Aceh that is most sought after by Nias people for migration and work. It is not surprising that in Singkil, it is easy to find Nias people and local residents of Nias descent.

Based on data and information from Baitul Mall administrators and the Aceh Singkil Islamic Sharia Service, the number of converts from Nias is significantly higher than converts from Pakpak on the border with Manduamas-Central Tapanuli Regency. In a social context, several converts admitted that if they became Muslims in Singkil, their identity would be more fluid in interacting with

the local community. Apart from that, identifying as a Muslim can be seen as a strategy to survive in a more intimate social context with the Singkil community. Local residents show more attention and concern towards immigrants who have converted to Islam.

Mustafa Naibaho, administrator of the Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB) in Singkil District, explained that becoming Muslim can be seen as a strategy for recognizing non-Muslim immigrants in Singkil. After converting, they are generally treated well and given more attention. Several types of social assistance for converts to Islam are also prioritized in the converts' development program. This condition is regulated in Islamic teachings to help those who have recently converted to Islam. In this context, the socio-cultural psychological strengthening of an individual applies, and environmental influences play a role in shaping the identity of converts (Haryanto & Sila, 2022). This suggests that the social conditions of society encourage the increase in the number of converts to Islam in Singkil. However, quite a few converts later returned to their previous religion. This condition is triggered by a lack of attention in fostering the clear faith of Mustafa, who is also the youth administrator of the mosque in Singkil.

Table 1. Converts to Singkil Regency and Previous Religion

Previous Religion	Subdistrict	The Reason for Becoming a Convert
Christian Protestant	Singkil Utara, Danau Paris Singkohor,	Marriage, Livelihood
Catholic	Danau Paris, Singkohor	Marriage
Flows of Believers	Singkil Utara, Danau Paris	Marriage, Livelihood

Source: Dayah Aceh Singkil Islamic Sharia and Education Service 2023.

In the Singkil District, many converts to Islam have officially become Singkil residents and are being trained at one of the local Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) foundations, known as the Center for Converting to Islam (LPMC-NU). Zaini Saleh, the head of this institution, admits that every Saturday, he trains nearly twenty converts to Islam. According to Zaini, the conditions for converts to Islam vary. Some are worried because their families abandoned them after converting, and some are still teenagers. Zaini's consistency in developing converts to Islam then encouraged him to establish an institution for converting to Islam there.

According to Zaini, one of the leaders of converts to Islam in Singkil, one of the factors behind the return of converts to their religion of origin is the lack of serious attention from the local government, especially in terms of developing the faith of converts. Not a few converts who have been Muslims for years seem confused and reluctant to carry out several obligations in Islam, such as prayer. This condition encourages some of them to choose to return to their previous religion.

Ibrahim (35 years old), an informant and convert from Nias, explained the dynamics of his conversion. Despite being a convert for almost a year, Ibrahim admits that he does not understand how to worship in Islam, such as prayer, because he has never been taught. The name Ibrahim was given to him after he became a Muslim. Ibrahim now lives with his wife and three children in the Singkil District area. The economic condition is a cause for concern. The house he lives in is also a temporary gift from residents. Ibrahim used to work as a thug in Jakarta. Several parts of his body are covered in tattoos, which he often shows to convince others that he was once a thug in the capital. After facing disciplinary action for his actions in Jakarta, he chose to return to Nias and get married. After getting married, his friend invited him to move and settle in Singkil. For converts like Ibrahim, Singkil Regency provides a more stable economic and social life due to the concern of local residents regarding their conversion to Islam. Ibrahim now receives support from Baitul Mal and the Aceh Islamic Sharia Service. His life as a convert to Islam has garnered attention from the local community, and he often receives assistance in the form of materials and basic necessities from the residents of Singkil (Informant Ibrahim, in-depth interview, August 2023).

Apart from Ibrahim, there are many converts to Islam in Singkil. They are scattered throughout the area. However, efforts to develop their faith are still ongoing despite facing obstacles and challenges. Some converts admit that their religious education is very limited. Many of them have never learned how to perform prayers properly or read the Quran at all. As a result, many converts eventually reverted to their previous religion. On the other hand, many children of converts who were born into Islam continue to practice the religion and receive education at Islamic boarding schools on the Aceh border, which are specifically designed for the children of converts.

The composition of those who persist and convert back to their previous religion is different between converts on the coast and inland areas and the mountains of Singkil. On the Singkil coast, most converts receive better attention than converts in inland areas. The basic needs of Singkil coastal converts are more often met because of the attention of coastal communities, in addition to the contribution of Baitul Mal and the Islamic Sharia Service in fostering awareness of how to practice Islam. This condition can be seen in the case of workers working on Musfata's Cengkih plantation in the Banyak Islands and the presence of Ibrahim, who converted to Islam from Nias. In fact, there is a convert who was Mustafa's former laborer who has now started a family and married a resident of the Banyak Islands. Now, he lives on Banyak Island and considers Mustafa to be his adoptive father (Mustafa informant, in-depth interview, August 2023).

However, not all converts depend on the surrounding community for their livelihoods. One of the converts who became an informant in the Singkil coastal area was Yusuf, who is also a descendant of Nias and is still 23 years old. Yusuf converted to Islam at the age of five because his parents had converted to Islam. Since becoming a Muslim, Yusuf has often studied Islam self-taught via social

media. Yusuf's knowledge of Islam is heavily influenced by the conservative style of Islam. He has also memorized the Quran, and sometimes, he becomes an imam in one of the mosques by imitating the rhythm of reading the Quran like imams in the Middle East. Yusuf's conservative religious principles often receive objections from local people who still maintain local traditions. However, in terms of survival, Yusuf is an example of an economically independent convert to Islam. He chose to trade where he lived (informant Yusuf, in-depth interview, August 2023). These are the results of research found in the field to explain more clearly. To make it visually clearer, the Resilience of the Muslim Community on the Aceh Border can be seen in Figure 1.

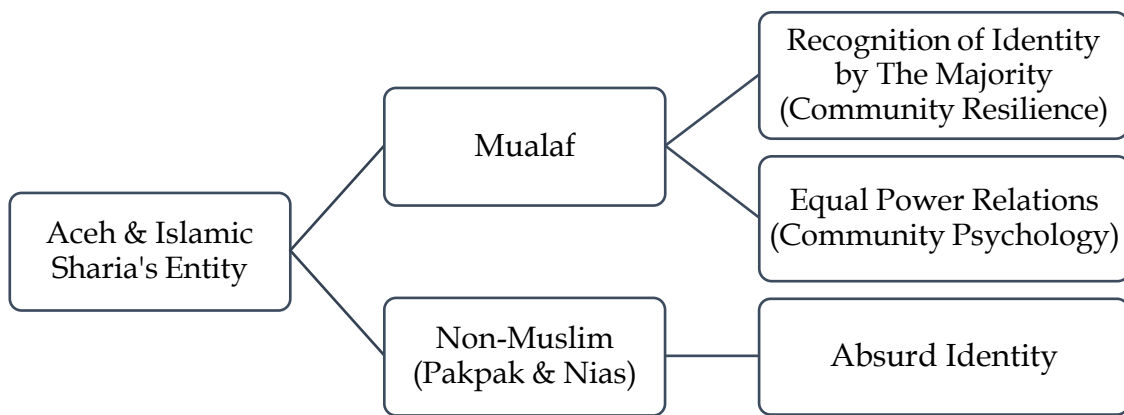


Figure 1. Roadmap for Resilience of the Muslim Community on the Aceh Border

Discussion

Converting to Islam as a Social Identity and Psychological Survival Strategy

The phenomenon of religious conversion in Indonesia arises from various factors, one of which is the impact of tensions between religious communities in Indonesia (Hudriansyah, 2018). Additionally, religious conversion can also be influenced by unpredictable spiritual experiences (Mahesya et al., 2022). Moreover, social and environmental influences can also encourage religious conversion (Santoso et al., 2019). When someone undergoes religious conversion, their entire personal life will also change, and they will need to reorganize their identity, as well as go through a long process of adaptation (Abdillah & Sjaf'e'i, 2019).

On the Aceh border, especially in Singkil, which is the focus of this study, religious conversion appears to be influenced by social factors and the religious and political conditions of the local community (inter-community tensions). Some studies have shown that inter-religious tensions have encouraged certain individuals to change their identity and convert. Furthermore, efforts to convert one's beliefs are also driven by social and economic conditions. In the context of the Aceh border, after someone converts to Islam, their existence and citizenship are more widely accepted, opening up opportunities for a sense of comfort. This

is different from their status within their previous beliefs (Ichwan et al., 2020). Several field findings also highlight the newfound power that accompanies their conversion (Fairusy, 2016a).

Social identity as a Muslim convert on the Aceh border does have its own psychological and anthropological meaning. However, social identity is a set of values and norms that a community believes in and practices in their daily lives. Therefore, becoming a convert can be understood as an effort to achieve a social identity for the individual. Social identity as a convert to Islam can also be seen as social capital (social bonding), which is often used to maintain survival (Abubakar et al., 2020). In the issue of religious conflict in Indonesia, social identity also becomes a tool that influences religious contestation and conflict, as well as ethnic and religious relations in Indonesia (Purwana, 2003; Habib, 2004; Muhrotien, 2012; Bertrand, 2012; Buchari & Astuti, 2014; Jubba, 2019). Therefore, the negotiation of social identity as a Muslim convert on the Aceh border can be seen as the result of contestation with religious nuances.

In Habib's study, which highlighted the pattern of ethnic Chinese and Javanese relations in one of the villages in East Java, the relations between ethnic groups were influenced by dialectical interactions between the parties. This dialectic forms a relationship pattern that changes from a pattern of control to cooperation and competition and ends with conflict. Through Simmel's view, he emphasizes the role of distance in social relations and the concept of the stranger, where the perception of one ethnic group towards another ethnic group is based on the relative distance between individuals from the first ethnic group and the second group. However, in the context of relations between ethnic Chinese and Javanese, there is no issue of foreignness. Nevertheless, Chinese ethnicity is not seen as organic to the Javanese ethnic group (Habib, 2004).

Jacques Bertrand explained that issues of identity and religion in Indonesia, especially those related to conflicts related to the New Order regime, the political impact of this regime contributed to the consequences of ethnic and religious conflicts (Jacques Bertrand, 2012). The presence of democratization accompanied by the end of the New Order regime contributed to conflict tensions between ethnicities and religions, which had previously been considered subdued. A similar condition was also explained by Noorhaidi Hasan, who stated that conservative and radical groups emerged after the new order. The role of the New Order in narrowing the meaning of nationality by marginalizing other ethnic groups has accumulated conflict in Indonesia. As a result, a way of seeing (awareness) of oneself as an ethnic group emerged, which had been marginalized by the "national model" instituted by the new order as a narrow concept (Hasan, 2008).

Jubba's (2019) study shows that tensions in relations between religious groups are a bad sign for humanity and togetherness. This situation is a form in which religion has long undergone a process of being personalized until it has its own truth. This condition makes religion disruptive and applies a contestative nature

to religion. Looking at the concept of identity, this study provides an understanding that if religious followers are so proud to be part of their followers, contestation of religious identity has led to strong reactions between religious groups themselves. As a result, fellow religious adherents started accusing each other.

Several notes regarding the life of religious communities in Singkil explain the two identities of the people there: coastal and inland (upstream of the river). These two regional features simultaneously reflect the diametric character of deep social and cultural conditions, including economic development. Religious friction never occurred on the coast. Coastal settlements are dominated by the Minang, Acehese, and Nias ethnic diaspora with Malay characteristics. The coastal communities of Singkil are generally more open to the outside world because this area has long been a stopover place for immigrants compared to inland communities (Al-Fairusy et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, in the interior of Singkil, frictions related to religion often occur (Aritonang, 2020). Some people who claim to be Singkil ethnic refuse to be categorized as Pakpak ethnic for several reasons, one of which is religious. The Singkil people who recognize themselves as the Singkil tribe tend to define themselves as Muslims. This condition is different from that of the Pakpak community, some of whom adhere to Christianity. It is difficult to differentiate their identities between people who recognize themselves as Singkil and Pakpak tribes because they are both very similar in terms of language and surname. Some of them admit that they are still the same ancestor (Ansor, 2014). For a long time, Pakpak people have come to the Singkil area to hunt for frankincense and camphor. The existence of this ancient plant can be seen in the work of Lombard (2007) and Kevonian in Guillot (Peny, 2014).

This condition of tension between communities of different religions provides space for the emergence of converts to Islam, which can be understood as a form of psychological survival strategy. This condition is supported by questions of social identity and resilience. Community resilience is an effort to survive conditions of radicalism and extremism. As explained by Cardozo, resilience is the new kid on the block in socio-religious discourse (Abubakar et al., 2020). Initially, this concept was used in the field of natural disaster management, climate change, and other risk factors, including global threats. Resilience in a basic context means rebounding, as quoted from the Macmillan Dictionary. Nowadays, resilience is also often used in many ways, such as digital resilience (Suud et al., 2024), Islamic resilience (Suud & Armansyah, 2023), and academic resilience (Suud et al., 2023).

The concept of resilience can be understood as "...Able to quickly become healthy, happy or strong again after an illness, disappointment or other problem, and being resistant or not susceptible to something" (Abubakar et al., 2020).

Resilience encourages individuals and communities to have the ability to face difficulties and want to return to normal after facing extraordinary, frightening,

and often unexpected threats, such as those experienced by converts to Islam in areas with cases of religious friction. This concept can also be understood as a form of ability and willingness to adapt over time to changes and potentially threatening environments (Abubakar et al., 2020). Indeed, the choice to become a convert was not solely due to the impact of religious conflict in Singkil. Several cases, such as marriage, are also the reason why immigrants become converts to Islam at the Aceh border.

Religious transformation and conversion have not yet disrupted the relationship of converts with their immediate families, who still adhere to their previous beliefs. Most converts admit that family relationships continue to be good. However, some converts do experience psychological pressure, as their identity as residents of the Aceh border differs from that of their core family. Once someone converts to Islam on the borders of Aceh and is recognized as a member of the majority, they tend to have special social opportunities that those who still follow their original religion do not have. As Michael Foucault stated, as quoted by Kahami, power is not just about ownership but also about strategy. At the same time, these converts also grapple with the knowledge produced from the Singkil identity discourse and Islamic Sharia, which has been formalized in Aceh (Kahami, 2017).

The social identity of being a convert to Islam is also used as a tool to exert power. According to Foucault, there are two types of power: repressive power and normalization power (Kahami, 2017). The latter is of particular interest to Foucault. He believes that power is not just a matter of possession but also of strategy. The identity as a convert to Islam can be seen as a survival strategy, as explained earlier. Converts seem to be attempting to distance themselves from their previous identity, which had limited power, and instead choose to align themselves with the dominant majority identity (Muslim identity). This attitude can be understood as a psychological strategy to empower themselves.

For converts, the Muslim identity is also a discourse with psychological implications for their own identity on the Aceh border, as well as a form of power in the beliefs of the local community, especially those residing on the border. The power vested in the Muslim identity encourages converts to transform their beliefs, leading to a sense of psychological comfort in living among the majority. However, the government's neglect in supporting their faith and the social and psychological pressure from their families also create opportunities for them to return to their original religion.

CONCLUSIONS

The presence of converts on the borders of Aceh with a set of social identities attached to them is a topic of discussion in this study for several reasons. First, the community of converts on the Aceh border is a social and religious phenomenon that emerged as a result of tensions between religious believers and not solely because of spiritual experience. Second, the phenomenon of converts

in Singkil can be used as a socio-religious study to see the extent of their endurance in converting status. This study highlights the motivation for converts to Islam because it is triggered by socio-religious conditions on the Aceh border. However, their beliefs are driven by the pursuit of social identity rather than conscious belief motivation.

Third, the weak guidance of converts on the Aceh border in terms of strengthening beliefs by the Aceh Government has opened up space for conversions to the religion of origin to also emerge. Apart from that, data on the number of converts at the Aceh border, such as Singkil Regency, has not been well integrated between departments; The Islamic Sharia Service, Baitul Mall, and related agencies are concerned with empowering the lives of Muslim converts there. As a vulnerable group, converts not only receive disrespectful treatment from their families of origin, but they are also ignored in the context of comprehensive guidance.

Efforts to develop Muslim converts have now been handled with the presence of several Muslim convert training institutions, one of which is the Center-NU Center for Converting Development Institute, with all its limitations. However, the psychological dynamics of converts can be explored well in this institution because they have become a community. The survival of converts to Islam is a serious socio-religious discourse in the context of civic development in Aceh.

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