FROM “SONG OF WAR” TO “SONG OF PEACE”: THE ROLE OF HIKAYAT PRANG SABI FOR ACEHNES

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Abstract: Hikayat Prang Sabi (HPS) was written in 1881 to raise the spirit of jihad and Acehnese Ethnonationalism against Dutch colonialism (1873–1942). In the war between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian government (1976–2005), the HPS was famous as a song of war and had four potential functions that led to the emergence of ethnonationalism and an ethnic revival. After the 2005 peace agreement, the meaning of HPS changed to a song of peace in line with the changing definition of the concept of jihad and Acehnese Ethnonationalism. Interviews and library research argue that this transformation occurred as a result of the Acehnese conflict history and the irrelevance of weapons during war in the modern era. Although times have changed, the HPS, as an ethnonationalism anthem, has many meanings, and its use remains relevant as both a war song and a peace song.

Subjects: Historical Sociology; Political Sociology; Race & Ethnic Studies; Asian Studies - Race & Ethnicity; Colonialism; Ethnic Identity; History of Race & Ethnicity; Postcolonialism; History; Race & Ethnicity

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This study examines the existence of Hikayat Prang Sabi (HPS) in the three crucial war eras in Aceh. During the Dutch colonial era, HPS was known as a “saga” and was read by the Acehnese. At that time, HPS functioned as a driving force for the ethnonationalism of the Acehnese people to fight against Dutch colonialism. After some time, the HPS gradually changed its function into a war song, especially for GAM members. Excerpts from the HPS were used as songs to signify the identity of GAM as a secessionist movement organization in 1976–2005. However, the function of HPS changed after the 2005 Helsinki MoU peace. The spirit of ethnonationalism within the HPS transformed from a “song of war” into a “song of peace”. Today, the HPS no longer signifies war but is a song that retains a collective memory of war.
1. Introduction
Aceh is one of the provinces in Indonesia, located at the tip of Sumatra Island. Since the 15th century, Aceh has been an autonomous kingdom area with an entity that was not part of Indonesia. Aceh has experienced two periods of significant war. The first was the war against Dutch colonialism, from 1873 to 1942. The Dutch first came to Aceh in 1873 under the leadership of General Kohler. In this war, the Dutch could not conquer Aceh, and finally decided to leave Aceh in 1942 (Kitzen, 2012; Teeuwen & Doorn, 2006).

At the same time, Indonesia was still colonized by the Dutch and Japanese until its independence in 1945. In the early days of Indonesia's independence, the vacuum of colonial power caused the Dutch to re-colonize Indonesia on 29 September 1945. As a result, the first President of Indonesia, Soekarno, invited Aceh to join Indonesia against Dutch colonialism. On 15 October 1945, an organization of ulama (Islamic religious leaders/figures) in Aceh called Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (PUSA) signed a letter agreeing help Indonesia fight the Dutch and become part of Indonesia (Bertrand, 2004; Sari, 2018).

The second period was that of the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (the Free Aceh Movement), more popularly known by its acronym, GAM, against the Indonesian government from 1976 to 2005. Since joining Indonesia, the Acehnese have been discriminated against by a centralized government. In the 1970s, the Indonesian government, under the leadership of President Suharto, explored and exploited Aceh's natural wealth. The discovery of gas and oil in North Aceh and East Aceh areas caused the Indonesian government to establish modern industries in Aceh but neglected the welfare of the local people. Several indicators that led to the establishment of GAM on the 4 December 1976 were the unequal distribution of wealth, authoritarianism, and marginalization of the Acehnese relative to the Javanese community. This movement was led by Hasan Tiro and aimed to liberate Aceh from Indonesia. The war between GAM and Indonesia lasted for about 29 years and was successfully stopped by the signing of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2005 (Bresnan, 2005; Sari, 2018; Tiro, 1968).

These two significant wars have something in common. They precipitated the ethnonationalist sentiments of the Acehnese. Behind these two periods of war, the spirit of the Acehnese's struggle comes from the Hikayat Prang Sabi (Saga of the Sabi Holy War). The Hikayat Prang Sabi (HPS) was read or sung to spark animosity amongst the Acehnese before the war. Before it became popular in the form of a song, the HPS was known as a saga containing poetry and stories written by Tgk. Chik Pante Kulu, around 1881. He was known as the great scholar of Aceh and had an essential role in leading the Acehnese’s struggle against the Dutch colonialists. HPS was handwritten in Arabic and then rewritten and translated by several scholars such as Tgk. Chik ditiro, Tgk Nyak Amat Cot Paleu, Sheikh Abbas Kutakorang, and Tgk Malem (Abdullah, 2000). The HPS consists of four fictional stories inspired by Islamic history. These four stories explained jihad’s idea to raise Acehnese ethnonationalism against Dutch colonialism (Alfian, 1992).

Reid (2006) wrote the power of HPS as a driving force for the struggle, and it became the most famous exhortation for the holy war. The Acehnese are famous for their heroic spirit in fighting Dutch colonialism for 69 years. Historical facts show that Aceh is an area that the Dutch have never conquered (Feener, 2011; Sari, 2018). The popularity of HPS during the war against the Dutch grew in the 20th century. HPS was used as a source of power when fighting and a means of entertainment for the people of Aceh.

HPS is usually read individually or out loud with a rhythm, making it a song. Mothers often take sentences from HPS to make a song and sing it as a lullaby for their children. Therefore, HPS remains in Acehnese memory. HPS can raise Acehnese Ethnonationalism in the struggle against Dutch colonialism.
The Dutch government saw the strength of the HPS as a dangerous weapon. Therefore, they forbade HPS to be circulated, stored, and read by anyone (Hasjmy, 1977; Subroto, 2015).

The influence of HPS was also shown in the period of war between the Indonesian government and GAM in 1976–2005. The HPS was used as a war song for GAM and served as a mandatory song for this movement. HPS is also a symbol of GAM identity, representing the people of Aceh during the fight with the Indonesian government. In the late 1980s, GAM wanted HPS to replace the national Song of Indonesia Raya, to be sung in every school in Aceh (Aspinall, 2009: 110). GAM framed their struggle as an act of jihad in a holy war, as depicted in HPS.

After the MoU Helsinki peace agreement in 2005, the role of HPS in Acehnese Ethnonationalism transformed. In the war against Dutch colonialism, HPS was better known as a “saga,” which underlies the concept of jihad against the Dutch. In the war between GAM and the Indonesian government, HPS functioned as a war song that ignited the war spirit. This war song contains an understanding of the concept of jihad against the Indonesian government. After 2005, HPS became a song of peace, with the meaning of jihad and ethnonationalism placed in a different context. In connection with HPS, this paper presents a study of a song’s role in igniting a sense of ethnonationalism. The interest in embarking on this study was determined by the limitations of previous research in examining how song lyrics can move individuals to ethnic revival. This research aims to analyze the role of HPS in awakening the spirit of ethnonationalism for the Acehnese. It also explores the causes of the transformations in the meaning of ethnonationalism and concept of jihad in the HPS. This research focuses on three historical periods: the war against Dutch colonialism (1873–1942), the war between GAM and the Indonesian government (1976–2005), and the era after the peace agreement of the Helsinki MoU (2005–2020).

2. Literature review
This section divides the previous research related to this study into three essential themes. The first is “music, song, and war.” The second is the “Potential Function of Music, Ethnonationalism and Ethnic Revival.” The third is “The role of HPS in Acehnese society.” These three themes will provide an overview of the research gap. Therefore, following previous studies, it was essential to conduct this study.

2.1. Music, song, and war
Throughout history, researchers from various disciplines have studied the origins of music and the purpose of listening to music (Peretz, 2006; Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2009, 2010). Empirical studies on the role of music in everyday life have also been conducted, with very diverse focuses (Lonsdale & North, 2011; North et al., 2004). Some of them examined the contribution of music to social and emotional communications (Bernatzky & Panksepp, 2002; Ujfalussy, 1993). Others studied the contribution of music to identity and social cohesion (Johan and Shazlin, 2019; Boer, 2009). The role of music in reducing social stress is explained by Schubert (2009), Schäfer and Sedlmeier (2009), and Huron (2001), whereas Nooshin (2020), Leante and Clayton (2020), and Williams and Abad (2005) studied parenting and music. The relationship between music and politics is explained by Massaka (2013), Neuman (2008), Donegani (2004), and Street (2003), Van Sickle (2005), and Denisoff (1970).

Apart from these themes, the dual role of music and song has also been studied. Generally, music can be used for violence or to seek peace (M. J. Grant et al., 2010). Snyder’s (2007) research views songs as an instrument of violence. His research involved songs about ethnic relations in Rwanda, written by Simon Bikindi, who committed genocide from April to July 1994. Johnson and Cloonan (2009) investigated the dark side of music. Their findings proved that music was used as a method of torture in US detention facilities during the war on terror.

For Hansen (2015), “Music has historically been a way to cope with hardship, of giving breathing space, and formulating ways forward.” Music can be an element of differentiation between us and others. On the other hand, music can also be a mobilizing instrument for conflict/war or improving fraternal ties or peace-making (O’Connell, 2011). During a war situation, a song may reject war or
encourage war. Alternatively, it could contain a brief description of everyday life during the war. Therefore, the term “song of war” was established. Song of war is a musical composition related to warfare or people’s behavior when conflict occurs. In history, several wars have had a close relationship with “songs of war.” Tuck and Goodman (1992) studied popular war songs in the medieval times. During the 16th century, England recognized a work of war literature in “The Ballad of Chevy Chase,” which was later converted into a song with patriotic and propaganda meanings. Subsequently, the civil war in England in 1642–1653 resulted in the Cavalier ballad (Mackay, 1863).

In America, the Civil War also produced several ballads, such as “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” written by Julia Ward Howe in 1862. The song was used as a means of disseminating propaganda and moral values. During World War I, influential songs such as “Over There” and “My Belgian Rose” helped to allay soldiers’ fears and comfort families by painting a positive image of the war experience (Gier, 2008). During World War II in America, the first patriotic song was “God Bless America,” written by Irving Berlin. For the American troops, influential songs included “I Will Be Seeing you,” “Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition,” and “A Nightingale Song in Berkeley Square” (Fauser, 2013; Young & Young, 2008).

The literature that connects music, song, ethnonationalism, and ethnic revival was difficult to find. In contrast, songs can be an important tool for ethnic-based movements to represent cultural identity. Music and songs play essential roles in mobilizing social groups to fight against colonialism and injustice. During warfare or a resistance movement, songs are textual and participatory because they accompany and motivate the movements.

2.2. Potential function of music, ethnonationalism and ethnic revival theory

Theoretically, the discussion of music in war has received little attention in ethnomusicology studies. The theme of war musicology is located under the auspices of music sociology, which is described as an investigation of the aesthetics and social potential interwoven in making and understanding music (Araújo, 2006; Grant, 2020; O’Connell, 2011). Collective actions such as singing, playing, and listening to music can produce a communal experience. On the other hand, war is also a collective action. Therefore, Grant (2020) explained war and peace as part of the musicology of war and collective violence. As a subordinate category of war, collective violence can impact the social, political, and cultural aspects of society. Collective violence is rooted in collaborative practice. Music functions as a catalyst, channel, frames collective experience, and creates meaning. This function makes it strategic before, during, and after the war (Grant, 2020).

The analogy we build to connect the song of war with ethnonationalism and ethnic revival requires a solid theoretical foundation. At least, a theory is needed to explain the role of songs of war to awaken the sense of ethnonationalism, which leads to ethnic revival. However, it is particularly challenging to find the best theory to explain this. There has been no prior research that genuinely illustrates this link. The only research that we think can deliver a “song of war” to the spirit of ethnonationalism and ethnic revival is Rosenthal’s research (2001). Although he talked about music in the context of a social movement, this concept is seen as the best to explain the HPS phenomenon’s function as a song of war.

Rosenthal (2001) asserted that music has four essential functions: serving the committed, educating the uneducated, recruitment, and mobilization. Essentially, these functions determine how music will bind people who are already committed to one group. Music can build trust and loyalty, foster a sense of commitment, and form a collective identity for group members. Music can change ideas and even individual behavior through the messages conveyed in this context. Popular songs, for example, have the unique ability to permeate into the flow of events over time and eventually dominate the listener’s mind. In educating the uneducated, music can present new facts to many people it. For example, the song “We Are The World,” which made a splash in the media in 1985, reminded people of the famine in Ethiopia. When Phil Ochs sang “Link on The Chain,” listeners learned the common enemies in the labor movement (Rosenthal, 2001: 12–13).
Music can also serve a recruitment function. The lyrics can persuade people outside a social movement to move beyond intellectual awareness or emotional sympathy to join or support the movement. Rosenthal (2001) explained that, in recent years, social movement theory has emphasized how a movement is sometimes built on pre-formed communities; music communities were an early community that pioneered such a movement. A concrete example is found in Vila and Cammack’s (1987) paper. They discussed the partisan phenomenon of “Rock National,” an essential component of the anti-military-dictatorship movement in Argentina between 1976 and 1983. The last is the function of mobilization, which helps to persuade people who were previously only sympathetic to the independence movement. Through music, these people can be persuaded to participate in the movement’s activities. They are not merely a member of the organization, but also play an active role in the struggle (Rosenthal, 2001: 14–15).

The potential function of music is closely related to ethnonationalism and ethnic revival. Ethnonationalism refers to ethnic nationalism, with a love for one’s own ethnicity defining the nation and nationality in an ethnic context (Leoussi, 2001; Smith, 2009). The issue of ethnonationalism is a common problem for multi-ethnic countries. As an ideology, ethnonationalism is described as nationalism at the local level, which opposes other ethnicities’ colonization. Ethnonationalism and ethnic identity were the cause of more than 70% of the wars between 1960 and 1999 (Sambanis, 2001). Several ethnic theorists, such as Akpan (2007), Gahramanova (2006), and Rubin (2006), argue that ethnonationalism can facilitate collective actions that are usually based on a collective sentiment towards other ethnic groups. This sentiment tends to use ethnic identity, resulting in an ethnic revival (Smith, 1984). Theoretically, ethnic revival is interpreted as an ideological movement aiming to achieve and perpetuate ethnic autonomy. Ethnic revival discusses the emergence of sentiments within a particular ethnicity. In this approach, sentiment refers to the feelings directed at specific groups or the absolute cultural values that distinguish between “we” and “the others,” which creates conflict (Smith, 1984). In ethnonationalism, music is a means of arousing ethnic sentiment, causing an ethnic revival.

In this study, the concept of the “potential function of music” will explain the function of HPS in building ethnic sentiment. These sentiments can be analyzed using the theory of ethnonationalism and ethnic revival. Both explained that ethnonationalism could be a driving force for ethnic revival in the form of the wars carried out by the Acehnese.

2.3. The role of HPS in acehnese society

The HPS has never been studied as the underlying basis of songs of war. Scholars have previously only discussed HPS within Islamic and sociological studies. Hasjmy (1977) is one of the earliest researchers to write a book on HPS. He explored how the HPS was used as a source of strength for the Acehnese against Dutch colonialism. HPS is reportedly based on Islamic history. The first story is about a beautiful angel in heaven named Ainul Mardhiah. Angels are only intended for those who have been martyred by sacrificing their lives for Allah. The second story describes a herd of elephants that were sent to the Holy War in Mecca against the Abyssinians, which occurred in 570 AD. Tgk. Chik Pante Kulu used the example of an elephant soldier under the leadership of Abraham, who wanted to destroy the Kaaba. This event is described in the Quran in Surah Al-Fiil. Allah SWT sent a flock of Ababil birds to throw stones at the elephants and unbelievers who wanted to destroy the Kaaba (Ahmad, 2020; Hasjmy, 1977).

The third story described M. Amin, an old man who had no children. He prayed to Allah and finally his wife became pregnant. Just before his son’s birth, he was called to join the holy war by the Prophet. This call left him in a dilemma, but in the end, he gathered his courage and decided to join the holy war (Ahmad, 2020). Set in the Medina era, the fourth story is about a young man named Said Salmi. He was an ugly descendant of the Habs. His skin was black and covered with wounds. No woman wanted to marry him. With the help of the Prophet, Said Salmi found a beautiful wife. However, Said Salmi was called to war when he had just begun to look forward to living with his wife. Said nonetheless joined the
holy war and died a martyr after killing many unbelievers. God appointed him to live again as a handsome young man with his wife until he had three children (Ahmad, 2020).

In addition, Subroto (2015) stated that HPS became the center of gravity for the Acehnese. It is described as a source of moral, physical strength, and freedom to take action. HPS provided an ideological doctrine and produced a spirit of struggle that was hard to quell. Moreover, Hardiansyah (2010) saw that HPS contained supernatural theology elements in defending Islam from attacks by foreign nations. In the way of Allah, jihad is one of the highest metaphysical values manifested by the Acehnese for a peaceful afterlife.

Abdullah (2000) and Ahmad (2020) studied how Islamic fanaticism uses jihad through their research, analyzing the text entitled “Hikayat Prang Sabi,” collected in the Leiden University Library. Some of the texts he studied contained jihad, encouraging the Acehnese to participate in the holy war. He found uniformity in these texts, namely, in their instilling religious fanaticism in the Acehnese’s hearts. Fanaticism made the Acehnese see “ulama” (Islamic religious leaders/figures) as a figure with a vital role in the holy war. For the Acehnese, the fight against Dutch colonialism caused poverty and despair. Therefore, jihad is an honorable death that can be achieved through holy war.

Several other studies described the focus on HPS in the war against Dutch colonialism. The only research that discusses HPS in the more extended period of the Aceh conflict is that conducted by Rizki (2020). His study focuses on three holy wars: Aceh against Dutch colonialism, DI-Aceh6 (Darul Islam) against Indonesia, and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) against Indonesia. These three wars perceived “the holy war” differently. In the Aceh war against the Dutch, the targeted subjects were non-Muslim people, who were called “kaphee” (non-believers) in Acehnese. Both DI and GAM were disappointed with their treatment by the central government, resulting in a prolonged conflict in Aceh. The findings of this research showed that HPS is seen as a flexible work, that was used to animate the three holy wars in Aceh, even though they happened in different periods.

The previous researchers focused on HPS as a “saga.” However, the literature examining HPS as a song that raises ethnonationalist spirit is barely available. The majority of prior studies only looked at the power of HPS in the era of war against Dutch colonialism. HPS as a “song of war”, and its transformation into a “song of peace”, has never been studied before. Therefore, it is essential to conduct this study to fill this research gap. This research answers two essential questions, based a review of the literature: “How was HPS able to awaken the spirit of ethnonationalism for Acehnese?” and “what is the underlying cause of the transformation in the meaning of ethnonationalism and the concept of jihad in HPS?”

3. Method

3.1. Data collection technique
This study uses a qualitative approach, with primary and secondary data analysis. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews. The in-depth interview method was carried out to understand informants’ experiences, thoughts, and feelings. The in-depth interview method is suitable for this study because it aims to develop a comprehensive picture of the interviewee’s background, attitudes, and actions (Schutt, 2017: 685). Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on three guidelines: first, the informant must be knowledgeable about the situation being studied; second, informants are willing to be interviewed; and third, they able to represent views from various angles. These three guidelines should be followed to obtain a complete picture of what the researcher needs to provide an overall picture of the meaning, concept, theme, and process (Rubin & Rubin, 1995: 65–92).

Based on these three guidelines, we selected informants based on four categories: First, the chosen informants were those aged 50 years and over. They were lecturers from one of the state
universities in Aceh, with an in-depth knowledge of Aceh’s history. Informants fulfilling these criteria were able to provide information about HPS in the Dutch Colonial era. Second, GAM members who were involved in the war against the Indonesian government. GAM members who were interviewed were from the following different positions: commander, soldier, and head of the information division. Third, younger listeners to the song, aged between 20 and 25 years, who are interested in Aceh’s history. This group represented the young generation of Aceh. Fourth, three of HPS’s famous singers, with the highest number of views and likes on YouTube. The table 1 shows the informant information.

| No | Name of Informants | Informants Criteria | Date of Interview |
|----|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | Mansur            | Older Generation    | 1 May 2021        |
| 2. | Mawardi           | Older generation    | 28 April 2021     |
| 3. | Fouzan Azima      | GAM Commander district Linge | 14 January 2021 |
| 4. | Tantawi           | GAM Soldier Aceh Besar Area | 18 January 2021 |
| 5. | Muliadi           | GAM Soldier Sigli Area | 18–19 January 2021 |
| 6. | Sri Handayani     | GAM Inong Balee Soldier | 19 January 2021 |
| 7. | Johan Makmur      | GAM Information Division | 19 January 2021 |
| 8. | Kapten P. Sabang  | GAM Soldier North Aceh Area | 20 January 2021 |
| 9. | Rimba             | GAM Soldier West Aceh Area | 20 January 2021 |
| 10. | Orangutan Squad   | HPS Singer          | 8 January 2021    |
| 11. | Cut Niken         | HPS Singer          | 18 January 2021   |
| 12. | Joel Pasee        | HPS Singer          | 20 January 2021   |
| 13. | Ismail            | Young Generation/ Listener to The Song | 19 April 2021 |
| 14. | Ikhsan            | Young Generation/ Listener to The Song | 22 April 2021 |

The primary data collected through these interviews were based on a list of critical questions: (1) Have you ever heard/sung HPS? (2) What does HPS mean to you? (3) How do you feel when you hear/sing HPS? (4) What do you understand about the concept of jihad in HPS? (5) What do you understand about ethnonationalism? (6) In your opinion, what factors caused HPS to experience the transformation of meaning from a war song to a peace song? The probing technique was applied during the interviews to broaden the core questions and obtain more information on a particular topic. This probing technique justifies the content and arrangement of questions, which varied from one informant to another. GAM members, for example, were also asked about what experiences they remember most when singing HPS. Furthermore, HPS singers were also asked about their reasons for singing the HPS song.

The secondary data were obtained from text sources, such as books, magazines, newspapers, documents, scientific journals, pictures, manuscripts, historical documents, and video recordings. Most of these were obtained from the Banda Aceh city museum. Meanwhile, information related to HPS as a song of peace was obtained from YouTube video channels and press releases. In qualitative studies, pictures and other visual sources are beneficial to explain the prevailing situation, and can be analyzed like other text sources to clarify the studied issues (Taylor et al., 2016: 148).
The data obtained from text sources and the results of interviews were transcribed in detail. These data were categorized by time classification based on three predefined periods. In addition, they were arranged according to the research sub-themes and analyzed using the concept of the potential function of music by Rosenthal (2001), the theory of Ethnonationalism (Leoussi, 2001; Smith, 2009), and the ethnic revival (Smith, 1984).

3.2. Data analysis technique

The primary and secondary data, obtained as described earlier, were analyzed using the data analysis techniques proposed by Schutt (2017). The first step is the documentation of the primary data from interviews and secondary data from the collected text sources. The results of the recorded in-depth interviews are transcribed into writing for documentation purposes. The next step is organization and categorization, namely, the grouping of the arranged data. The results of the interview transcription were arranged systematically according to the predetermined theme to answer the research questions. Likewise, secondary data were systematically arranged following specific themes before the analysis process. Themes in this stage were determined using the method proposed by Taylor et al. (2016: 168–170), which involves reading the data, and tracing the interpretations and ideas that often appear in interviews, to obtain a distinctive pattern. The transcription results showed several themes that often arose regarding the concept of jihad in HPS, the transformation of the meaning of HPS, and the feelings that arise when singing HPS.

The third step is condensing the data by considering which pieces of data are essential and needed. The fourth step is examining and displaying relationships, and examining the relationship between data to simplify the analysis process. The next steps are the corroboration and legitimization of the conclusions. According to Becker (1958), there is no set standard for evaluating the validity/authenticity of conclusions in qualitative studies; however, the researchers ensured that the methods and evidence used are the most accurate, to form a basis for deriving conclusions by triangulating the evidence with secondary data. The final step reflects how the researcher’s bias is minimized by conducting a triangulation process for the war songs, interview transcriptions, YouTube videos and literature reviews. The researchers retained informants’ expressions and perceptions, and reported them as they were.

4. Results and discussion

HPS played an essential role in three significant eras in Aceh, namely, the war against Dutch Colonialism (1973–1942), the war between GAM and the Indonesian government (1976–2005), and after the peace agreement of Helsinki MoU 2005. In these three eras, HPS was recognized to have different forms and functions. Therefore, in this paper, we will discuss the position of HPS in these three eras and analyze how ethnonationalism was transformed over time.

4.1. Hikayat prang sabi: the spirit of jihad and ethnonationalism against Dutch colonialism (1973–1942)

The Dutch first landed on Cerumen Beach Banda Aceh on 8 April 1873, led by Major General Kohler, carrying 3,198 soldiers. On the first day of the war, the Dutch battleship Citadel Van Antwerpen was hit by 12 instances of cannon fire. Furthermore, on 14 April, Kohler was killed by Acehnese troops with the spirit of jihad. This war lasted for 69 years, until the Dutch left Aceh in 1942 (Kitzen, 2012; Taeuwen & Doorn, 2006). One of the sources of strength for the Acehnese was chanting the HPS enthusiastically before they entered the battlefield. Mawardi, an Acehnese historian representing the older generation, states that the HPS was read in meunasah (small mosques centered in the village), especially after the Maghrib and Isha prayers. The spirit of jihad penetrated almost all levels of the Acehnese. In the mid–late 19th century, there was not much public entertainment media, and thus reading the HPS served as a form of entertainment for the Acehnese. HPS was also read at a dayah (high-level religious school) or where the Acehnese gathered to prepare for war (Ahmad, 2020: 11). Abdullah Arif (Figure 1) copied and rewrote the HPS, originally composed by Tgk. Chik Ponte Kulu (Figure 3) Although there is no mention of the publication year, this version of the manuscript was easier to find, as opposed to those that were retold with modifications by Zainuddin (Figure 2) (Rizki, 2020).
Figure 1. Cover Page, HPS by Abdullah Arif (Rizki, 2020).

Figure 2. Cover Page, HPS by H. M. Zainuddin (Rizki, 2020).
The idea of “Prang Sabi” in Acehnese is recognized as a holy war against non-Muslim believers (kaphee). One method of disseminating the idea of a holy war is by singing the saga. In the Acehnese social life, the saga integrates Islamic teachings at the local level with universal Islamic teachings. The results established a set of communal religious beliefs for Acehnese. One of the core messages in HPS is jihad. People who want to fight in the way of Allah will be rewarded immensely in heaven (Alfian, 1992; Kloos, 2015). Jihad means defending Islam and the nation to receive the pleasure of Allah. Fighting against Dutch colonialism is a manifestation of jihad in the way of Allah (Rizki, 2020). The following quotations regarding jihad can be seen in the HPS text:

**Indonesian:**

*Saudaraku sayang adik dan abang,*
*Mari berperang lawan Belanda,*
*Setapak kita ke medan perang,*
*Berat timbangan tiada terkira.*
*Langit dan bumi tiada berdaya,*
*Memikul berat pahala jihad.*
*Lepaskan pelor tembak Belanda,*
*Musuh Ambiya kafir keparat.*

**English:**

*My brothers and sisters,*
*Let us fight against the Netherlands,*
*Our footsteps to the battlefield,*
*The weight of the scales is immeasurable.*
*Heaven and earth are helpless,*
They are shouldering the hefty rewards of jihad.

Release the bullets, shooting the Dutch,

Ambiya’s enemy is a bastard.

(Hasjmy, 1977)

The concept of jihad in the lyrics of HPS promises that anyone who is martyred will go to heaven. Joel Pasee, an Acehnese singer, stated:

“Lyrics about jihad fii sabiillah (fighting in the way of Allah) can channel positive energy to the Acehnese people. The meaning of the holy war for the Acehnese was so great to fight against Dutch colonialism. The lyrics in HPS teach me how to get victory in this world and the hereafter”.

HPS, in the war against Dutch colonialism, was widely known as a “saga” to encourage Acehnese ethnonationalism. However, fragments of the lyrics are often used as a short lullaby song in everyday life. Reading or singing the HPS can ignite Acehnese youth to fight against the Dutch. Recitation of the HPS in public can incite rage among listeners, leading them to attack their enemies. Anzib, the writer of HPS, once learned that, in 1907, an Acehnese youth named Lem Abah heard the HPS. On the following day, Lem Abah met a Dutchman and stabbed him to death. R.A Kern (in Ahmad, 2020: 17) investigated the murder of some Dutch people in Aceh. In 1910–1921, 99 Dutch people were attacked, leaving twelve of them dead, and the rest seriously injured. The phenomenon, known in Acehnese as poh kaphee (killing of the non-believers), was inspired by HPS. Aflian (1992) explains that HPS was partially confiscated and destroyed because it was perilous for the Dutch colonialists. Therefore writing, reading, and saving the HPS was considered a significant offense. The HPS Manuscript was secretly reproduced and rewritten, causing slight differences between one script and another (Hasjmy, 1977).

4.2. HPS as “Song of War” for GAM Against the Indonesian Government (1976–2005)

GAM was founded on 4 December 1976 by its leader, Hasan Tiro. GAM is an ethnonationalism-based movement that organizes Acehnese’s collective sentiment towards the Indonesian government. The cause of this movement was the massive exploration and exploitation of Aceh’s natural resources that occurred around the 1970s. However, the benefits derived from exploring and exploiting Aceh’s natural resources are not comparable to Acehnese welfare. The establishment of modern factories in Northern Aceh alienated the Acehnese from their own home, and the government paid little compensation for the lands taken. Factory workers were brought in from areas outside Aceh, while many Acehnese remained jobless (Sari, 2018; Tempo, 2003).

GAM was labeled a separatist movement by the Indonesian government. In response, the Indonesian Government, under President Soeharto, took repressive actions by declaring Aceh a Military Operation Area (DOM). The Indonesian army was brought to Aceh to eradicate GAM. The crackdown on the movement resulted in 2,000 people being killed and 3,439 victims of human rights violations (Schulze, 2004). Since 1986, GAM members have conducted military training in Libya and Mount Halimoon, in the Pidie Aceh area. GAM members are given an “Aceh education”, which contains doctrines about Acehnese Ethnonationalism, some of which include reading and singing HPS songs (Sari et al., 2019). During this time, HPS was more popular as a song. The fragmented lyrics in the HPS text were used as a “song of war” for GAM and became a marker of Acehnese identity. During the interview, Fauzan Azima stated:

“The story of HPS is usually taught during military training. The HPS song seems to be an obligation for us. We feel ashamed if a fighter is not able to memorize and sing HPS. Those who memorized it would chant it first and guide the half-memorized ones. We sang HPS together with the Shalawat for the Prophet during the conflict, both when it was difficult and happy.”
Furthermore, Tantawi stated that HPS played a vital role in his life as a Muslim and a GAM soldier:

"I have known HPS since I was six years old. HPS was always taught after the recital of the Quran in mosques. My mother always sang the HPS as a lullaby for bedtime. Therefore, the lyrics have made an impression on my memory. I understand that HPS invites Muslims to love Islam and the country. We must fight evil through jihad. Being a GAM soldier and fighting the enemy is jihad."

Muliadi felt the same way:

"HPS has become a part of me since childhood. My mother used HPS as a lullaby. So when I joined GAM as a soldier, I still feel the values of HPS."

Another view comes from Sri Handayani, a member of GAM’s Inong Balee troop (female GAM soldiers):

"I joined the Inong Balee troop in 1998 when I was 16 years old. My father is Teungku Tazura, a GAM commander for the Aceh Besar region. I feel it in my heart to join this movement. I attended military training and can operate a variety of shotguns. In 1999 I became a trainer for other women. Every time we practice, we sing to HPS together in order to raise our spirit to fight."

HPS has deep meanings for GAM members and, therefore, it is used as a hymn. Joel Pasee, a singer, whose music video on YouTube has as many as 107,413 views and 1,500 likes, explained that HPS songs are popular among GAM members. The song ignites GAM’s spirit to fight for the Acehnese. Johan Makmor, Muliadi and Kapten P. Sabang confirmed this. They would sing the HPS during war, Aceh state meetings, and as a lullaby for their children. Even though the Dutch ended the war, the jihad concept present in HPS was passed down through the generations in GAM. HPS was repeatedly sung to spur the spirit of militancy against the Indonesian Military (Rizki, 2020).

The spirit of jihad in HPS was transcribed into songs of war. HPS is generally sung in the Acehnese language, with lyrics praising Allah and the Prophet Muhammad, which are then followed by advice to fight in the way of Allah. The following is a snippet of the translated HPS lyrics:

**Acehnese:**

Subhanallah wahdahu wabi hamdihi,

Khalikul badri wa laili adza wa jalla,

Ulon pujoe poe sidroe poe syukur keu rabbi ya aini,

Keu kamoe neubri beusuci Aceh Mulia.

Musoe yang tem prang syit meunang meutuah tuboh,

Syuruga that roh yang leusoh neubri keu gata,

Lindong gata sigala , ya mujahidin mursalin,

Jeut-jeut mukim iekulim Aceh mulia.

Budiadari meuriti didong dipandang,

Di eu cut bang jak meucang dalam prang sabi
Hoka judo rakan eu, syahid dalam prang that seunang,
Diperap rijang peutamong syuruga tinggi.

Indonesian:
Subhanallah wahdahu wabi hamdihi
Khalikul badri wa laili adza wa jalla
Saya memuji dan bersyukur kepada Allah Yang Maha Esa,
Berikanlah kepada kami Aceh yang Mulia.
Siapa yang pergi berperang akan menang dan mendapatkan keberuntungan,
Surga akan diberikan kepadamu.
Lindungi semua prajurit, ini akan membawa ke Aceh mulia.
Para Bidadari berbaris, berdiri melihat,
Mereka sedang melihatmu menghunus pedang dalam prang sabi,
Dimanakah dia jodohku yang mati syahid dalam perang?
Mereka akan secepatnya ditempatkan ke surga yang tertinggi.

English:
Subahallah wahdahu wabi hamdihi,
Khalikul badri wa laili adza wa jalla,
Praise and gratitude only to Allah,
Please give us a holy and noble Aceh.
Whoever wants to go to war will win and get the fortune,
Heaven will be given to you,
Protect all warriors,
This brings to Aceh mulia.
The angels lined up, stood and watched,
They're watching you draw your sword in prang sabi,
Where is he, my soul mate who was martyred in the war?
They will soon be assigned to the highest heaven.
(Cut Niken, 2014)

All informants have the same understanding of the concept of jihad. Tantawi and Fauzan Azima interpreted the HPS lyrics as an effort to fight for their rights and undermine the crimes of wrongdoers. For them, HPS teaches Muslims about the obligation of war and the rewards for those who partake. Therefore, war is a form of jihad and love for their land. Sri Handayani and Johan Makmor interpreted the same thing. For them, HPS is about struggling in the holy war. HPS has power in its lyrics, which can evoke the spirit of ethnonationalism. In this study, all the informants explained the power of HPS in mobilizing ethnic revival. Fauzan Azima recalled the military training he managed in the Salak Mountain (near the North Aceh) area: “... The lyrics of HPS fill the air; all are passionate about fighting for Aceh’s liberation.”

Sri Handayani stated that, when she sang the HPS, her spirit was overflowing, and there was a feeling that she could not explain. Kapten P. Sabang admitted that he could eliminate fear and bring confidence in war by singing HPS:

“There is no war without HPS. Singing HPS together makes fighting like a fun thing. There is no fear of dying. The enemy must be crushed, such is the oath of the GAM soldiers”.

Rimba, a GAM member in East Aceh, was victimized and killed during the Aceh conflict. HPS provided encouragement to fight against the enemies who killed and tortured his family. When answering the questions, Rimba seemed very emotional:

“His stomach was cut open, his ears were plugged in, and his eyes were plucked out. That has happened to my family during the conflict. Great power comes to me when I hear HPS. I thought of my family, who was tortured. Only Allah can reward them with jihad. God willing, they will be placed in the highest heaven”.

Apart from increasing fighting spirit, HPS also evokes bitter memories of the death and torture of several informants’ families. Sri Handayani revealed:

“My husband was also a GAM member. In 2000, he was shot during the war. I do not know where the body is. If I hear the HPS now and sing it, it would hurt”.

The interviews revealed several things. First, the understanding of the concept of jihad is formed by the internalization of HPS in childhood. This concept was reinforced by the Aceh Education training for GAM’s members. Second, the injustices committed by the Indonesian government evoke a sense of ethnonationalism, which is manifested through an ethnic revival. Third, jihad is a form of ethnic revival used by GAM members against the Indonesian government.

4.3. HPS as “Song of Peace” in Aceh Post Peace the MoU Helsinki Agreement (2005–2020)

Upon signing the peace agreement on 4 December 2005, a new chapter began in Aceh. In 2005–2020, HPS changed its meaning from a “song of war” to “a song of peace”. For former GAM members, HPS became a way of remembering the struggle during the Aceh conflict. HPS was still sung by former GAM members during certain times. Figure 4 shows that GAM members continue to commemorate 4th December with a celebration, raising the moon and star flags while singing the HPS.

On 4 December 2020, GAM celebrated its 44th birthday. Sympathizers and former GAM members went to the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque in Banda Aceh to hold a demonstration while waving the moon and star GAM flag as they sang the HPS (Lintas Nasional, 2020). These actions were carried out peacefully to commemorate the signing of the 2005 Helsinki MoU. For the Acehnese, HPS began to be expressed as a “song of peace.” The lyrics of the HPS were slightly changed, with pop, hip-hop and upbeat musical arrangements that were more popular among the youths. Three
Acehnese singers who are famous for singing the new version of HPS are Orangutan Squad (2018), Cut Niken (2014), and Joel Pasee (2019). Their version of the song is broadcast on YouTube, and has the highest number of views compared to other HPS singers.

Orangutan Squad is a group that sings HPS in a unique style, combining traditional and modern music. HPS is sung in six languages: Acehnese, Acehnese Singkil, Aneuk Jamee, Kleut and Indonesian. This combination shows the ethnic diversity in Aceh, yet still upholds the Indonesian national language. The HPS music video was released on YouTube on 20 June 2018. The uploaded video received 516,430 views, with 9,100 likes. The group explained that the biggest motivation for singing the HPS was the desire to always remember that the HPS was made by the people of Aceh.

HPS, as sung by the Orangutan Squad, offers a new perspective on the holy war. For them, Aceh has been at war for a very long time, and this has caused losses for the Acehnese in terms of morale and material. Representing youth in Aceh, The Orangutan Squad stressed that Acehnese youth want only to live in peace. They added that, in modern times, fighting does not have to involve weapons. The holy war in the modern era can be conducted by fighting for the welfare of society. The Acehnese youth must change their mindset regarding war towards peace. This change is manifested in the new lyrics of HPS, sung in the Aneuk Jamee language:

**Aneuk Jamee:**

*Kinin bukan pakai sanjato tapi pikian,*

*Kito bisa basamo maju walau dari pinggian,*

*Ainul Mardhiah alah lamo mananti di ateh sugo,*

*Tatok dijalan Rabbi tatok kambangkan budayo kito.*

**Indonesian:**

Figure 4. HPS recitation in GAM’s Anniversary 2019 (Atjeh Watch, 2019).
Kini bukan memakai senjata tetapi pikiran,

Kita bisa bersama maju walaupun berasal dari pinggiran,

Ainul Mardhiah sudah lama menanti di Syurga,

Tetaplah berada dijalan Allah dan kita kembangkan budaya kita.

**English:**

Now it is not using weapons but thoughts.

We can move forward together even if we come from the countryside.

Ainul Mardhiah has long been waiting in heaven.

Stay in God's way, and We develop our culture.

*(Orangutan Squad, 2018)*

Ismoil and Ikhsan are two young Acehnese who are fond of the new version of the HPS. Both of them understood that HPS and the conception of jihad are inseparable. Ismail argues that, over time, jihad has been interpreted in different contexts. He explained that maintaining peace and preserving the Aceh culture are examples of jihad from a modern perspective. Furthermore, Ikhsan saw that HPS, as a song, had a slightly changed function:

“As a listener, I understand that HPS in each era has textual similarities, and the only difference lies in its function. In the colonial and GAM era, HPS was used to raise the spirit of war. Nevertheless, it has been used to generate peace and enthusiasm for work.”

Representing the older generation in Aceh, Mawardi and Mansur stated that the meaning of jihad is relevant for every era. However, jihad must be adapted to the situation and time. HPS, in the context of war, was interpreted as a jihad against foreign invaders who were only interested in annexing Aceh. However, at present, the meaning of jihad has been interpreted as broader than just fighting with weapons. HPS represents the Acehnese desire to continue to live in peace and prosperity.

Cut Niken, a national singer from Aceh, released the new version of HPS in 2014. This version of the song was uploaded on YouTube, and it received 476,408 views and 2,400 likes. Niken says she has heard this song since she was seven years old. During the GAM era, HPS was considered to be something that was owned by the movement. However, Niken states that, at present, the HPS belongs to the Acehnese. For Niken, the people of Aceh are tired of living in war and, hence, in the modern era, the meaning of jihad has changed, focusing on making people prosperous through education.

### 4.4. The Role of HPS is to Awaken Acehnese’s Ethnonationalism Spirit

The Aceh war against Dutch colonialism and the war between GAM and the Indonesian government is a collective violence *(Grant, 2020)*. The root of this collective violence is the domination of foreign nations outside the Acehnese nation. The Dutch-dominated Javanese and Indonesian governments are considered foreign invaders and, therefore, must be defeated. Ultimately, the ethnic sentiment forms the emotional foundation for changing the ideology into collective action during war.

Music is a catalyst that can elevate feelings of enthusiasm before, during, and after a war *(Grant, 2020)*. The results of interviews with informants showed that the HPS was used as a focus and regulatory mechanism that kept troops united whenever they felt like surrendering. Even after the
war, the HPS still played a fundamental role in commemorating wars and warriors. Sometimes, music can serve as a basis to awaken collective memories and mobilize them for war. Of course, music cannot be separated from songs in this regard. Music is a tone or sound, arranged to contain rhythm, song, and harmony.

On the other hand, songs contain lyrics that carry a specific message to encourage the behavior of the listener and the singer. The HPS is a form of identity to the Acehnese people—the music and song contained in the book trace the history of war in the land, to the point that it is accepted as part of the local culture. This is an essential element in the nation's identity, and music can bind members of an ethnic group, making them feel they belong to each other. Emotional, social, and cognitive ties can develop through music and become immersed in national identity (Feder and Shelemay, 2006).

According to Rosenthal and Flacks (2012), music can help us express a pre-existing and fully emerging identity, and these can reinforce each other. The more emotional the experience, the more likely it is to form an identity. The HPS can emotionally evoke war experiences, causing it to be remembered as a war song of Acehnese identity. This identity will then form a boundary between groups and serve as a symbolic identifier for a group. Music expresses existing identities compared to other identities (Kyker, 2013; Stokes, 2004).

The four functions of music that can be found within the HPS existed in the colonial era and the GAM era. First, serve commitment refers to the function of music for people who are already involved in a movement. In the era of colonialism, the Acehnese were directly committed to fighting the Dutch, and reading the HPS eliminated fear. The same thing was true for the GAM era. The results from the analysis results show that four GAM members identified this HPS function: to serve the committed. Fauzan Azima, Johan Makmur, Kapten P. Sabang, and Rimba only got to know the HPS after becoming GAM members. Regarding the function to serve the committed, they acknowledge that singing the HPS can strengthen supporting values, build trust and loyalty, foster a sense of commitment, and form a group identity.

Second, music functions to educate the uneducated, especially through lyrics, by presenting new facts. Based on a literature review and the interviews, all the informants understood that the lyrics of the HPS are interpreted as jihad for the Acehnese. In this context, jihad in the era of colonialism was aimed at the Dutch people, while, during the GAM era, jihad was carried out against the arbitrary Indonesian government.

Third, music can be a means of recruitment, with persuasive lyrics. This can be seen in the following HPS lyrics:

- We fight the enemy as taught by the Prophet.
- Who wants to carve a note to God Almighty.
- Those who are not willing to go to war will have dire and bad luck.
- Heaven will not be obtained. Instead, it will get hell.

These lyrics tell the Acehnese to fight against their enemy, with heaven as the reward. This recruitment process occurred during the colonialism era—Acehnese youths who heard the reading of the HPS were called on to participate in the struggle. On the other hand, people who refuse to join the war will be punished in hell. In the GAM era, Tantawi, Muliadi, and Sri Handayani experienced this recruitment function. They have recognized the HPS since childhood as a lullaby. On another note, the DOM period's experience aroused sympathy for the Acehnese's fate. The combination of childhood memory and DOM experiences formed a recruitment function that led them to join the GAM. The recruitment function caused people to join the movement upon hearing and singing the song, as it moved them beyond intellectual and emotional thoughts (Rosenthal, 2001).
Fourth, music can also perform a mobilization function that helps persuade people who were previously sympathetic with a movement to become involved. This function coincides with the recruitment one, as it means becoming directly “involved” in the battlefield to fight the enemy. The impact of reading the HPS in the colonial era shows the function of mobilization. This action can be seen in the story of Lem Abah. By just reading and listening to the HPS, an Acehnese would be immensely inspired to join the war. In the GAM era, Tantawi, Muliadi, and Sri Handayani were initially only sympathetic, but were later mobilized to join the GAM. The mobilization function moved them to act and join the activities. They attended military training and went to the battlefield to fight. Music also invites sympathy and motivates people to fight. Rosenthal (2001) mentioned four functions of music that can form a sense of ethnonationalism, leading to ethnic revival. Figure 5 shows the relationship is shown below.

The HPS has four essential functions as a war song. When sung by anyone, the lyrics will make people remember two things. First, they will remember their memories of the war with the Dutch colonials and the DOM era. Second, HPS lyrics evoke the spirit of Islamic jihad for the Acehnese. Both memory and the concept of jihad awaken the sense of ethnonationalism, namely, the embodiment of love for an Acehnese ethnicity through an ethnic revival. The war against the Indonesian government is a form of ethnic revival that can be realized through Aceh’s desire to be independent from Indonesia. Hence for Smith (1984), ethnic revival is interpreted as an ethnic movement to achieve and perpetuate autonomy and ethnic identity by forming a new state.

HPS carries a special message, and forms a sense of identity for the Acehnese. According to the interview results, it can be concluded that, during a war, a song of war is often sung for two reasons: first, the song’s message will arouse the spirit of struggle. Second, the song will remind people about the nation’s identity, and this will strengthen the spirit of the struggle. Ethnonationalism emerged and organized into an ethnic revival against the enemy through these two things. According to Smith (2009) and Leoussi (2001), ethnonationalism is an expression of love for one’s ethnicity, which may arise as a reaction to colonialism. For the Acehnese, the war against the Dutch colonials and the Indonesian government was an ethnonationalist expression that led to an ethnic revival. Both Dutch and Indonesian colonialism resulted in the emergence of an ideological movement that spread ethnic sentiment that distinguished between “us” and “the others” (Smith, 1984).

Figure 5. The Role of HPS in Shaping Acehnese’s Ethnonationalism.
4.5. Jihad and Ethnonationalism: What, When, Why and How It is Transformed

The questions of “what” and “when” aim to explain three aspects of the HPS that have changed: the role of the HPS, changes in the meaning of jihad, and changes in the manifestation of ethnonationalism and ethnic revival in each era. Table 2 shows the changes.

| War and Peace Era               | Role of HPS     | The Meaning of Jihad                                   | Manifestation of Ethnonationalism and Ethnic Revival |
|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Dutch Colonialism’s era (1973–1942) | Saga and Song of War | Battle in the path of Allah using weapons                  | War against Dutch colonialism                        |
| GAM’s era (1976–2005)           | Song of War     | Battle in the path of Allah using weapons                  | War against the Indonesian government               |
| The post Peace agreement of MoU | Song of Peace   | Battle in the path of Allah using ideas, creativity, education | War against backwardness and poverty                |
| Helsinki (2005–2020)            |                |                                                        |                                                      |

In the war against Dutch colonialism (1873–1942), the HPS was more popular as a saga and song of war. The four stories in the HPS were read to the Acehnese, and the lyrics were sung in everyday life. Through reading the HPS, the Acehnese understood the meaning of jihad as defending the Acehnese by going to battle in the path of Allah using weapons. After reading the HPS, the Acehnese’s sense of ethnonationalism emerged and was manifested in an ethnic revival against Dutch colonialism. On the other hand, during the war between GAM and the Indonesian government (1976–2005), HPS was more prevalent in music and songs. The conflict situation in this era caused the HPS text to be destroyed by the Indonesian army. It is impossible to destroy the spirit of HPS among the Acehnese because it is a “song of war.” The strength of HPS in this era lies in its lyrics, which contain the concept of jihad. The meaning of jihad in the GAM era is the same as in the Dutch colonialism era. The only difference lies in the manifestation of ethnonationalism and ethnic revival that appears after singing HPS. In the GAM era, the lyrics succeeded in building a sense of ethnonationalism and ethnic revival against the central government of Indonesia.

Furthermore, after the 2005 Helsinki MoU peace, the context of the HPS changed. The discussion in the post-peace agreement of the Helsinki MoU era showed that the inclusion of weapons during war is irrelevant in the modern era. The “song of war” experienced a shift in meaning to become a “song of peace”. Its strength still lies in its modified lyrics, which incorporate new war values, namely, the use of ideas, creativity, and education. The sense of ethnonationalism and ethnic revival that was formed changes. In this era, ethnonationalism and ethnic revival is manifested in the war against backwardness and poverty.

The question of “why” and “how” the HPS changes the meaning of “song of war” to “song of peace” can be explained in two ways. First, the history of the conflict in Aceh took place for such a long time that it caused the community to feel tired of living in misery and violence. Therefore, peace is a way of realizing security in the everyday life of the Acehnese. Second, over time, a war involving weapons is becoming irrelevant to modern society with more powerful technology. The Acehnese need an integrated and prosperous life, through education, creativity, and new ideas. These two things have caused the HPS to no longer be identified with war songs, and its meaning was changed to one of peace.

5. Conclusion

The HPS plays a central role in arousing Acehnese Ethnonationalism. The HPS, as a war song, has four essential functions: serving the committed, educating the uneducated, recruitment, and mobilization. These four functions cause GAM members to experience two things. Firstly, the HPS evokes a memory of the war during Dutch colonialism, the conflict during the DOM era, and the Indonesian government’s
 neglect of minority rights. Secondly, anyone who sings the HPS will remember the concept of jihad, to defend one’s nation and religion. These two memories will evoke a sense of ethnonationalism as a form of love for certain ethnicities. This feeling of love is manifested through an ethnic revival.

The sense of ethnonationalism, ethnic revival, and the concept of jihad experienced a shift in meaning in the three studied periods. In the war against Dutch colonialism (1873–1942), the HPS was more prevalent as a “safari”, rather than as a war song. Poetry and stories in the HPS can generate ethnonationalism and an ethnic revival through the war against the Dutch. In the war between the Free Aceh Movement and the Indonesian government (1976–2005), the HPS was more prevalent as a war song. The lyrics of struggle in the HPS song can evoke the spirit of ethnonationalism in GAM fighters. An ethnic revival was realized through wars against the Indonesian government.

Meanwhile, in the post-Helsinki MoU (2005–2020) era, the HPS changed its function to become a song of peace. When sung, the spirit of ethnonationalism and ethnic revival turned into a spirit of battling without weapons. The meaning of today’s struggle is the effort to use creativity, new ideas, and education to advance the Acehnese people. Although times have changed, HPS still has many meanings as an ethnonationalism anthem. Its use remains relevant, both as a war song and a peace song.

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Notes
1. The Aceh Ulama Association (Persatuhan Ulama Seluruh Aceh—PUSA) is an Acehnese Islamic organization. PUSA was founded on 5 May 1939 and led by Tengku Daud Breueh. PUSA ultimately has an important role not only in education, but also in politics. It helped the people of Aceh to end the Dutch colonialism (Kell, 1995: 9)
2. The Acehnese refers to the people living in Aceh area and consists of various ethnicities. However, the dominant ethnic group is people who speak the Acehnese dialect (Tolson, 1880).
3. Scholars such as Hasjmy (1977) mentioned that HPS was written by Tgk. Chik ditto, Tgk Nyak Amat Cot Paleu, Sheikh Abbas Kutakarong, Tgk Malem and Abdullah Arif (these five authors did not mention their year of publication). Other known authors are Zainuddin (1960), Ibrahim Alfian (1992) and Ali Hasjmy (1977).
4. Darul Islam-Aceh is a liberation movement that was founded on 20 September 1953. The purpose of this movement was to separate Aceh from Indonesia. The background of the movement is the authoritarian Indonesian government and the debate about Islam as the ideology of the Indonesian state. This movement was successfully stopped through peace negotiations on 8 May 1962 (Bertrand, 2007: 168; Apipudin, 2016: 164).
5. Maghib is the prayer time for Muslims which begins just after sunset and lasts after sunset until dusk (Islam International Publications, 2016: 9).
6. Jsy prayer time begins when dusk disappears giving way to the darkness of night (Islam International Publications, 2016: 9).
7. Until now, Aceh has 13 ethnicities and each ethnic has its own customs, different languages, namely; the Aceh ethnic, Gayo, Anheuk Jamee, Singkil, Alas, Tamiang, Kluet, Devayan, Sigualai, Pekok, Haloban, Lekon, and Nias. However, these various ethnicities are bound by the unity of Acehnese culture, such as Acehnese language, religion and customs (Miller, 2013).

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