

## Cosmopolitanism of Langsa Society during Colonial Era

Sumiyati,<sup>1</sup> Singgih Tri Sulistiyono,<sup>1\*</sup> Yety Rochwulaningsih,<sup>1</sup> Ichwan Azhari<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Doctoral Program of History, Faculty of Humanities,

Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang, Central Java - Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Department of Historical Education, Faculty of Social Sciences

Universitas Negeri Medan, North Sumatra - Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author: [singgihtri@lecturer.undip.ac.id](mailto:singgihtri@lecturer.undip.ac.id)

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### Abstract

The advent of modernization in the 19th century significantly influenced the development of Langsa City, Aceh Province, as a cosmopolitan city. Despite having a strong Islamic tradition, Langsa was able to embrace cosmopolitanism without losing its Acehnese identity. This study focuses on the influence of cosmopolitanism on the socio-cultural life of the Langsa community. Cosmopolitanism in Langsa also influenced the lifestyle of its people, as seen in their global thinking and the perspectives of the educated elite. The research findings indicate that cosmopolitanism in Langsa has been ongoing for a long time, starting from the pre-Islamic era, continuing through the waves of European and other foreign arrivals, the influence of colonialism, independence, the arrival of modernist Islam, and up to the New Order political era. With abundant natural resources, Langsa has attracted foreigners. The interaction of people from various nations has led to the convergence of diverse cultures. However, despite being influenced by external cultures, the people of Langsa have also maintained their original culture amidst a hybrid culture. This is partly because the native people of Langsa, in their lifestyle, tend to follow the *ulama* (religious scholars) rather than the *umara* (secular leaders). As a cosmopolitan city, Langsa has also become a meeting place for modernist thoughts. One example is the acceptance of Muhammadiyah as a modernist Islamic organization.

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### Introduction

This study focuses on the historical and cultural legacy of cosmopolitanism in Langsa City. Cosmopolitanism has gained prominence in global discourse as it is inseparable from the multicultural context, which emphasizes the importance of diversity and plurality. Delanty (2008) states that the goal of cosmopolitanism is pluralism, which is related to the principles of democracy (Delanty, 2008, p. 6). Pluralism itself is related to the right to life of groups within a community, each with its own culture (Tilaar, 2004, p. 82).

A plural or multicultural society is essentially the result of migration processes. Langsa has been a destination for both local and global migrants since the 9th century, precisely during the Samudera Pasai Kingdom, the first Islamic kingdom in the archipelago. Langsa is located in the East Aceh region, which was part of the Samudera

Pasai Kingdom. The migration of people to Langsa can be traced back to the international relations established by Samudera Pasai with foreign nations, as mentioned by Ibn Battuta in his book "Rihla" (2020). Additionally, after the fall of Samudera Pasai, Aceh also established relations with Western nations such as England and the Netherlands.

The arrival of the Dutch in Langsa was motivated by the various commodities available in the region, including spices, sandalwood, camphor, and gold. Initially, they occupied the east coast of Aceh, specifically in Pereulak, Langsa, East Aceh, which was previously part of the Samudera Pasai Kingdom (Jongjeans, 2008, p. 2). Simultaneously, Aceh also had contact with Arab traders who came to spread Islam in Langsa. Besides the need for spices, the arrival of Westerners in Langsa was also influenced by Langsa's geographical location near the Strait of Malacca and the Malay Peninsula. This made Langsa an open and continuously developing region, becoming a port city since 1813 (Anderson, 1840, p. 22). The arrival of various nations in Aceh since the Sultanate of Iskandar Muda characterizes the people of Langsa as a cosmopolitan or global society due to the resulting social interactions (Khairi, 2021). Furthermore, Langsa can also be considered a cosmopolitan region because the migration process propelled Langsa as a center of modernization in East Aceh.

The arrival of various nations led to Langsa City growing into a gathering point for various ethnicities and tribes from different parts of the world. The arrival of these nations was driven by various interests, both political and economic (Khairi, 2021, p. 5). These interests can be seen in the spread of Islam, imperialism, and capitalism that occurred in Langsa, making the Langsa region multicultural. This subsequently created social and cultural changes, particularly for the people of Langsa.

In a study conducted by Pauline (1999) on cosmopolitanism in Germany at the end of the 18th century, indicators for determining a cosmopolitan region were outlined. These indicators include openness and good relations with other nations, equality among people, the use of a free trade system, and freedom within cultural diversity (Pauline, 1999). Various elements that support a region being called a cosmopolitan city have been reflected in the life of Langsa City since the colonial era.

Under the rule of the Dutch colonial government, Langsa became the capital of *Afdeeling Oostkust van Atjeh* for economic purposes. As the capital, various infrastructures began to be built, including land and sea transportation routes connecting Langsa with surrounding areas. During that time, the colonial government built a railway line, although sea routes remained the primary mode of transportation. The opening of transportation routes, particularly sea routes through the port of Langsa, made Langsa more accessible. Since the Port of Langsa was opened for general shipping, at least 36 ships docked at the port, including both the *Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij* (KPM) fleet and merchant boats from Penang (De Boer, 1917, p. 16). This led to an even greater diversity of ethnicities and cultures in Langsa. Nevertheless, the people within the community continued to live harmoniously and strive to maintain their identity. In other words, the influx of various nations with different characteristics did not affect the local culture but rather added color to the culture that

grew in Langsa City. In this regard, this study focuses on the influence of global culture, particularly the cultures of various nations that entered Langsa, on the local culture. This relates to the acculturation between the existing local culture in the community and the cultures that entered Langsa, resulting in what can be called a cosmopolitan culture. The discussion is divided into several sub-chapters, guided by the following research questions: How did the cosmopolitan culture develop in Langsa, East Aceh? Did the global culture (cosmopolitan culture) acculturate the local ethnic culture? And what elements of the local culture were acculturated by the cosmopolitan culture?

### **Method**

This article is prepared using the historical method. The historical method consists of four stages: heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography (Notosusanto, 1984, pp. 22-23). To maximize research findings, interviews through oral history are also utilized. This article utilizes primary sources in the form of publications from relevant institutions, such as archives containing written documents related to Langsa under Dutch colonial rule until the New Order era. To obtain a more comprehensive and in-depth context, secondary sources such as books and articles from various journals are also used in this article.

### **Establishment of Cosmopolitan Culture in Langsa**

Langsa is located in the East Aceh coastal region, directly facing the Strait of Malacca and the Malay Peninsula. During the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate, the city's territory stretched from the northwestern tip of Sumatra Island to the Batu Bara River on the eastern coast of Sumatra (Anderson, 1826, pp. 22). As a port city due to its strategic geographical location, Langsa grew into an open city, although the interior of Langsa is bordered by mountains (Ismail, 1991, p. 20). This certainly supported the economy of Langsa, which came from the port. It also underlies the arrival of foreigners into Aceh, leading to Aceh's rapid development.

During the Aceh Sultanate, the community's economic activities were free from government intervention, which was an effort to dismantle the feudal system. The gradual collapse of feudalism during the Aceh Sultanate is reflected in the role of the king in economic activities, who only had the right to regulate but could not profit from trade activities. Such a trading system was an initial step in raising awareness among the people about an independent, free, and sovereign nation, so that the welfare of the people could be achieved (Madjid, pp. 16-18).

Meanwhile, during the Dutch Colonial Government, Langsa was a plantation area. Plantation commodities spread across the Langsa region at that time included rubber, coffee, and oil palm. The presence of these commodities indirectly attracted various companies, including a rubber company in Langsa (Jongjeans, 2008, p. 71). Various plantation commodities grown in the Langsa region were commodities needed by Western nations. Therefore, the existence of plantations in Langsa also contributed to the revitalization of the Kuala Langsa Port. Indirectly, the connection

between the distribution of plantation products and the existence of plantations became one of the accelerators of economic flow in Langsa City (Langsa East Aceh Regency Government, 1970, p. 9).

The Dutch colonial government's control over Langsa can be seen from the development of infrastructure in various fields, including the construction of administrative buildings, shop spaces, educational spaces, and socio-cultural spaces in 1905. The construction of these various facilities further attracted the presence of other nations from various tribes, nations, and ethnicities. The entry of Western nations into Langsa demonstrates Langsa's openness as one of the oldest cities in Aceh. In this regard, a free trade system and cultural freedom grew as part of the community's life in Langsa, East Aceh. This marked the success of the Dutch colonial government in making Langsa a cosmopolitan region.

### **Growth of Culture of Nations and Migrants in Langsa**

The life of Westerners in East Aceh began in the early 20th century, precisely after the Dutch Colonial Government succeeded in suppressing the Acehnese people's resistance that had been ongoing since 1873 (Alfian, 1987, p. 232). Meanwhile, the colonial government's power over Langsa began when Teuku Chik Bentara Blang was forced, as the Uleebalang (local ruler) of Langsa, to sign a statement acknowledging the Dutch presence in Langsa on May 18, 1877 (Langsa City Government, 2017, p. 107). The colonial government's position was further strengthened by granting administrative status to the east coast of Aceh, called *Afdeeling Oostkust van Atjeh*, which oversaw the *Gouvernement Atje hen Onderhoorigheden* (Governor of Aceh and its conquered territories). Based on the *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indie* (Official Gazette of the Dutch East Indies) in 1908, Langsa was designated as the capital of *Afdeeling Oostkust van Atjeh*, led by an assistant resident to control the entire Aceh region.

European (Dutch) culture, with its modern and open life structure, brought a new color to the social fabric and created a different culture, namely an open or global culture known as cosmopolitan culture (Kartikawangi, 2011, p. 86). Cosmopolitan culture is a logical consequence of the development of capitalism in Langsa, which is a city of trade and industrialization. Several onderneming or rubber plantation companies recorded as operating in East Aceh and located precisely in Langsa include Landsyndicaat Paya Rambong, Sumatra Rubber Mijn. Langsar, and Amsterdam Langsa Rubber Maatschappij. In Tamiang, rubber plantations Noord Sumatra Rub. Cult. Mij and Tamiang Rubber Estate Ltd. were opened. Meanwhile, in Gajah Mentah, Rubber Cultuur Mij. S. Raya was established. These rubber plantations were members of the *Algemeene Vereeniging van Rubberplanters ter Oostkust van Sumatra* (AVROS) or the Association of Rubber Plantation Entrepreneurs on the East Coast of Sumatra (Congresverslag, 1914).

Evidence that Langsa is a cosmopolitan city is also shown by the many remnants of plantation and trade offices around Kuala Simpang and Langsa, East Aceh, including the Dutch Colonial Rubber Factory Administration Office built in 1926 and the Dutch Trading Office built in 1923 called *Atjehsche Handel-Maatschappij* (AHM)

(Muhajir, 2017, p. 6). The presence of local and global migrants continued to increase during the colonial period, creating a global society that is a characteristic of cosmopolitanism (Khairi, 2021). Becoming a multi-ethnic region also created an open cultural system. The culture or civilization created due to the interaction of global community cultures in Langsa is explained in the next sub-chapter (Tylor, 1920).

### *Churches and Temples in Langsa, East Aceh*

Despite being far from their ancestral homeland, the Dutch in Langsa, East Aceh, maintained their culture. One example is the presence of a church, a place of worship for Christians, in Kampung Jawa. The church, currently named Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP), is included in the Langsa Tunong Urban Spatial Pattern 1907-1942 established by the colonial government and is considered an elite area (Muhajir, Yuliati, Rochwulaningsih, 2017, pp. 63-76). This church remains the only place of worship for Christians in Langsa, East Aceh, to this day. Still within the framework of the Langsa City Development Plan, since 1944, the Chinese ethnic group in Langsa, East Aceh, has also received attention. This further contributed to the cosmopolitan nature of Langsa, East Aceh, especially since the construction of the Chineezen wijk/Pecinan/Shopping Area, and the Chinese People's Factory Complex. Amidst the predominantly Muslim population of Langsa, there are places of worship for Christians and Buddhists that are over a century old. In addition to buildings, the Dutch language and customs are also preserved. This is because European migrants lived in exclusive settlements. They only interacted with people within their own community, except for officials who had dealings with the Uleebalang (local rulers), in which case they used Malay (Indonesian). Because it was always used as the daily language, the Dutch language was preserved (Asyah, Interview, July 5, 2021).

Another cultural aspect that persists in the context of an open global culture is fashion or clothing. European culture has a distinctive elegance, as seen in Figure 1. The women wear skirts, special shoes, and bob haircuts. This style represents the daily life of the global European community in Langsa, East Aceh. Meanwhile, the men from the Dutch community wear suits with leather shoes.



Figure 1. Dutch government officials and their wives gather in the Langsa Pendopo (traditional pavilion), East Aceh, 1933.

### *Hybrid Culture*

Hybridization refers to a process that brings together two or more cultures in one cultural space, resulting in strategies for mixing. With political aims, hybridization is often used to negotiate local interests in facing "the outside," as a result of colonization and globalization, which always introduce cultural practices and forms from outside the local space (Hatley, 2014). This also occurred in the Langsa community of East Aceh, where the process of adaptation and interaction of the global community in Langsa, East Aceh, also gave birth to a hybrid culture.

As previously described, the presence of people from various regions in Langsa, East Aceh, made the city cosmopolitan, which then also had a significant influence and change on the mindset of the community. They transformed into a society with a global mindset (Khairi, 2021). The publication of the newspaper titled "*Oetoesan Ra'iat, Choeth'bah Merdeka*" in Langsa is evidence that the community had good literacy and an open mind. The newspaper was published three times a month and managed by a native company called "*Samoedera*" ("*Choeth'bah merdeka*," 1923). *Oetoesan Ra'iat* was a media outlet for conveying messages to resist colonialism in Langsa. The content of the newspaper mostly focused on issues of Islam and the spirit of independence. The local community's awareness of ideology and critical thinking reflects that some of the native population had been acculturated by the global community (Giddens, 2002, pp. 3-5).

The above description is also related to the social interactions that occurred in the cosmopolitan society. Interactions over a long period led to changes in the lifestyle of the Langsa community. One indicator is the emergence of entertainment venues, namely cinemas, which encouraged a shift from local culture to global culture. Figure 2 shows an advertisement for a film screening at a cinema. In the context of the emergence of cinema as a means of entertainment, there were two responses from the Langsa community. Some of the community acculturated and accepted cinema as a new lifestyle, while others rejected it because cinema was considered incompatible with religious norms. This was a logical consequence considering that Langsa is part of Aceh, a region with strict Islamic rules.

After the Dutch left, the Japanese arrived in Langsa for a short period (1942-1945) but left many historical traces. The image of Langsa as a cosmopolitan city is evident from various print media in the form of newspapers circulating in the Aceh region, including Langsa, called Aceh Sinbun. As with the propaganda carried out by Japan in almost all occupied territories, the Japanese Military Government in Langsa also introduced elements of Japanese culture to the community. This can be seen from the content of the newspaper, which reported on the formation of *Tonari Gumi* or neighborhood associations. *Tonari Gumi* was formed in places like Kampong Jawa, Langsa, East Aceh, with the aim of maintaining security together with the Japanese police. In this news, many Japanese terms were used ("*Tonari Gumi*," 2604, p. 2). However, on the other hand, there was a global influence that made some of the local community remain critical. They voiced freedom through radio broadcasts and other

information media found in cinemas.

There were three police officers during the Japanese era, one of whom was named Abdullah, who received information about the independence of the Republic of Indonesia from a radio broadcast from the Republic of Indonesia in Bandung. This information was relayed by Gazali Idris to the Langsa community through a cinema that was showing a film. He asked the management to stop the show for a moment, and then when the lights were turned off, he stood on the stage in front of the white screen and said, "We have heard from the radio broadcast that Indonesia is independent" (Abdullah, 1990, p. 47).

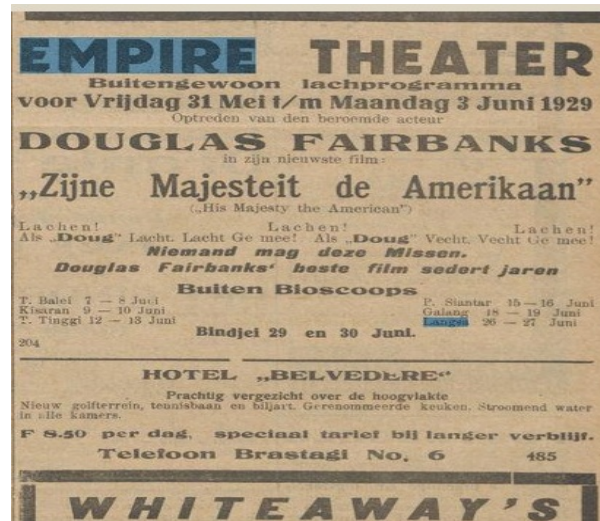


Figure 2. Cinema schedule information in a newspaper advertisement

October 1, 1945, was a historic day for Langsa, East Aceh, as it marked the end of Japanese rule in Langsa. The departure of the Japanese seemed to be the end of the development of cosmopolitan culture in Langsa. Langsa eventually transitioned into a multicultural region inhabited by various ethnicities, marked by the emergence of various ethnic enclaves in Langsa, Aceh. The departure of the Japanese from Langsa was the closing door to cosmopolitanism in this administrative city, but the influence of cosmopolitan culture was still strongly felt. The development of technology, ideology, and the thinking of the native ethnic groups became the capital to achieve and maintain independence in Langsa.

The desire to express independence can also be traced back to the use of *Bon Kontan Peng Puteh* as a medium of exchange. *Bon Kontan*, a product of cosmopolitan culture, was a revolutionary currency printed in the *Balee Juang* Building during the struggle against the Japanese. The *Balee Juang* Building itself was the headquarters of the Indonesian independence movement, known locally as *Balee Juang*. Previously, *Balee Juang* was a trading office built by Dutch capitalists called the *Atjehsche Handel-Maatschappij* Office. Meanwhile, *Bon Kontan* was printed and issued as a temporary medium of exchange, valid throughout the Military Governor's territory.

The payment instrument called *bon kontan* was issued by the East Aceh Defense Headquarters in Langsa in 1949. The issuance of *bon kontan* was initiated by the Head of Finance and Equipment of the East Aceh Defense Headquarters, Osman Adamy, in

an effort to overcome the problem of the lack of a medium of exchange in the community. This “*bon kontan*” paper money was accepted in the community and considered by the people as legal and trustworthy money. The policy of issuing *bon kontan* was taken by Osman Adamy after receiving a mandate from the Resident of Aceh because the government in Kutaraja was no longer able to provide money for the needs of the army, which was increasing day by day. The *bon* was in the form of a plain piece of paper written by Osman Adamy with a certain denomination, which he signed and then gave to the army units. The mandate was then exchanged at certain post offices to obtain cash circulating in the community (Abdullah & Husi, 1984, p. 292).

*Bon Kontan* not only functioned as money or a medium of exchange but also as a tool to gain recognition of sovereignty and identity. Recognition by other countries is an important condition for the establishment of a state. De facto and de jure recognition includes trade, economic, and diplomatic relations, including the sovereignty to use one's currency. As a complement to the ORI (Oeang Republik Indonesia, the first Indonesian currency), *Bon Kontan* also showed Langsa, East Aceh, as a civilization.

ORI itself was issued by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia as an identity and a form of economic sovereignty, as well as an effort to improve the Indonesian economy, which was experiencing high inflation. ORI was issued to replace the currency previously issued by the Dutch Colonial Government and Japan. In other words, ORI was also a form of Indonesian resistance against all forms of oppression. Although made in a simple form of plain paper, ORI was able to arouse the spirit of the Indonesian people to fight for independence and Indonesia's economic sovereignty. Meanwhile, the local government took the initiative to request permission from the central government to issue its currency, which was valid only in that region and temporary, called ORI Daerah or ORIDA.

*Bon Kontan* is a form of struggle and maintaining Indonesian independence, especially in Langsa, East Aceh, through economic struggle. This revolutionary money, which has the regional name *Peng Puteh*, represents the spirit of struggle to maintain the nation's sovereignty intellectually. The influence of global thinking is evident in this revolutionary money. The shift from the grandeur of past history and culture of the Acehnese people can be seen in the form of *Peng Puteh*. This revolutionary money no longer only highlights Islamic culture but tends to emphasize the modern side with the concept of global thinking and the spirit of maintaining the independence of the Republic of Indonesia (Figure 3).

Before the arrival of the Dutch, Aceh as a nation already had its currency in the form of Dirham, which was made of gold. In addition, a currency in the form of a “*Keuh*” coin from Bandar Aceh Darussalam was also found, which is currently stored in the Langsa City Museum. This currency was made of copper or stone (Figure 4). Its manufacturing process was the same as the way lead bullets were made at that time (Sufi, 1993, pp. 96-103). *Bon Kontan* is evidence of the historical role of Langsa in fighting for and maintaining the independence of the Republic of Indonesia. The heroism of independence is seen in the economic struggle of the people of Langsa, East Aceh. This can be seen from the inscription *Sekali Merdeka Tetap Merdeka* (Once



Independent, Remains Independent) on the money, which is a characteristic of the development of cosmopolitan culture and also shows intellectuality. Cosmopolitanism is seen in the use of a new medium of exchange that adapts to the changing times. Even though Aceh, as a great Islamic kingdom, had its currency for centuries, the use of revolutionary money shows that the people had knowledge and awareness as a sovereign nation. When ORI was launched, the mechanism for exchanging *Bon Kontan* with ORI was based on a note from the Military Governor of Aceh, Langkat, and Tanah Karo dated January 2, 1949.



Figure 3. Bon Kontan/ Peng Puteh.



Figure 4. "Keuh" coin from Bandar Aceh Darussalam.

### *Muhammadiyah as Milestone in Emergence of Modernist Islamic Organizations and Understanding in Langsa*

One example of the development of global thinking in Langsa, East Aceh, is the presence of a religious organization called Muhammadiyah. The Muhammadiyah organization entered Aceh (Kutaraja) in 1923, brought by Djaja Sukarta, who moved to Kutaraja and worked at the Aceh Railway Department. In Langsa City (East Aceh), Muhammadiyah entered on October 29, 1928. On April 29 - May 2, 1938, in Idi City (East Aceh), near Langsa, East Aceh, an annual conference was held, attended by a famous Muhammadiyah figure at that time, Haji Abdoel Karim Amrullah (HAMKA). HAMKA had a significant influence on the development of Muhammadiyah in Aceh,

especially in the eastern coastal region of Aceh.

The development of Muhammadiyah and its educational institutions in several cities in Aceh received a reaction from religious leaders (ulama) there. After the arrival of Muhammadiyah, they began to establish organizations and educational institutions to compete with Muhammadiyah, such as "Sirajuddin" or "Pelita Agama." Subsequently, there was a renewal of religious education in Aceh, particularly in the Pidie region, through the establishment of an educational institution called Madrasah Saadah Adabiyah. This institution was realized in 1930 and was founded in Biang Paseh (Peukan Pidie). With the presence of this educational institution, the Acehnese people there indirectly balanced the education system implemented by Muhammadiyah and also the one implemented by the Dutch East Indies government in the Pidie region. The Acehnese people were then encouraged to enroll their children in Madrasah Sa'adah Adabiyah, which was an educational institution under the care of the sons of Aceh (Department of Education and Culture, 1992).

From 1927 to 1942, cosmopolitan culture significantly influenced education and religion in East Aceh. There was a dynamic interplay between Muhammadiyah, the local community, and the colonial government. In 1931, the Dutch East Indies Colonial Government in Aceh wanted to use the Acehnese language as the medium of instruction in public schools, replacing the Malay language (Indonesian) that had been used previously. This policy was opposed by Muhammadiyah because it was feared that the Acehnese people would not be familiar with the Malay language (Indonesian), which would also hinder the realization of the national unity ideals as declared through the Youth Pledge in 1928. Moreover, the Malay language was essential for economic development if they wanted to interact with communities outside of Aceh. Muhammadiyah realized that the Dutch Colonial Government's policy was a form of dumbing down the population to isolate the Acehnese people from the outside world.

The development of Muhammadiyah's thought itself was not accepted by all segments of society in every district/city in the East Aceh region. This is evident from the existence of Muhammadiyah educational institutions in several areas in Aceh, which later faded. It seems that only in Langsa could Muhammadiyah survive and thrive, marked by the existence of various Muhammadiyah educational institutions. Muhammadiyah educational institutions in Langsa became favorite private schools for the people of Langsa City. This strengthens Langsa's position as an open region in various aspects of life. In contrast, Muhammadiyah, as a modern religious organization, was difficult to accept by groups of people who adhered to traditional Islam, such as in the Deli and Serdang Sultanate regions. As mentioned by Sinar (2005), the Sultan of Deli often hindered the development of Muhammadiyah in Deli. There was even an incident where a Muhammadiyah scholar was removed from the pulpit. In Deli, Muhammadiyah was banned because it was considered contrary to traditional Islamic teachings. However, in Aceh, including Langsa, Muhammadiyah, which brought modernist understanding, was able to develop well. This could happen because of the cosmopolitan culture in Langsa, which had been rooted for hundreds of years before.

### Preservation of Culture: The Role of Ulama

The dominance of Islamic elements in the culture of Aceh and the migrants is due to the more dominant role of the ulama (religious scholars) in the social structure of Langsa, East Aceh, compared to the role of the Umara (leaders/government). At that time, the role of the umara was held by the *Uleebalang* (local rulers). The *Uleebalang* did not have much of a place or become role models in Langsa, East Aceh, based on the understanding of the ulama and the Acehnese people who considered the collapse of the Aceh Sultanate to be due to the *Uleebalang*. The *Uleebalang* were also seen as collaborators with the Dutch colonials. The *Uleebalang*, who became local rulers with power obtained from the Dutch, had become a new capitalist class or similar to landlords in Europe (Ibrahimi, 1982). Based on this, the people of Langsa, East Aceh, considered the Uleebalang not to be on the side of the people.

Apart from the obligation to implement Islamic teachings, the Acehnese people and migrants like the Javanese still tried to maintain their original culture amidst the emergence of foreign cultures. This became interesting after the Acehnese people and migrants from Java had interacted with outsiders for a long time. In addition to maintaining religious teachings, the Acehnese and Javanese ethnic communities, which were the dominant ethnic groups in Langsa, East Aceh, continued to preserve their culture, including language and clothing. Acehnese women maintained their distinctive clothing style with headscarves and sarongs, while Javanese women wore kebaya (traditional blouses) and batik sarongs with their hair in buns (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Local Javanese (left) and Acehnese women in Langsa (right)

### Conclusion

The arrival of Europeans and other foreigners in Langsa, East Aceh, with various driving factors, ranging from the spread of Islam, imperialism, and capitalism, has shaped Langsa, East Aceh, into a cosmopolitan city. This was further strengthened by the development of industrialization and modernization. The extraordinary natural and economic potential attracted local and foreign migrants to come and settle in Langsa, East Aceh. The diversity of ethnic groups in Langsa, East Aceh, created a global community structure with all forms of adaptation, leading to changes in the social field. In the process of interaction and adaptation between local and global migrants, some cultural elements were not acculturated by the global community, namely: religion, language, clothing, and so on. The cosmopolitan culture that developed in Langsa, East Aceh, triggered the development of hybrid culture and global thinking. These thoughts influenced the perspective of the educated native elite

of Langsa, East Aceh, on the fate of the nation to become a dignified country with the goal of independence.

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## **Informan**

Asyah