

Aceh's Democratic Landscape: Exploring the Role and Impact of Local Political Parties

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Abstract: After issuing Law No. 18/2001 on Special Autonomy for the Special Province of Aceh. The central government has given extensive concessions to Aceh Province by delegating various authorities, including forming local Aceh political parties. Local political parties are political organizations formed voluntarily based on similarities of will and ideals to fight for the interests of the community, nation, and state through the election of members of the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Aceh, Governor, Regent, and Mayor. The existence of local political parties is considered effective in carrying out their roles and functions, especially in implementing the party system in the special autonomy region of Indonesia.

Purpose: This study aims to identify and comprehend the role played by Aceh's local political parties in the local-level implementation of democratization.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This research method uses a legal research method with a conceptual and statutory approach.

Findings: The results of the study show that the existence of Acehnese local parties can provide political advantages for interest groups to seize power, with the presence of local parties given way as a political vehicle to mobilize power in its government, both in the legislature and the executive. The existence of local parties can embrace all the aspirations of the Acehnese people more specifically than national parties. For this reason, local parties can support the implementation of special autonomy in Aceh.

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Originality/Value: There are many studies on local parties in Aceh, but this research explores the existence of local parties in implementing local democracy in Aceh.

Keywords: Existence; Local Party; Special Autonomy

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Introduction

The territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) is a region that cannot be divided from the numerous islands since it was formed as one form of unity from the many existing territories. Indonesia greatly values its citizens' variety (Arrsa 2011). Indonesia is a unitary state in the form of a republic, according to Article 1 Paragraph 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia 1945 (hereinafter referred to as the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia). Still, the NKRI is set up with the broadest guarantee of autonomy so that the regions can develop per their potential and wealth. According to the legal politics of Article 18 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the State of Indonesia promises substantial decentralization and autonomy for all of its regions (Asshiddiqie 2010). This principle of decentralization guarantees the growth and birth of autonomous regional government units (Fikri and Wibisono 2023), these units have the authority to manage regional matters in accordance with the interests of the local community utilizing the principle of widest autonomy and responsibility.

Based on this guiding philosophy, the Indonesian government is passionate about transforming all types of authoritarian constitutional systems into democratic ones and decentralizing those once centralized. With these modifications, the Indonesian government granted the government in the province of Aceh special authority/authority to administer and regulate the interests of its territory based on the rights and aspirations of the people. These changes are embodied in Law Number 18 of 2001 concerning Special Autonomy for the Province

Aceh Special Region as Naggroe Aceh Darussalam Province and Law No. 11 of 2006 concerning the Governance of Aceh. As a counterbalance to implementing social procedures that are in line with the color and noble values of life in ethnic communities in the region, this law can provide broad authority to regulate and manage in terms of increasing creative, economic, and democratic sources (general elections) (Sesung 2013).

Elections are necessary and the cornerstone of building processes, procedures, and methods for accommodating people's ambitions in Indonesia, which builds itself as a democratic nation (Budiardjo 2009). Political parties function in this situation as institutions that allow for power mobility. This makes political parties crucial components that serve as effective structures for participation, socialization, mobilization, recruitment, and governmental control. Because there is a national party system, national party branches sometimes ignore local concerns while adapting at the regional or local level. This is evident from the institutionalization of the phenomenon, which has until far only been perceived as a purely structural link. After some time had passed and several local issues had arisen, it was believed to grant regional leaders the power to exercise political autonomy (Ansari 2012). Local parties are labeled as organizations/institutions formed by a group of citizens based on the same will and aspirations to fight for the political interests of society, and the state domiciled in the scope of one province within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. According to this description, the author is curious to discuss the existence of local political parties in implementing democracy in Aceh.

Methods

In this study, the authors used legal research with a normative legal research type. Normative legal research is a process to find a rule of law, legal principles, or legal doctrines to answer legal issues. The legal materials used are primary and

secondary legal materials. The approach used in this study is a conceptual approach and a statutory approach (Marzuki 2016).

Discussion and Findings

The Existence of Local Parties in the Special Autonomous Region of Aceh

Political parties reflect a democratic state (Riqiey, Pramesti, and Sakti 2022), a requirement for contemporary state activity, and is a given. Political parties are institutions that guide the interests of the people and the interests of those in power; nevertheless, it is not clear how and where these interests originate. Political parties result from a connection between top-down and bottom-up fashions as an institution guiding interests. If this situation can be handled correctly, the role of political parties becomes political socialization, political participation, political communication, interest articulation, interest aggregation, and policy formulation can move well so the desired political arrangement can be handled.

Political parties now play a significant role in the economy that supports democracy. Political parties are essential to democracy, thus rules and regulations must be in place to recognize and safeguard their existence. Laws and regulations are anticipated to ensure the growth of legitimate, wholesome, successful, and functional political parties (Dewi 2021). The election of leaders and the cadre process, political education, and sound social control will likely come from political parties in good physical and mental health. Conflict and agreement may also be achieved with political parties, raising the community. The disputes that appear to be a consensus are sought to make the party healthy and effective, but difficulties are generated and utilized to divide the party.

Local political parties play a significant role in the special autonomy system, which refers to their presence and the fact that they originate from the special autonomous territory and perform

their political duties at national and regional levels. Local political parties have a significant role in reflecting the local community's political, economic, and social interests under the special autonomy system. When local political groups diverge from national political parties in some ways. Local political parties typically concentrate more on the fight for the rights of the residents of the particular autonomous territory, whereas national political parties typically concentrate more on the fight for the nation's rights. Local political parties are better equipped to offer relevant and correct answers to problems encountered by the residents of the special autonomy region because they are more familiar with their area's social, cultural, and political circumstances. People living in the special autonomous region may profit from the presence of local political parties in the system. In the unique autonomous area, local political parties can struggle for development and the rights of the populace. Local political parties may also foster variety and build local identity in the particular autonomous territory. Local political parties can also support national democracy by preserving political stability in certain autonomous regions (Muhadam and Teguh 2015).

One of places that allowed the particular to exercise autonomy is Naggroe Aceh Darussalam. The emergence of Acehnese local political parties is one example of distinctiveness. It is impossible to separate the acceptance of local Acehnese parties from the insurrection being fought by the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM), attempting to secede from the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Recognizing Aceh's local political parties presents a problem since, on the one hand, it is viewed as a practical way to address issues in Aceh, but on the other, some believe it might lead to a separatist movement inside the party. Demands for local parties are seen as in violation of Law No. 2/2008 concerning Political Parties (hereafter referred to as Law No. 2/2008), which as of yet has not given a pathway for the

creation of local parties, in addition to concerns about possible separatism. Local political parties cannot comply with the law's need for national party representation. Furthermore, the Helsinki Agreement's memorandum of understanding on local parties still leaves much to be desired regarding definitions, election procedures including local parties, and the relationship between local and national political parties. However, because national parties tend to be centralized, local parties are seen as the sole means by which locals may express their local political objectives. Additionally, given the public's mistrust of the national party, it is crucial to consider the desires of Aceh's citizens, particularly the GAM organization within the local political party, in the context of conflict settlement (Murodi 2019).

When considered from the standpoint of the political policy-making process, the policy respecting local parties included in Law No. 11/2006 appears to have a more persuasive rationale. To quell the separatist movement in Aceh, local parties represent a compromise between Indonesia and GAM. The whole of UU No. 11/2006 is a political concession made by GAM in exchange for an end to all separatist attempts to break away from the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. So, despite it being theoretically impossible, the government eventually permitted the foundation of a local party in Aceh after much haggling and careful study (Murodi 2019).

The presence of local political parties in Aceh is acknowledged within the constitutional framework of the Republic of Indonesia. The recognition of political parties in Aceh is governed by Law No. 11/2006 and further supported by Government Regulation 20 of 2007, which outlines the procedures for establishing political parties in the region. Local parties in Aceh perform many duties and acquire political influence, similar to their national counterparts while holding political posts. This phenomenon has been empirically demonstrated over multiple

general election cycles, wherein regional political parties have garnered increased public backing and secured representation in the legislative assembly. Hence, the presence of indigenous political factions in Aceh does not contradict the constitutional framework, as the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia acknowledges and upholds the establishment of distinct regional governing entities, subject to legal provisions (See Article 18B of the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia)

Laws and regulations always reflect local political parties' contributions to advancing democracy. Do not eliminate the status and presence of political parties, as is done with political mechanisms in general elections. Political parties would cease to exist in the constitutional system if society had an unfavorable assessment of them at this time. The democratic process is only getting started, as everything happening right now shows. The political parties structure and the objectives of local parties fundamentally differ from the features of local parties in each nation. Local political party systems may be divided into two categories: open systems and closed systems. Local parties have the right to fight for national political seats in national elections within an open system of local political parties. Local political parties can only run in local elections under a restricted local party system. If a local party wants to have political power at the federal level under a closed system, it must work with the national political party (Erick and Handoyo 2022).

Table1. Arrangements between Parties and Voters

NO	Local Party	National Party
1.	As political parties that were born at the provincial level, local parties have more emotional ties with their	As a political party born at the provincial level, the National Party does not have an emotional bond with its voters compared to the Local Party

	voters than the National Party	
2.	According to local parties, voter groupings have strong familial links to one another.	The National Party does not do well with related voter groupings.
3.	I believe that voters have a better relationship with their area's local parliamentarians.	I don't think voters know their regional parliament representatives very well.

Local political parties in Aceh benefit from pursuing provincial and district/city-level seats. This phenomenon can be attributed to the more robust connections between voters and local political parties, as evidenced by the data presented in Table 1. In addition, the prevalence of a strong regional identity contributes to the increased profitability of local political parties. Local parties are perceived to possess a superior understanding of local values compared to national parties. The presence of regional political parties in the electoral competition for province and district/city seats demonstrates a significant capacity to rival national parties. According to available records, the 2019 legislative election resulted in local parties securing 18 out of 81 seats available.

Table 2. Strengths and Weaknesses of Local Parties and National Parties

NO	Local Party	National Party
1.	restrictions on the political space available to local parties that cannot or cannot accelerate nationally. These	have no restrictions on political mobility in terms of quickening/quicken national preparedness and ratification

	restrictions can be understood in terms of national discussions, the creation and adoption of legislation, and the selection of governors, regents, and mayors, among other things	
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Because of their higher resources and broader social backing, local political parties sometimes have more clout and influence than national political parties (see Table 2). Local political parties often have a broader and more sophisticated organizational structure than national political parties. They have a central hub for coordination, harmonization, and decision-making in their head office. Local political parties may plan political campaigns and motivate the populace to fight for their political objectives thanks to their enormous member networks in their respective regions (see Table 1).

Local political parties often have a broader and more thorough political program than national political parties. They advocate for more extensive and more complicated causes, such as those involving political, social, and economic policy. Additionally, local political parties typically have a more defined and consistent political philosophy, which enables them to mobilize a larger constituency and run more successful political campaigns. Local political parties typically have more community backing and financial resources than national political parties operating in that region. Community support can come from various sources, including voter demographics and social groupings. National political parties may be able to run more

extensive and expansive political campaigns with more financial resources (see Table 2).

Local parties may experience difficulties managing their operations over time. Effective coordination and decision-making at the national level are some of the major obstacles. The tiny organizational structures of local parties can make effective coordination and decision-making challenging. Local parties may also experience fierce internal rivalry, mainly if factions with divergent goals are present. Party Effectively advancing community concerns may be complex for local communities. Local parties may lose emphasis on topics that are more particular and significant to residents because of their smaller political platforms, which can split their attention. The presence of local parties has given rise to a political vehicle to mobilize power in its legislative and executive administration, which might provide interest groups political advantages to grab power. More precisely than national parties, establishing local parties may include all of the objectives of the Acehnese people. Due to this, local parties may favor Aceh in implementing special autonomy (Afrijal and Helmi 2022).

The Function of Local Political Parties in Aceh's Democracy Implementation

Local political parties are groups with a regional or local emphasis established at that level of government. Local political parties can be established at a city, district, province, or hamlet level. Local political parties frequently appear in response to the needs and goals of the local community. Local concerns vital to the community, such as infrastructure, health, education, and employment, are typically tied to topics that local political parties are concerned about. Local political parties can also concentrate on more specialized topics like minority rights, environmental preservation, and local industrial growth. As a logical outcome of

the democratic process, establishing local parties cannot be avoided historically or politically (Muttaqin 2020).

Local political parties have expanded quickly due to the special autonomous region's democratic implementation. Let's look at and evaluate the people's participation in the various stages of the democratic process itself. We can see that democracy in the special autonomous area is expanding quickly. We may observe, for instance, how the citizens of Aceh participated in the legislative and executive elections. The Acehnese people are becoming more aware of the need to participate in political contestation actively. They are no longer just voting or voting; instead, they are beginning to take part in the procedures for selecting "Prospective Candidates" to serve as their representatives in the democratic process (Musrafiyan, Fahmi, and Karim 2021).

Compared to national political parties that are less conversant with local concerns, local parties are better able to express the interests and ambitions of local citizens. Local parties can provide a platform for residents to engage in politics and influence public policies more responsive to regional concerns. Depending on the location and organizational level, local parties may have various organizational structures. Local political parties typically have a more straightforward leadership structure with a stronger connection to local areas than national political parties.

The local population, particularly in the province of Aceh, was still not engaged in opposing candidates who would represent their regions before forming local political organizations. The people of Aceh have started to develop an emotional attachment to the local party leaders and the planned candidate candidates since the formation of the local party. Compared to the unique territory of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, implementing people's sovereignty in the special autonomous region of Papua, in this case, the general election process differs in

several ways. A highly distinctive trait of the special autonomous territory of Papua is its propensity to incorporate a representative system pattern into every decision-making procedure. The people of Papua entrust the traditional coconut with all of their choices. Indigenous Papuans/Papuan inhabitants received a determination (affirmation) in the form of an appointment to fill legislative posts in their area when Papua was declared a special autonomous zone (Rasida, Suharso, and Muksin 2016). Meanwhile, the democratic process in Aceh recognizes the presence of regional parties. As a result, local parties were represented by elected members of the Aceh People's Representative Council (DPRA). The community believes having local parties will ensure political leadership renewal in their control regions. This renewal offers hope for the people of Aceh to seriously consider and implement their political aspirations to make their region more prosperous and developed while paying attention to the principles of good democracy and without interfering with the interests of the central government or party officials at the central level to force candidates who are dropping out or being engineered by the government center.

Local political parties may also have a structure like national political parties, with party leaders overseeing the organization as a whole in light of the numerous areas that inadvertently carry out particular autonomy. Local political parties may have links to national political parties despite their concentration on regional concerns. Local parties might affiliate with national political parties to forge stronger coalitions in the face of elections or to advocate for national problems affecting their region. On the other hand, Party Locals may also have a distinct political identity from national political parties, particularly if local concerns diverge from national ones. Party Local governments can play a significant part in the local political process. Party Local governments can seriously challenge national political parties in general elections

and significantly impact local public policy. Local parties can serve as a conduit between the people and the government by promoting public policies and community interests. Party Local communities may encounter difficulties coming together and defending their interests (Andriyansyah 2020).

Aceh is one of Indonesia's special autonomous zones, which was given special autonomy in 2005 following the Helsinki Agreement. The development of a unique autonomous territory and the defence of human rights in Aceh are greatly aided by the presence of local political parties. Aceh, which has special autonomy status under Law No. 11/2006, is a case study of how the presence of local political parties is applied under the special autonomy system. Several regional political parties, including the Aceh Party (PA), the Nanggroe Aceh Party (PNA), the Adil Prosperous Party of Aceh (PAS Aceh), the Beusaboh Tha'at Aceh Generation Party, and Taqwa, the Acehnese Prosperous Party (PAS Aceh), are now in operation in Aceh. (Aceh People's Independent Solidarity) Darul Aceh, Sira Party. Local Aceh parties allow the people of Aceh to select representatives who advocate for their interests at the federal level. In addition, regionally active local parties may defend Acehnese citizens rights and monitor the government's functioning in Aceh. Local political parties are one of the ways Acehnese may express their ambitions for achieving social justice (Djusfi 2019). This illustrates how the particular autonomy system uses the presence of local parties (Marwazi and Fatimah 2023).

Conclusion

The existence of regional political parties serves as a tool or local political mechanism for establishing democracy in the particular autonomous territory, in line with the desires of the Acehnese. Local political parties in Aceh share the same objectives and duties as conventional national political parties. The goal is to strengthen Acehnese political involvement in regional

government administration and defence of local party values in the affairs of society, the country, and the state in line with Aceh's unique characteristics and advantages.

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