

## Disaffected Coattail Effect: The Election Anomaly in Local Political Party in Aceh, Indonesia

Fadhli

Institute for Muslim Politics and Aceh Studies (IMPACT), Indonesia. (email: fadhli.espece@gmail.com)

### Abstract

This research explains how the Aceh Party, which supported Prabowo-Gibran in the 2024 presidential election, not only won the election in Aceh but also managed to secure more seats in the local parliament. This vote gain seemed anomalous when other supporting parties saw the negative coattail effect of the national political contestation. Aceh, a region synonymous with political Islam, became a vote bank for the Anies-Muhaimin candidate pair, who were associated with Islamism. As a result, the party supporting them secured a significant vote share in the Aceh legislative elections. The coattail effect also affected the parties supporting the other unpopular candidate pairs, Prabowo-Gibran and Ganjar-Mahfud, which experienced a decrease in the number of votes in the legislative elections. Diverting from the patterns, the Aceh Party supported Prabowo-Gibran yet managed to secure more seats in the parliament. It was the only political party supporting an unpopular candidate yet secured more seats in the parliament. This article analyses the factors that boosted the Aceh Party's votes in the 2024 elections. Based on the literature study, this article shows that the Aceh Party's victory was inseparable from the campaign strategy shift in local political contestation. Despite supporting unpopular candidates, the Aceh Party was able to translate ideology into a demarcation between national political interests in Jakarta and regional political interests in Aceh. The emphasis on cultural and local political identity has strengthened the Aceh Party's political base.

### Keywords:

Aceh party; electoral contestation; local party; political identity; 2024 election

### Introduction

The signing of a peace agreement between the Republic of Indonesia (RI) and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) through the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU Helsinki) in 2005 has allowed Aceh to establish local political parties. The constitution regulates this authority in Law No. 11/2006 on the Governing of Aceh (LoGA) (*Undang-Undang Pemerintahan Aceh/UUPA*). In addition to being the foundation of the state, UUPA has also become Aceh's political bargaining chip in carrying out specificities in politics, religion, and culture. In the political context, the establishment of local parties in Aceh has led to a different political configuration map from other provinces in Indonesia. The

people of Aceh utilised the authority to form local political parties to channel their political aspirations constitutionally (Hamzah, 2009). In 2007, GAM also established a local party (*Partai Aceh/the Aceh Party*) to accommodate Aceh's political interests in a legal avenue. The presence of the Aceh Party in Indonesian political discourse can be seen as momentum for the transition from an armed political struggle to one through the ballot box.

Since gaining this authority, local political parties in Aceh have participated in general elections four times (2009-2024). The Aceh Party has been the only local party winning elections consecutively and having control over the parliament. Unlike the Aceh Party, other local political parties have to struggle to



The coattail effect departs from the idea that there is a correlation between the popularity of a presidential candidate and the electability of the supporting party. If a presidential candidate is popular, the supporting party will also gain high electability. Likewise, the low popularity of a particular presidential candidate will impact the electability of the supporting party. The coattail effect will directly impact the candidate's party (Borges & Turgeon, 2017).

Several studies have shown that voter turnout tends to increase in the presidential elections, as the president's office is considered to have greater significance than other political positions. This increasing turnout directly impacts legislative elections, which are held simultaneously. Additionally, the popularity of presidential candidates also influences voters' preferences over legislative candidates from the same party. This phenomenon indicates that the appeal of presidential candidates not only mobilises voters to participate but also creates a chain effect on the legislative elections (Sardini & Erowati, 2020).

The coattail effect is not only a relevant political phenomenon in the United States but also other countries, with often a positive outcome. In Taiwan, for example, the coattail effect has been shown to influence election outcomes, depending on the electoral dynamics and the candidates involved (Huang & Wang, 2014; Meredith, 2013). This effect can also promote gender solidarity in politics. For example, if a female candidate in an upper position is popular, the electability of other female candidates in lower positions may also be positively impacted (Niebler, Marchetti, & Kozdron, 2020). However, the coattail effect may also result in a negative impact. In some instances, when a party is banned and branded as a terrorist organisation, its electability may decrease significantly, which then impacts its affiliates' electability (Arenas, 2024). Furthermore, such bans can also result in

an overall decrease in voter turnout, reflecting the broader consequences of repressive political dynamics.

The coattail effect is not always seen as a top-down phenomenon, where a candidate's popularity at the top level (such as the president) increases the electability of candidates at the lower level. In some cases, this phenomenon can also occur the other way around, known as the reverse coattail (Dewa, Sobari, & Pohan, 2020). In this situation, candidates at the local level or lower structures contribute significantly to the increase in electability of candidates at the upper level, even in authoritarian countries (Moraski, 2016). For example, candidates at the municipal level can positively influence the electability of candidates at the legislative level (Gomberg, Gutiérrez, López, & Vázquez, 2018). Reverse coattails can also occur when local candidates who have significant influence in a particular region successfully boost the popularity of national candidates, including the president. This phenomenon often appears in regions with distinctive characteristics or areas with popular local candidates and a strong mass base (Dewa et al., 2020).

Nonetheless, many researchers have criticised the coattail effect, especially its complexity and variability. This shows that political dynamics are not always hierarchical from top to bottom. In addition, voter turnout is influenced by various other factors that often go beyond the candidate's relationship. Rogers' research shows that the decision to vote for partisan voters or those who are not ideologically attached can be strongly influenced by external factors, such as weather conditions. For example, voter turnout tends to decrease in rainy weather, as these conditions are perceived as arduous for voters to go to the polls (Rogers, 2019). This finding confirms that environmental factors also play an important role in determining the level of political participation.

In a multiparty political system like Indonesia, the coattail effect may spread

influence from a popular figure to political parties beyond their own. The extent to which other supporting parties in the coalition benefit from the diffused coattail effect depends on how strongly they can associate themselves with the figure. To get the coattail effect, Borges and Turgeon emphasise that the supporting party that is not the home party of the presidential candidate must associate itself as strongly and effectively as possible with the candidate (Borges & Turgeon, 2017). In other words, a candidate's prominence correlates negatively or positively with the other supporting parties in the coalition.

Within this conceptual framework, the victory of the Aceh Party in the 2024 election is an anomaly. The Aceh Party, which supported Prabowo-Gibran (an unpopular candidate in Aceh), managed to secure more seats in parliament. The diffused coattail effect explains the victory and defeat of several parties supporting certain candidates in Aceh. However, in the context of the Aceh Party, the diffused coattail effect does not apply. Therefore, this article examines how the 2024 election phenomenon in Aceh displays anomalous politics or what I call the "Disaffected Coattail Effect".

### Local Political Parties in Post-Conflict Aceh

The authority to form local parties agreed upon in the MoU Helsinki became the starting point of GAM's political transformation from armed resistance to struggle through the ballot box (Sindre, 2009). Studies on Indonesia's democratic challenges suggest that post-reform society tends to be dissatisfied with political parties because they cannot represent local values. Therefore, the existence of local parties is an alternative to post-conflict Aceh's political democratisation—a form of recognition to accommodate local interests (Muntoha, 2018). The existence of local parties serves as a channel for peaceful and non-violent political aspirations, reducing ethnic tensions.

Therefore, Hillman argues that local parties in Aceh can be a model for conflict-prone areas—an alternative to non-violent struggle (Hillman, 2012).

Theoretically, local parties are expected to implement local democracy and become a vehicle for voicing regional aspirations (Yuriadi, Herlambang, & Hasan, 2023). John Ishiyama (2019) argues that party facilitation can de-radicalize rebels, where success is measured through the parties no longer committing violence (Ishiyama, 2019). This seems to be the case in the GAM movement after establishing the Aceh Party, where mobilised armed forces are no longer used to respond to the socio-political dynamics that occur in Aceh (Nurhasim, 2012).

Since Aceh has been authorised to form local parties, the Aceh Party has been the patron and representation of local political identity. The Aceh Party has always managed to win local political contestation. Its existence in political contestation in Aceh has coloured the dynamics of local politics, de-centralising power in the political decisions by national parties. The political reality of post-conflict Aceh illustrates that the victory of the Aceh Party in every election in Aceh has opened a space for negotiations between national and local parties in government operations in Aceh (Nurhasim, 2012).

At the beginning of their inception, local parties had a positive impact on the democratic climate in Aceh. A previous study showed that local parties in Aceh increased people's political participation (Syarif, 2019). However, along the way, local parties experienced a crisis of confidence because the public perceived that local parties failed to act as catalysts for policy influence and lacked a distinct political identity separate from national parties (Abdullah, Hamdani, & Mulyad, 2022). This decline was further emphasised after local parties experienced internal conflicts and lost role model figures. Moreover, many of

their government cadres failed to fulfil their political promises to the public (Ansori, 2012; Janah, Fatimah, & Hariz, 2023; Rasanjani, 2018; Usman, 2021; Zulfan, Ikramatoun, & Aminah, 2023).

This crisis of confidence had a significant impact on the Aceh Party's voting trend. Public dissatisfaction leads to "silence power" or disappointment not being expressed openly (Saharuddin, Larasati, Suwitri, & Dwimawanti, 2023). Until 2019, data on the number of Aceh Party votes showed a drastic decline. In ten years, the Aceh Party lost 15 seats in the parliament. Studies on this issue reveal concerning signs about the survival and future of local parties (Alfian, Muhammad, & Saputra, 2022; Syarkawi, Koeswara, & Aromatica, 2021). In this context, the Aceh Party, although consistently successful in winning legislative political battles in Aceh, has been unable to maintain the stability of vote acquisition in elections.

More generally, Taufik Almubarak (2019) identified the Aceh Party's defeat as being due to three factors. First, its potential cadres ran for Senayan (the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia/DPR-RI), which resulted in the loss of voters. Second, the public became reluctant to vote for the Aceh Party after giving it a chance in two elections. The third is the coalition with the Gerindra Party. According to Taufik, the coalition was like keeping a "*tuyul*" (a mythical folklore being known to steal cash from households quietly), hoping that it would benefit the party in a quiet but impactful way. Instead of benefiting the Aceh Party, the coalition benefited Gerindra's electability (Almubarak, 2019). This shows that the Aceh Party has not been able to build a stable voter base.

The trend of the Aceh Party's votes in three elections (2009, 2014, and 2019) has become a guide for many observers and researchers in predicting the Aceh Party in the 2024 election contest. It is not surprising that

a reading of the Aceh Party's declining vote graph has led them to the conclusion of the decline of the Aceh Party. The announcement of the 2024 election results confirmed that the Aceh Party not only emerged as the winner of the election but also refuted the assumptions of many observers and researchers by successfully adding two legislative seats to become 20 in the Aceh parliament.

## Methods

This research explores the dynamics of local political contestation in Aceh in 2024 by highlighting its links to national politics, particularly regarding vote acquisition and coattail effects. The main focus of this research is the Aceh Party, a local party that has consistently won elections in Aceh since the participation of local parties in the Indonesian electoral system. The analysis uses historical vote data from 2009 to the 2024 elections, compared to identify patterns of change in the Aceh Party's electability over this period.

The research data were collected from various sources, including legislative election results for four periods (2009, 2014, 2019, and 2024) and regional election results in Aceh for three periods (2006-2007, 2012 and 2017). Table 1 presents the Aceh Party's vote shares in the three regional elections, while Table 2 displays the legislative election results for four periods. To explore the (disaffected) coattail effect, Table 3 visualises the relationship between party electability and legislative seat gains in connection with presidential candidate affiliation in the 2024 election.

This study aims to understand local political trends in Aceh and explore how national political dynamics affect regional voter preferences. By analysing the relationship between the Aceh Party's vote share and the national political constellation, this research aims to shed light on the relationship between local and national politics in Indonesia's evolving democracy.



to 128,272. At the same time, the Aceh Party's victory statistics also declined at the district/city level. In the 2017 regional elections, the Aceh Party only won 10 executive seats out of 23 city districts (Nivada, 2022).

**Table 1.**  
**GAM/The Aceh Party Seat Acquisition Trend for the Executive**

Executive/Year	2006-2007	2012	2017
Province	Won (768.745)	Won (1.327.695)	Lost (762.279)
District/City	10/23 D/C	11/23 D/C	10/23 D/C

Source: KIP Aceh, 2006; 2012; 2017

The downward trend in the number of votes continued in the 2019 elections. During this period, the Aceh Party's vote share dropped dramatically to 18 seats or 21% (KIP Aceh, 2019). In other words, the number of Aceh Party legislative seats at the provincial level decreased by 11 seats from 2014 and by 15 seats from 2009. A decline in dominance also occurred at the district/city level. The Aceh Party led in 15 cities/districts in the previous period, but in the 2019 elections, it only led in 10 out of a total of 23 districts/cities. The 2019 election marked the steepest decline in parliamentary seats for the Aceh Party. This setback is a continuing impact of the defeat in the 2017 regional elections. Thus, this phenomenon has become a reference point for observers and researchers in analysing Aceh's political landscape in 2024.

Following the announcement of the 2019 election results, which showed a decline in the number of Aceh Party votes, many observers and researchers viewed this phenomenon as a threat to the future of local parties in Aceh.

The failure of the Aceh Party to maintain its dominance in local political contestation in Aceh could be due to the party's exclusivism, focusing too much on empowering GAM ex-combatants. This characteristic has made the Aceh Party less open to public participation in the party (Zulkarnaini, 2023). In addition, internal divisions within the party also led to a decline in its influence, especially after the emergence of the Aceh National Party (Partai Nanggroe Aceh/PNA) founded by Irwandi Yusuf (Saputra, Nugroho, & Sujito, 2022). In the 2019 election, the PNA managed to secure six seats in the DPRA, an increase of three seats from the 2014 election results. The presence of the PNA has at least split the GAM vote base that the Aceh Party had controlled. Therefore, based on the 2006-2019 election data, observers openly predicted the continuation of the Aceh Party's decline in the 2024 election.

The public judgment has made the Aceh Party evaluate and improve its strategy to win the 2024 election. In the 2024 elections, the results were not like the predictions, as the Aceh Party gained 683,768 votes. This vote gain not only made the Aceh Party the winning party but also increased the number of seats in the parliament to 20 (KIP Aceh, 2024). In addition, the Aceh Party also had representatives from every electoral district in Aceh. The increase in Aceh Party's vote share in the 2024 election shows that the public is once again placing its trust in local parties.

On the one hand, the fluctuation of the Aceh Party's votes across four post-conflict elections highlights the resilience of local parties, which have consistently emerged as the dominant force in Aceh's democratization

**Table 2.**  
 **Aceh Party's Legislative Seat Acquisition Trend**

Legislative/Year	2009-2014	2014-2019	2019-2024	2024-2029
Province	33/69 (1.007.173)	29/81 (847.956)	18/81 (568.110)	20/81 (683.768)
District/City	12/23 D/C	15/23 D/C	10/23 D/C	8/23 D/C

Source: KIP Aceh, 2014, 2019, 2024

efforts. On the other hand, the Aceh Party, as a representation of local parties, has struggled to maintain a stable and evenly distributed political constituency across all electoral districts. The data presented above shows that the Aceh Party has the opportunity to regain public trust that had declined in the previous two elections. The revival of the Aceh Party in the 2024 elections can be a political capital to expand its power to areas that have not been the political base of GAM in the past.

### **Disaffected Coattail Effect: the Aceh Party and National Political Affiliation**

The notion of a coattail effect that explains the correlation between the popularity of a presidential candidate and the electability of his supporting party cannot be used to read the case of the Aceh Party. The Aceh Party has been affiliated with a national party for three election periods in the context of local elections in Aceh. During that time, the coattail effect did not correlate with the electability of the Aceh Party as the ruling party affiliated with the national party. In this section, I analyse the ineffectiveness of the coattail effect on the Aceh Party, particularly in its affiliation with a national party, through the lens of the "Disaffected Coattail Effect." In this lens, I show that when the Aceh Party supports a candidate with high popularity, its electability decreases; conversely, when it supports an unpopular presidential candidate, the Aceh Party's electability increases.

The Aceh Party's political affiliation with national parties was marked by its support for Prabowo Subianto in the 2014 presidential election. At that time, the Aceh Party, already affiliated with Gerindra, officially supported the Prabowo-Hatta candidacy. In the 2014 presidential election, Prabowo-Hatta won the contest in Aceh with 1,089,290 votes, or equivalent to 54 per cent (Kompas, 20/07/2014). In the 2019 presidential election, the Aceh Party again supported Prabowo, who was

paired with Sandi. The candidate pair even won absolutely in Aceh, gaining 2,400,746 votes, equivalent to 85.59 per cent (Kompas, 13/05/2019). During the two election periods, Aceh became a militant voter base for Prabowo Subianto, as he was seen as representing the aspirations of Muslims.

In the 2024 presidential election, the Aceh Party again supported Prabowo paired with Gibran. However, the political map in Aceh has changed from the previous two elections. In the 2024 election, Aceh became the voter base for Anies Baswedan – Muhaimin Iskandar, supported by the NasDem Party, the National Awakening Party (PKB), and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). The Acehese shift from Prabowo to Anies is because Anies is seen as more religious and represents the politics of "Muslims." The discourse of Islamism that has long been rooted in the Acehese worldview becomes a political identity. Therefore, Prabowo's defeat in the 2024 presidential election in Aceh is not surprising. In conversations at coffee shops in Aceh, an anecdote circulated reads, "Anies would have won in Aceh even without campaigning."

In the three elections where the Aceh Party backed a presidential candidate, the coattail effect that benefited other supporting parties did not apply to the Aceh Party. When Prabowo won in Aceh in 2014, its electability declined, which continued in the 2019 presidential election when Prabowo won decisively in Aceh. The vote share fell further to 568,110 votes. Thus, the Aceh Party's support for Prabowo as the winner of the presidential election contest in Aceh did not positively impact its electability. Interestingly, in the 2024 presidential election, Prabowo lost in Aceh. However, the Aceh Party, which supported Prabowo, saw an increasing vote share.

In general, the presidential election contestation at the national level affects the votes of supporting parties in Aceh. NasDem, which previously held only two parliamentary



seats, increased its representation to ten in the 2024 elections. Similarly, PKB secured nine seats in the 2024 legislative elections, up from just three. NasDem was the first party to declare Anies Baswedan as a presidential candidate. Meanwhile, PKB endorsed Muhaimin Iskandar as a vice presidential candidate paired with Anies. These two supporting parties received a significant vote increase in Aceh, which was the base of Anies-Muhaimin's victory. The coattail effect factor from the 2024 presidential election positively correlates with the two parties winning leadership seats in the Aceh parliament.

The negative correlation of the coattail effect of the 2024 election affected the parties supporting the Prabowo-Gibran and Ganjar-Mahfud presidential candidates. For parties supporting Prabowo or Ganjar in Aceh, their electability would either decline or stagnate. Gerindra Party, with previously eight seats in the parliament, lost three seats in the 2024 election, leaving only five. This vote gain has led to the loss of leadership positions in parliament, which the Anies-Muhaimin supporting parties (NasDem and PKB) took over. Except for Golkar, which retained nine parliamentary seats, a similar decline in the number of seats was also felt by other Prabowo-supporting coalitions such as PAN and the Democratic Party and PPP, Hanura, and PKPI from the Ganjar-Mahfud supporting camp. Thus, the only parties that could maintain their electability were Golkar, which kept nine seats, and PDIP, which had only one seat since the beginning. In contrast, the electability of the other parties all declined, except for the Aceh Party. The Aceh Party was the only one with increased electability among the parties supporting the losing presidential candidate in Aceh. This phenomenon shows that the coattail effect did not apply to the Aceh party—I call the phenomenon the “disaffected coattail effect.”

The decline in the Aceh Party's electability is stark compared to the 2009 elections when it

**Table 3.**  
**Seats Acquisition of Supporting Parties for the 2024 Presidential Election in Aceh**

Anies-Muhaimin 2.369.534 (73.56%)	Seats for DPRA 2019	Seat for DPRA 2024
Nasdem	2	10
PKB	3	9
PKS	6	4
SIRA	1	0
PDA	3	1
PAS	-	4
<b>Prabowo-Gibran 787.024 (24.43%)</b>		
Gerindra	8	5
Golkar	9	9
Demokrat	10	7
PAN	6	5
PA	18	20
<b>Ganjar-Mahfud 64.677 (2.01%)</b>		
PDIP	1	1
PPP	6	5
Hanura	1	0
PKPI	1	0
<b>Abstain</b>		
PNA	6	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>81</b>

Source: KIP Aceh, 2019, 2024; KPU, 2024

was not affiliated with a national political party. In the 2009 election, the Aceh Party explicitly declared itself neutral and did not participate in politics at the national level. Since the 2014 presidential election—the first presidential election in which the Aceh Party participated—it experienced the disaffected coattail effect. This phenomenon is an anomaly for the Aceh Party, setting it apart from other political parties. Despite supporting the winning candidate in the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections, the Aceh Party saw no boost in its electability.

On the other hand, Gerindra benefited from the coattail effect as Prabowo's party. Having won no seats in the regional parliament in the 2009 election, it gained three seats in the 2014 election and eight seats in the 2019 election. In contrast, the Aceh Party experienced a drastic decline from 33 seats

(2009) to 29 seats (2014) and 18 seats (2019). Yet, in the two presidential elections involving the Aceh Party, the candidate won the contestation. In contrast, in the 2024 presidential election, the Prabowo-Gibran candidate, again supported by the Aceh Party, lost in Aceh. However, the number of Aceh Party's seats in parliament increased to 20 seats.

## Discussion

### The Aceh Party's Political Empowerment in 2024 Election

The decline in the Aceh Party's number of seats in parliament in the 2014 and 2019 elections is considered to be closely related to the political conflict with the ruling regime at the national level (Dialeksis, 2024). In the 2014 election, the Aceh Party supported the Prabowo-Hatta ticket, which opposed the Jokowi-JK ticket. In the 2019 election, the Aceh Party again supported the Prabowo-Sandi ticket against the incumbent Jokowi paired with Ma'ruf Amin. The impact of the Aceh Party's political support against the national political ruling party could be a factor influencing the decline in the number of seats the Aceh Party secured in the parliament. However, this explanation has limitations in explaining the increase in the Gerindra Party's electability in Aceh, which not only managed to increase the number of seats in parliament but also managed to secure the DPRA leadership seat in the 2019 elections. In contrast, in the 2009 elections, Gerindra Party did not secure any parliamentary seats in Aceh. Therefore, the concept of the disaffected coattail effect is a more relevant framework for understanding the dynamics of electoral politics in this context.

If observed closely, the revival of the Aceh Party in the 2024 elections correlates with changes in the party's image and branding displayed to the public, which has become the party's new strength in facing political contestation in Aceh. Although its national political affiliation is unpopular, the Aceh

Party has managed to leverage its political power to counteract the negative effects of the coattail effect. This paper argues that the Aceh Party's political empowerment in the 2024 election is done through three key political capitals: independence, mobilisation, and commodification.

Firstly, in terms of independence, the Aceh Party is a local party with an established structure in Aceh. Moreover, *Komite Peralihan Aceh* (the Aceh Transitional Committee/KPA, a forum for the reintegration of GAM soldiers) has an official structure down to the village level, which can strengthen the mass base and social capital for the Aceh Party (Akmal, Rahman, & Candrasari, 2022; Nirzalin et al., 2023). By utilizing the GAM network, which has a mass base down to the lower structures, the Aceh Party can control vote barns in each electoral district (Alqarni et al., 2024; Budiatri, 2022). In addition, local parties in Aceh have a 120% privilege for the nomination quota of legislative candidates, which is different from national parties with a 100% nomination quota. This mass base has even more potential because the Aceh Party does not have a national structure. This capital means that the party's independence is not reduced by the discourse and political dynamics that develop in the national arena.

The independence of the Aceh Party can also be seen from the nuances of locality, which have become the umbrella that shelters their capital. As the ruling party, the Aceh Party can capitalise on power in districts/cities, especially in areas led by its party cadres. The existence of power as economic capital combined with established social capital was crucial to mobilising the winning machine down to the lowest level (Hajad & Susetiawan, 2022). These two capitals have strengthened the Aceh Party's independence in maintaining its constituent base and expanding its territory. This political strength was realised in the 2024 elections, where the Aceh Party was the only

party with representation in every electoral district in Aceh.

Second in terms of mobilisation, the Aceh Party realises that revamping the party is crucial for the 2024 elections. Ahead of the 2024 elections, the Aceh Party has evaluated and improved party management in facing the elections. The Aceh Party was seen as an exclusive party in several elections because former GAM combatants dominated it. This dominance has implications for the Aceh Party's image, which is seen as a party of people who are not highly educated. The mockery is usually packaged in the idiom "*Partai Paket C*" (Paket C Party) or "*Partai Ijazah SMA*" (High School Diploma Party). This framing certainly hurts the party's image. Recognising the criticism and negative campaign, the Aceh Party has evaluated it by conducting open recruitment and regeneration, especially for youth and students.

Since 2019, the Aceh Transitional Committee and the Aceh Party have reconsolidated several "underbosses" such as Muda Seudang Aceh (2021), Jaringan Aneuk Syuhada Aceh (2022), and Putroe Aceh (2022). In the following years, these underbosses strengthened their structures not only at the city district level but also at the sub-district and village levels. This expansion of the mass base area became a momentum for the Aceh Party to regenerate cadres with the younger generation and novice Gen-Z voters (under 26 years old) with a total 931,705 voters (Muzaffarsyah, Rasyidin, Rahman, Dameria, & Mahdalena, 2022).

In addition, the Aceh Party also undertook political empowerment by mobilising former executives and legislators (as getting voters) and promoting 60% of new figures from potential cadres with higher education backgrounds in legislative candidacies. In a statement by its spokesperson, the Aceh Party nominated four doctors, nine masters, and 50 bachelors to win legislative seats at the provincial

level (Zulkarnaini, 2023). This new force's mobilisation improves the party's image and broadens the base area, evenly distributed in ten electoral districts throughout Aceh.

Third, in terms of commodification, since its establishment in 2007, the Aceh Party has consistently branded itself as the party of Aceh's speciality and "*seunambong perjuangan*" (continued struggle) that oversees the implementation of the MoU Helsinki with the UUPA. This brand has become the Aceh Party's political identity in the contestation of democracy in Aceh. The issues of privileges that the central government has not implemented have become commodities and political marketing for the Aceh Party. On the one hand, the Aceh Party's consistency in commodifying these issues benefits them because other political parties in Aceh rarely voice these issues. On the other hand, this political marketing can also be a boomerang because the public perceives that the failure to implement Aceh's special rights is the Aceh Party's failure to advocate for them.

To a certain extent, the commodification of the MoU Helsinki and UUPA issues by the Aceh Party became an instrument of political education to the public. It maintained the sense of struggle that had become the party's 'ideology.' Although criticism and counter-propaganda against these commodities are always loud in the public sphere, it seems that the Aceh Party has never hesitated to use the narratives in the three previous elections as the identity and political character of the party.

These three power structures became the basis for the Aceh Party's movement to increase its electability. GAM's involvement in the Aceh Party in four election periods confirms the "ideological diffusion" of their struggle that adapts to the needs of the local political context (Hajad & Susetiawan, 2022). In addition to the role of ulama, the utilisation of GAM's past network has a strong patronage relationship in boosting the votes of local parties, especially

the Aceh Party (Budiatri, 2022; Syam & Khalill, 2021). In the previous two elections (2014-2019), the Aceh Party tended to focus on the third building block: commodification. In these two elections, the party focused too much on political marketing about the MoU Helsinki, UUPA, and past struggles. This political marketing tends to generate negative sentiment from the public. This is because such commodification is irrelevant when power is in their hands. Public distrust led to punishment from the public, who left the Aceh Party. The Aceh Party's strategic focus on maximising its other strengths, particularly mobilisation, in the 2024 elections helped mitigate the negative coattail effect of its support for unpopular presidential candidates in Aceh.

## Conclusion

Political contestation in Aceh in the 2024 elections reflects complex dynamics and deviates from the general pattern in the political literature, which is terms the disaffected coattail effect in this paper. This phenomenon shows that the increase in Aceh Party seats does not correlate positively with the results of presidential election contestation at the national level. Instead, there is an inverse pattern of electability: when the presidential candidate supported by the Aceh Party wins in Aceh, the party's electability tends to decline, while when the candidate loses, support for the Aceh Party increases. This anomaly challenges the classic concept of the coattail effect, which usually describes a party's electoral gains from affiliation with a popular candidate at the national level.

In the post-conflict context, the Aceh Party's sustained success in four consecutive election periods confirms its position as an independent local political entity resistant to the hegemony of national discourse. The Aceh Party has utilised locality as a political branding tool, creating the perception that the party is a symbol of Aceh's specificity and political

identity that is still relevant and needed. This is reinforced by the reconsolidation of ex-GAM forces, which mobilises potential cadres to occupy strategic positions through formal democratic mechanisms.

In addition, the success of the Aceh Party is also supported by the optimisation of three main political capitals: independence in positioning itself outside the influence of national parties, the ability to mobilise based on local networks, and the commodification of local values as elements of electoral politics. These three capitals allow the Aceh Party to maintain its sustainability and strengthen its position as the only local party capable of dominating the Aceh political stage for almost two decades. Thus, this phenomenon confirms that the Aceh Party has not only survived but has also built a unique narrative and strategy that can overcome the limitations of local politics in the broader democratic landscape. These three components of political capital are the leading causes of the disaffected coattail effect.

## References

- Abdullah, T., Hamdani, M., & Mulyad, M. (2022). The Existence of Local Parties in the Perspective of Banda Aceh Citizens. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation*, 111–118. <https://doi.org/10.54660/anfo.2021.3.1.9>
- Aceh, K. I. P. *Penetapan Perolehan Kursi dan Calon Terpilih Anggota Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Aceh Pemilihan Umum 2014*. (2014).
- Aceh, K. I. P. *Keputusan Komisi Independen Pemilihan Aceh 15/Kpts/KIP Aceh/Tahun 2017*.(2017).
- Aceh, K. I. P. *Keputusan Komisi Independen Pemilhan Aceh 96/PL.01.8-Kpt/11/Prov/VIII/2019*. (2019).
- Aceh, K. I. P. *Keputusan Komisi Independen Pemilihan Aceh Nomor 6 Tahun 2024*. (2024).
- Akmal, M., Rahman, B., & Candrasari, R. (2022). Strengthening the Role of Sagoe

- Leadership Council in Developing Political Education: Study on Aceh Party. *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Social Science, Political Science, and Humanities (ICoSPOLHUM 2021)*, 648(ICoSPOLHUM2021), 319–322. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220302.048>
- Alfian, Muhammad, Z., & Saputra, J. (2022). The Crisis of the Aceh Local Party's Hegemony Post Election 2019. *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Social Science, Political Science, and Humanities (ICoSPOLHUM2021)*, 648(3), 66–74. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220302.011>
- Almubarak, T. (2019). Senjakala Partai Aceh? Retrieved March 24, 2024, from Kumparan website: <https://kumparan.com/acehkini/senjakala-partai-aceh-1r3QAivcmgb/full>
- Alqarni, W., Saleh, R., Anggraini, T., Sulaksono, T., & Akhyar, M. N. (2024). The Strategic Role of Local Political Parties in the Legislative Process Qanun for Sharia Financial Institutions in Aceh. *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam*, 8(3), 1881–1900. <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhg.v8i3.21802>
- Ansori, M. H. (2012). From Insurgency to Bureaucracy: Free Aceh Movement, Aceh Party and the New Face of Conflict. *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 1(1), 31–44. <https://doi.org/10.5334/sta.ah>
- Arenas, A. (2024). Coattail Effects and Turnout: Evidence from a Quasi-experiment. *Research and Politics*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20531680241229930>
- Borges, A., & Turgeon, M. (2017). Presidential coattails in coalitional presidentialism. *Party Politics*, 25(2), 192–202. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068817702283>
- Budiatri, A. P. (2022). The Impact of Local Parties on Party System Institutionalisation in Post-Conflict Aceh. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 41(1), 34–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681034211029035>
- Dewa, T. Z. S., Sobari, W., & Pohan, I. A. (2020). Jokowi Effect or Krisdayanti Effect? an Analysis of the Phenomenon of Reverse Coattail Effect by Celebrity Politics in the 2019 Concurrent Election. *Journal of Politics and Policy*, 3(1), 61–80. Retrieved from <https://jppol.ub.ac.id/index.php/jppol/article/view/35/31>
- Dialeksis. (2024). Fachrul Razi: Partai Aceh Bangkit di pemilu 2024. Retrieved April 13, 2024, from Dialeksis website: <https://dialeksis.com/polkom/fachrul-razi-partai-aceh-bangkit-di-pemilu-2024/>
- Gomberg, A., Gutiérrez, E., López, P., & Vázquez, A. (2018). Coattails and the Forces that Drive Them: Evidence from Mexico. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 58, 64–81. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2018.10.001>
- Hajad, V., & Susetiawan, S. (2022). Diffusion of Ideology and Role of Local Party Control to Understand Aceh Post-War. *Journal of Government and Civil Society*, 6(1), 71. <https://doi.org/10.31000/jgcs.v6i1.5518>
- Hamzah, M. (2009). Local Political Parties in Aceh: Engines of Democratisation in Indonesia. In O. Törnquist, S. A. Prasetyo, & T. Birks (Eds.), *Aceh The Role of Democracy for Peace and Reconstruction* (pp. 305–336). Sleman: PCD Press Indonesia & ISAI.
- Hillman, B. (2012). Ethnic politics and local political parties in Indonesia. *Asian Ethnicity*, 13(4), 419–440. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2012.710078>
- Huang, C., & Wang, T. Y. (2014). Presidential Coattails in Taiwan: an Analysis of Voter- and Candidate-specific Data. *Electoral Studies*, 33, 175–185. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2013.09.004>
- ISAI. (2009). Regional Election in Aceh. In O. Törnquist, S. A. Prasetyo, & T. Birks (Eds.), *Aceh The Role of Democracy for Peace and Reconstruction*. Sleman: PCD Press Indonesia & ISAI.

- Ishiyama, J. (2019). Identity Change and Rebel Party Political Success. *Government and Opposition*, 54(3), 454–484. <https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2018.48>
- Janah, K., Fatimah, S., & Hariz, H. S. S. (2023). The Role of Aceh Local Parties in the 2024 General Election in Realizing Democratization. *Volksgeist: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum Dan Konstitusi*, 6(1), 33–47. <https://doi.org/10.24090/volksgeist.v6i1.7532>
- Moraski, B. J. (2016). Reverse Coattail Effects in Undemocratic Elections: An Analysis of Russian Locomotives. *Democratization*, 24(4), 575–593. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2016.1222373>
- Muntoha. (2018). Strengthening Local Democracy through Local Political Parties in Aceh. *Researchers World: Journal of Arts & Science and Commerce (RWJASC)*, 9(2), 116. <https://doi.org/10.18843/rwjasc/v9i2/15>
- Muzaffarsyah, T., Rasyidin, Rahman, B., Damera, E., & Mahdalena. (2022). Analysis of the Political Party Position Decline in District Representative Council (DPRK) in the 2019 Election. *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Social Science, Political Science, and Humanities (ICoSPOLHUM 2021)*, 648(ICoSPOLHUM 2021), 214–220. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220302.031>
- Niebler, S., Marchetti, K., & Kozdron, T. (2020). Gubernatorial Elections and Coattail Effects of Women Candidates. *Journal of Women, Politics and Policy*, 41(3), 334–350. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1554477X.2020.1805268>
- Nirzalin, Bachri, N., Fakhurrhazi, Yunanda, R., Ilham, I., & Muchlis. (2023). Strengthening Reintegration through Social Capital: Learning from Aceh, Indonesia. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik*, 27(2), 141–156. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jsp.82251>
- Nivada, A. (2022). Eksistensi Partai Aceh dalam Percaturan Politik Pilkada. Retrieved March 20, 2024, from Dialeksis website: <https://dialeksis.com/analisis/eksistensi-partai-aceh-di-percaturan-politik-pilkada/>
- Nurhasim, M. (2012). Dominasi Partai Aceh Pasca-MoU Helsinki. *Penelitian Politik*, 9(2), 35–49.
- Rassanjani, S. (2018). Adu Kuat Partai Politik Lokal Peserta Pemilu Legislatif Tahun 2019. Retrieved from Dialeksis website: <https://dialeksis.com/analisis/adu-kuat-partai-politik-lokal-peserta-pemilu-legislatif-tahun-2019/>
- Rogers, S. (2019). Coattails, Raincoats, and Congressional Election Outcomes. *PS - Political Science and Politics*, 52(2), 251–255. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096518002135>
- Saharuddin, Larasati, E., Suwitri, S., & Dwimawanti, I. H. (2023). Analyzing People's Silence Power and the Incumbent Local Party Regime in Aceh Province Regional Head Elections in 2017. *International Journal of Research and Review*, 10(3), 206–226. <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20230324>
- Saputra, A., Nugroho, H., & Sujito, A. (2022). Post-Conflict Aceh; Partai Aceh Versus Partai Nanggroe Aceh at the 2017 Election. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 10(1), 87–104. <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v10i1.683>
- Sardini, N., & Erowati, D. (2020). "The Coattail Effect" in the Concurrent Elections in Indonesia: Study on Increasing Turnouts and Use of Voting Rights in the 2019 Elections. 2, 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.21-10-2019.2294415>
- Sindre, G. M. (2009). From Political Exclusion to Inclusion: The Political Transformation of GAM. In O. Törnquist, S. A. Prasetyo, & T. Birks (Eds.), *Aceh The Role of Democracy for Peace and Reconstruction* (pp. 215–256). Sleman: PCD Press Indonesia & ISAI.
- Syam, F., & Khalill, M. (2021). *Ulmaa' on the Political Stage: Study of the Analyzing*

- Aceh Party and the Aceh Sovereign Party in Southwest Aceh District.* 2(1), 70–88.
- Syarif, M. R. (2019). Local Political Parties in Aceh in 2017 Regional Election: Analysis of Political Identity and Islamization Issue. *ULUL ALBAB Jurnal Studi Islam*, 20(2), 346–363. <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v20i2.5668>
- Syarkawi, S., Koeswara, H., & Aromatica, D. (2021). Measuring the Existence of Aceh'S Local Parties in Aceh Legislative Election 2009-2019. *Jupiis: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, 13(2), 332. <https://doi.org/10.24114/jupiis.v13i2.28404>
- Umum, K. P. *Keputusan Komisi Pemilihan Umum Nomor 360 Tahun 2024.* , (2024).
- Usman. (2021). Analisis Eksistensi Partai Politik Lokal Di Aceh Pasca Perdamaian. *Jurnal Serambi Akademica*, 9(4), 520–537. Retrieved from <http://www.ojs.serambimekkah.ac.id/serambi-akademika/article/view/3069>
- Yuriadi, Y., Herlambang, P. B., & Hasan, N. D. (2023). Aceh's Democratic Landscape: Exploring the Role and Impact of Local Political Parties. *Jurnal Mengkaji Indonesia*, 2(2), 285–300. <https://doi.org/10.59066/jmi.v2i2.455>
- Zulfan, Ikramatoun, S., & Aminah. (2023). Aceh Local Political Party: The rise, victory, and decline. *Multidisciplinary Science Journal*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2023018>
- Zulkarnaini. (2023, December 30). Aceh Local Political Parties Betting in the 2024 Election. *Harian Kompas*. Retrieved from <https://www.kompas.id/baca/english/2023/12/18/en-pertaruhan-partai-politik-lokal-aceh>