

The Transformation of Free Aceh Movement (GAM) from Armed Movement into Political Movement: Strategy and Challenges of Aceh Party (PA)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the transformation process of GAM's Free Aceh Movement from armed movements to political movements after the signing of the Peace MoU between GAM and the Government of Indonesia, and to investigate the strategies and challenges of GAM through the Aceh Party (PA) in carrying out the Aceh peace vision and mission to prosper the people of Aceh. This research was conducted using a qualitative approach and analyzed interpretatively on the data collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. This study found that the transformation of GAM into PA has colored politics in Aceh where the presence of local political parties that can attract the attention of the Acehnese so far has dominated the victory both in the executive and legislative ranks. Many GAM figures occupy strategic positions in the Aceh government. The PA strategy is political empowerment from grassroots to elites at the provincial level by appointing charismatic fighters, representative political recruitment between young and old groups, as well as the right political education methods in the community to attract PA victory. However, in the 4-period political journey of PA in realizing the mandate of peace, has experienced several challenges. Internal conflicts both horizontally and vertically have colored the political dynamics of PA. The right political education is expected to realize the expectations of the people of Aceh in accordance with the mandate of the Helsinki Peace MoU.

Keywords: GAM, PA, Aceh Peace

INTRODUCTION

The prolonged conflict that occurred in Aceh was a bloody conflict that lasted more than 30 years. The post-independence conflict of the Republic of Indonesia began with Tengku Muhammad Daud Beureueh's rebellion to the proclamation of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) led by Hasan Tiro on December 4, 1976, and ended in the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) on 15 August 2005 in Helsinki-Finland.

The MoU above provides an opportunity for GAM to participate in the political process in Aceh through the establishment of local political parties. This means that GAM has gone through a process of transformation from an armed movement to a political movement. GAM for

more than 30 years has succeeded in influencing the people of Aceh, especially in rural areas. So that during the conflict, fighting for the ideology of GAM's struggle to separate itself from the Indonesian government was increasing (Stange & Patock, 2010)¹.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Some research results and theories underlying the writing of this article include:

Understanding of politics:

Politics

Misunderstanding or understanding in a narrow scope about politics will obscure political objectives and all activities that are related to politics, including political education. Etymologically politics comes from

Greek, precisely from the word “policy” which means city state. The political understanding of the experts among them was raised by Laswell & Kaplan (1950)² who gave a classic understanding that “politics as who gets, what, when, and how.”

Furthermore, according to Miriam Budiardjo (2008)³ politics is a variety of activities in a social system that involves the process of determining and implementing goals. Here are some perspectives or approaches to politics³:

1. Moral Perspective / approach (good / bad): Politics of something noble because it is an attempt to achieve a good and just social order. Politics in bad form is the struggle for power, property and throne.

2. Conflict Approach: Politics is an activity to obtain and maintain interests (material and non-material). In an effort to find and maintain interests, conflicts, conflicts (physical and non-physical) arise.

3. Functional approach: Politics is the activity of formulating and implementing general policies (concerning the allocation of importance values formulated in public policy).

4. Discourse analysis approach: Politics is an activity to discuss situations from a political phenomenon, for example, the process of selecting ministers.

Various political definitions put forward by experts with various similarities and differences in understanding. Usually differences arise from attitudes that only emphasize certain political aspects or tendencies to see the point of view of the originator himself. In the past few decades, politics was identified only by activities controlling the state. But in its development politics encompasses all political decisions and various political problems in achieving noble goals, namely people's welfare. For example, a community group that has been made aware of the effects of pollution from factories around the settlements that have caused citizen poisoning, will trigger political problems involving company owners, the government, and the community.

In Kartono (2009)⁴, the definition of politics is more dynamic and operationally functional, namely:

1. All decisions and implementation of future community development efforts.

2. Decision concerning self-fate.

3. Dynamic activities and processes of human behavior with an emphasis on political aspects of social problems.

4. Activities to uphold or change existing social conditions by using power.

5. All efforts and struggles of individuals and groups by using various tools, ways and alternatives of behavior to achieve one goal in accordance with the ideas of individuals and groups in an integral authority system in the territory of the country.

Political Party

Political parties are generally regarded as a manifestation of a political system that is modern or that is in the process of modernizing itself. So in the new countries the party has become a political institution that can be found.

According to Budiardjo & Anwar (1998)⁵ political parties are an organized group whose members have the same orientation, values and ideals, the aim of this group is to gain political power and win political position, and implement their policies. While according to Carl J Frieddrich in Budiardjo & Anwar (1998: 160)⁵, a political party is a group of people who are organized in a stable manner with the aim of seizing or maintaining control over the government for the leadership of their party and based on this control gives the party members fair and material use. But this is not a reason for R. Soltau defines a political party that is a group of citizens who are more or less organized, who act as a political entity and by utilizing their power to vote with the aim of controlling the government and explaining their general policies.

Aceh Conflict

The conflict between Aceh and the central government is multi-dimensional and rooted, meaning that the current conflict relationship cannot be separated from the conflict that occurred before the consolidation of Aceh. Darul Islam Government / Indonesian Islamic Army (DI / TII), revival of Free Aceh (AM), Aceh as Military Operations Area (DOM), Free Aceh Movement (GAM), Implementation of Martial Law, Civil Emergency and memorandum of understanding (MoU) between government RI and GAM are coordination lines that are not interrupted from the Aceh conflict.

MoU Helsinki

The Helsinki MOU according to the Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia is a memorandum of understanding or agreement between Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) which was signed jointly in Helsinki Finland. The Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) affirmed their commitment to resolve the Aceh conflict in a peaceful, comprehensive and sustainable manner for all⁶. Furthermore, the parties to the conflict are determined to build mutual trust because they believe that only with a peaceful settlement of the conflict will it be possible to rebuild Aceh.

Aceh Party (PA)

The Aceh Party (PA), formerly known as the Free Aceh Movement Party (GAM), was once transformed into the Independent Aceh Movement Party. PA is one of the local political parties in the province of Aceh, Indonesia (Wikipedia: 2018). The party first participated in the 2009 Indonesian Legislative General Election and the Aceh provincial parliamentary elections, chaired by Tengku H. Muzakir Manaf, with the attorney Kamaruddin Abubakar. In the 2009 elections, the Aceh Party won a majority of votes in the province of Aceh with 47% of the seats available but in the 2014 election it was only able to win 26 seats from 81 seats.

The vision of PA is to build a positive image in political life within the framework of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia. As well as implementing party mechanisms in accordance with existing rules, and upholding the Helsinki MoU.

Political Education

Political education in English is called political forming, the word forming refers to the desire to form political people. Political education is one form of adult education⁴. This education is not intended only to form political intellectuals that are isolated from the surrounding community, but rather to emphasize individual relations with other individuals, and individuals with society in their environment, in a political context related to socio-economic-cultural aspects, in the midst of emerging conflict situations because of various kinds of differences or plurality in society. Next we review some definitions of political

education according to experts.

According to Rusadi Kantaprawira⁹ (2004: 55) political education is to increase people's knowledge so that they can participate optimally in their political systems. In accordance with people's sovereignty or democracy, the people must be able to carry out the duties of participation. Meanwhile, according to Almond & Powell (1975)⁷, political education is a part of political socialization that specifically forms political values, which shows how each society should participate in its political system.

Method

The research approach uses qualitative approaches that describe or describe problems by looking at phenomena and problems through the actual description. The data collection techniques used interview with elements of the Aceh Transition Commission (KPA), the TNI, the Community, the Government, former GAM, and Aceh Party Candidates. Furthermore, the researchers also observed the phenomenon of the change in the Free Aceh Movement to become a political movement. The third step is to study the documents related to the research, including the Law, Perpres, and also journals about GAM's struggle.

DISCUSSION

The Process of GAM Transformation

GAM's actual transformation has begun in stages, but it always fails and leads to gunfire. But the tragedy of the December 26, 2004 earthquake and tsunami brought about a tremendous disaster but also brought extraordinary goodness. The peace that the people of Aceh craved, finally realized with all the consequences. Disputed weapons turn into arguments, the wilderness becomes the negotiating table, emotional physical change becomes rational, and selfishness becomes humanist. The transformations that occur are 2 types of segments:

GAM Transformation in Society

GAM transformation into the community was a peace process in the Helsinki MoU after the GAM signed it, requiring GAM to reintegrate into the community. After GAM was dissolved they returned to ordinary people who could live safely without being hunted by fear like during a conflict. Many of the former GAM members,

when they returned to the community, returned to their old professions that had been abandoned, for example as farmers, fishermen, builders, traders, and also taught at dayah.

Even though in the Helsinki MoU agreement it was stated that former GAM and conflict victims must be given adequate services, but most of them did not expect the government too much. They just hope that they can live in peace and harmony.

GAM Transformation in Political Movement

Changes to political movements need to be done with smart steps and a natural approach, therefore, the need for involvement of charismatic figures in the community are needed. They can bring simple political methods that can be accepted by the Acehnese who are mostly apathetic about the situation of peace.

Political movements have been carried out and have been relatively successful which is marked by the end of the physical war, followed by the formation of local political parties in Aceh, including the Aceh Party. The following is the opinion of one of the figure of PA on political development in Aceh. According to him the development of GAM in politics has experienced rapid development because political management has changed verbally and no longer on the issue of Aceh independence, but has developed on the issue of autonomy, regional development and community empowerment. Aceh' political movements highlight more peace and development in areas affected by conflict.

Political Strategy of PA

GAM transformation from an armed movement to a political movement requires a strategy in its implementation. Among the strategies that exist is to avoid throwing issues = issues with indications of thuggery and field intimidation, on the contrary, the following strategies of PA as one of the mandates of GAM:

Comply with Vision and Mission

The establishment of this party is a commitment of peace agreement between RI and GAM which is also a tangible manifestation of armed political transformation towards civilized democratic politics. The substance of the agreement provides some authority for Aceh which is explained in Law No. 11 of 2001 concerning

the Government of Aceh as the basis for running the government. But the substance is incomplete, so the PA Law is formulated as well as its implementation as aspired, namely Self Government. For this reason the PA formulates the Vision and Mission as follows:

Vision: Build a positive image of political life within the framework of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia and implement the party mechanism in accordance with the rules of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia by upholding the Helsinki memorandum of understanding signed on August 15, 2005 between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement.

Mission: Transform and / or develop a vision to think the Acehnese people from the image of the revolution to the image of party development in terms of transparency for the prosperity of the people of Aceh, especially and the Indonesian people in general.

Formulating PA Winning Steps

The followings are steps that has been formulated based on the interviewed with elements of party members, party leaders, party sympathizers, and common members of society.

At least there are 4 steps:

1. The mass base of PA is very real and heterogeneous in social status so the PA must do political empowerment from grassroots to elite. PA candidates are recruited with the sikureung team system. This system is known conventionally as PA politics. It was said that PA conveyed its political vision and mission through appropriate political education within the party and the general public, both through training of cadres and party sympathizers and also through social media to the general public.

2. PA must have a strong political engine that can work effectively and quickly without a complicated bureaucracy. The political machine is not only in the political structure, but also involves, KPA, youth, women, intellectuals and also elements of the ulama.

3. Creating a positive political atmosphere that shows the political power that is considered capable of bringing political and economic change in Aceh.

4. Creating Positive Political Culture by giving a model to society that PA is the right party controlling

Aceh. The models are elite of PA, cadres and sympathizers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Changing the direction of GAM's movement to politics shows that the existence of the struggle still exists and continues to grow because as long as it still does not provide justice for the people of Aceh in the economy and welfare. But the challenge ahead is that representatives of the people must explore the science of legacy and become legislators who are concerned with the people. So the task and responsibility of GAM in this case PA is able to absorb the aspirations of the people and accommodate the interests of the people.

Some recommendations are:

1. To the board members both DPRA / DPRK from PA do not forget the promises that have been given to the people

2. The management of the PA and the Council of PA cannot prioritize the interests of the group alone, but think of the interests of the people who have entrusted to represent the aspirations of the people.

3. To the regional leaders from PA for the welfare of all Acehnese people regardless of class and party.

4. Political education will be the recommended choice in spreading the PA's vision and mission.

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