

Aceh Party Seen by Millennials in Bireuen Regency

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Abstract

The Aceh Party in Bireuen District, Aceh Province, has been successful in multiple elections, winning the mayoral election and occupying the majority seat for two terms. The party has played an active role in fostering democratic life and maintaining peace in the region, as well as influencing policy and promoting the development agenda. Despite a decline in the number of legislative seats in each election, the Aceh Party has managed to maintain its presence as a winner by acquiring parliamentary seats. However, it is important to note that the decline in legislative seats is not the sole factor that weakens the party's existence. There are various factors that contribute to the declining electability of the Aceh Party, and further analysis is required to understand the overall impact on the party's strength. This research aims to understand the views of the millennial generation on the Aceh Party, a local political party. Using a qualitative approach, the study explores how millennials perceive the party's existence in the present day. It is important to explore the knowledge and insights of millennials, as it provides an understanding of their role in shaping the nation and state. The research hopes to promote millennial awareness and involvement in building national identity and democratic wisdom in Bireuen Regency. The study will employ a qualitative and descriptive method, using techniques such as interviews and documentation to collect and analyze data. This data is crucial in examining the perspectives of the millennial generation on the Aceh Party in Bireuen Regency, Aceh Province, ensuring accurate and reliable findings. The study conducted on the perception of the millennial generation in Bireuen Regency towards the Aceh Party reveals contrasting views. While the party's existence is seen through a historical struggle lens and tends to be sectoral egoistic, the millennials view it more objectively, resulting in a decline in its political electability. The Aceh Party fails to engage and empower the millennials in promoting the party, thereby hindering its effectiveness. This disconnect is primarily due to the rapid growth of digital media and the information it disseminates. Consequently, the Aceh Party struggles to stay relevant in the current political landscape. As the millennial generation plays a significant role in Bireuen Regency, it is crucial to approach them in an adaptive manner, avoiding sectoral egos and exclusivity, and aligning with their evolving needs and preferences.

Keywords: *Existence, Aceh Party, Millennials, Bireuen Regency.*

Introduction

Since the 2009 elections, local parties in Aceh have played a significant role in the development of democracy in Indonesia. The Aceh Party, founded by former GAM combatants, has emerged as the most prominent local party in the province. Despite a decrease in the number of seats won in each election cycle, the Aceh Party has managed to retain its status as the dominant local party. It continues to hold a majority in the provincial parliament and in several districts and cities in Aceh, including Bireuen District. In Bireuen District, the party has managed to survive despite a decrease in the number of contested seats. At the provincial level, the Aceh Party has also experienced a decline in the number of seats won, but it still holds the top position. The composition of the Aceh Party's seat gains in both Bireuen District and the province is shown in Table.

Table 1. Aceh Party Seats for 3 Election Periods

No	Period	Bireuen		Province		Info
		Total	Seats	Total	Seats	
2	2014-2019	40	13	69	33	
3	2019-2024	40	9	81	30	
4	2024-2029	40	6	81	18	

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The Aceh Party has experienced a decline, and it is predicted to continue in the 2024 elections if no efforts are made to maintain its presence. Similarly, the Bireuen Regency may face a crisis of confidence if preventative measures are not taken. Aceh parties must develop strategies to survive in the local democratic universe of Aceh. Despite the decreasing number of parliamentary seats, the Aceh Party has played a significant role in fostering democratic life in Aceh, including in the Bireuen Regency. The party has fulfilled its roles, functions, and responsibilities in representing the constituents and has adhered to the party law. The Aceh Party has fought to strengthen its existence and influence policies in the Bireuen Regency. Supposedly, a political party fights for its interests by obtaining power and establishing its existence or seizing a position in a constitutional manner (Budiharjo, 1998). Therefore, in Sigmund Neumann's view, political parties legally compete for popular support and focus on controlling government power (Arbi Sanit, 2001: 19). Furthermore, so that the existence of political parties is legitimized, according to Carl J. Fredreik, the main focus of political parties is to influence and win the determination of public policy (Oka Mahendra, 2004).

This research aims to understand the perspective of millennials as a public voice towards the Aceh Party, specifically in Bireuen Regency. The millennial generation, which makes up more than 34% of the total population, has the potential to interpret political awareness and national ethos in the future. In Bireuen Regency, there are 131,709 registered voters, with a participation rate of 74.84% in the 2019 legislative elections. The data shows that the millennial generation, born between 1981 and 2001, is the largest and most influential voter group. This highlights the importance of considering the views and opinions of millennials in shaping political discourse and decision-making. As the millennial generation continues to grow in numbers and become significant potential voters, political parties need to take their perspectives into account. The research aims to shed light on the understanding of millennials as a voice of public criticism towards the Aceh Party.

Literature Review

The term millennial was first coined in 1987 by William Strauss and Neil Howe (2000) in their book "Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation." It was used to refer to the group of children born in 1982 who entered pre-school. The media started referring to this group as millennials when they graduated from high school. However, other definitions of millennials exist. According to Elwood Carlson, millennials are those born between 1983 and 2001. Based on Karl Mannheim's Generation Theory, millennials are those born between 1980 and 2000. The millennial generation is often referred to as generation Y and has been recognized and used in major US newspapers since August 1993 (Said: 1993). States that millennials are those born in the early 1980s to 2000s, or between 1981 and 1996. This generation is also known by other names such as Gen-Y, Net Generation, Generation WE, Boomerang Generation, and Peter Pan Generation. The millennial generation has emerged as a significant population group (Yuswohady, 2016).

In the article "Millennial Trends" discusses the millennial generation, which is defined as those born between the early 1980s and 2000s, or specifically between 1981 and 1996. This generation is also known as Gen-Y, Net Generation, Generation WE, Boomerang Generation, Peter Pan Generation, and other terms. The millennial generation has emerged as a significant population during a time of advanced technological development. Millennials are distinct from the preceding generation, known as generation X. Additionally, there is a subsequent generation referred to as Gen-Z, with individuals born between 2000 and 2012 (Yuswohady: 2016). The age classification of millennials or generation Y is actually not very specific because there are many similarities between generation Y and generation Z so that these two generations are usually associated and related to each other because they live hand in hand with the emergence of new technology. In addition, the characteristics of these two generations are not much different.

The emergence of the term millennial because this generation began at the beginning of the emergence of technology ranging from games, gadgets, smartphones, the internet and the term is increasingly familiar to hear until now. Based on data from Badan Pusat Statistik (2021) as in Table 2, it explains the millennial group and distinguishes generations and age groups between generations.

Table 2. Distinguishes Generations and Age Groups

Populatio	Age Groups	Age
Gen Z	1997-2012	10th-25th
Milenial	1981-1996	26th-41th
Gen X	1965-1980	57th-42th
Baby Boomer	1946-1964	76th-58th
Post Gen Z	Beyond 2013	09th-pasca
Pre Boomer	Post 1946	Post- 76th

According to Nindyati (2017) that another name for the millennial generation is also commonly referred to as Generation Y or Generation Langgas is a demographic group after Generation X (Gen-X), where this generation is the millennial generation born between 1980 and 2000. Furthermore, the results of research from Lancaster & Stillman (2002) Generation Y is known as the Millennial generation or Millennials. The phrase generation Y began to be used in editorials of major US newspapers in August 1993. This generation uses instant communication technologies such as email, SMS, instant messaging and social media such as Facebook and Twitter, Instagram and others, so in other words generation Y is a generation that grew up in the era of the internet boom (Hidayatullah: 2018).

The aspect of millennial resources quoted from the statement of MilBrath and Goel in Candranegara (2019) distinguishes several types of political participation, namely; First, “apathetic” political participation is a person who withdraws from the political process. Second, having a “spectator” attitude towards politics, at least having voted in general elections. Third, “gladiatorial” political participation is people who are actively involved in the political process, namely communicators, face-to-face specialists, party activists and campaign workers and community activists. the participation rate of the age segmentation. The younger generation, 15-24 years old, prefer topics related to music or movies, sports, and technology. Meanwhile, the 25-34 year olds are more varied in the topics they like to talk about, including social politics, economics, and religion. The internet consumption of the 15-34 year old population is also much higher than that of the older population (Alvara research, 2014).

The millennial generation is different from previous generations. This generation was born and raised at a time when economic, political and social turmoil hit Indonesia. The roar of reformation has had a profound impact on millennials. This generation grows into individuals who are open-minded, uphold freedom, are critical and brave, and care about political life (pen). This is also supported by the current government conditions which are more open and conducive (Suci Prasasti, 2020: 16-17). The typology of political participation includes five dimensions, namely: 1) Electoral participation is the participation of citizens by voting, including voting during general elections; 2) Consumer participation, which includes activities to make donations to charity, boycott or sign petitions and carry out political consumption, or in other words, consumer participation is the action of citizens as critical political consumers; 3) Party activity, which is the act of becoming a member or active supporter of a political party, doing volunteer work or donating money to a political party; 4) Protest activity, which includes actions such as participating in demonstrations, strikes and other demonstration activities; 5) Contact activity, which is the act of contacting government organizations, politicians or government officials (Teorell, Et.al, 2007).

The millennial generation's proximity to technology has an impact on their political choices. Because traditional ways of expressing ideas will no longer be used but will utilize technology which will have a greater impact. An educated and open-minded culture due to technological support and what is a global trend, will be a consideration for this generation, including in participation and choice decisions in the democratic party (Ali Said, et.al, 2018). Political participation is not solely measured by voting in elections. Basically, there are many forms of political participation by millennials, such as sending letters (messages) to government officials, participating in protests or demonstrations, becoming members of political parties, becoming members of community organizations, running for public office, making donations to parties or politicians, and participating in social fundraising events to help the poor (dhuafa) (Christiany Juditha,

2018). Nurul Utama (2021) in his article published in Kompas online media argues that the millennial generation was born at a time when technology has advanced so that it is automatically very proficient in technology. They are inseparable from social media and smartphones.

Methodology

Empirically, this type of research explores the understanding and knowledge of millennials about the Aceh Party. Millennials are invited to recognize and or understand, and vice versa, millennial opinions are explored so that their views on local parties or Aceh parties can be revealed from what was previously understood. The importance of the existence of the Aceh Party in the political life of citizens in Bireuen Regency will certainly vary in understanding from millennials. Moleong J lexy states that this type of qualitative research uses descriptive-qualitative analysis methods, as well as exploratory qualitative (Moleong, 2018). The diversity of millennial perspectives means that the research will explore in-depth understanding, develop theory, and describe the social realities and expectations that millennials understand about Partai Aceh. The various realities understood by millennials are recorded, interpreted and analyzed according to the understood context. Through a qualitative approach, it is possible to dive into the context of the research. Therefore, the primary data source of this research is based on direct interviews and written interviews through questionnaires that are prepared in such a way that the problem formulation is answered properly.

Result

Geographical Condition of Bireuen Regency

Kota Juang is the name for Bireuen, which became a district that was formerly part of North Aceh district. On October 12, 1999 this region was divided from North Aceh with the nickname Kota Juang so that it became a characteristic in the characteristics of this district. Historically, Bireuen Regency was once a historic area and was once designated as the capital of the Second Indonesian Republic on June 18, 1948, due to political instability due to the Second Dutch military aggression in 1947-1948, the Emergency Government of the Republic of Indonesia which was originally located in the city of Bukit Tinggi in West Sumatra shifted to the Bireuen area. This provides a story of struggle in maintaining the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia when this country was just proclaimed on August 17, 1945. Bireuen Regency is a coastal area located on the east and north coast of Aceh province. Bireuen Regency has an area of approximately 1,798.25 km² or 3.16% of the total area of Aceh Province. Bireuen Regency is located 40 53' 20.3" - 50 16; 25.8" North Longitude and 960 55' 30.1" - 960 19' 45.9" East Longitude and is at an altitude of 0 - 2637 meters above sea level (DPL) from the side of the region (BPS Bireuen, 2024).

Millennials' views on the existence of the Aceh Party in the political process in Bireuen Regency

Millennials are a very important political organ in gaining political support. Of course, the millennial generation is able to influence the ongoing political process. Millennials in the digital age are able to provide a space for political views that can sustain political support. What must be understood is that the development of technology and information is able to provide an overview of political direction and understanding. According to the views of the millennial generation, the political process that occurs is not necessarily the political behavior of a political party. This is what makes millennials the most potential political ammunition in winning political contestation for political parties. The millennial generation has an important role in the process of providing political support to individuals who are cadres of certain political parties.

The development of information technology has changed the pattern of politics that is manual to a digital-based system for political support. Observations of the election process so far by the millennial generation tend to have considerations in supporting every political actor who they think is very supportive of their interests. The views of this millennial generation need to be predicted so that it will provide an overview of the trend in the direction of support for political competition. The presence of the millennial generation

can have a major impact on the support achieved by a political party. Consciously or unconsciously, political parties must recognize that millennial views are very important because they have a large support base due to the presence of generations Z and Y in general in society. Millennials are also the most up to date social media users regarding political issues that are developing.

The political process that occurs within the Aceh Party is increasingly making it unattractive to the millennial generation. This is what makes the Aceh Party's electability in Bireuen district decreasing so that the results of the last election Aceh Party lost prestige to the Golkar Party, which became the overall champion from the determination of 40 seats in parliament. This is seen from the political perspective of the millennial generation in Bireuen Regency who tend to be very open to any party. They think that the political leaders of Bireuen Regency must bring the changes and aspirations desired by them, so it is not surprising that the political process that occurs in Bireuen Regency where the existence of the Aceh Party has not been so significant. Millennials tend to see politicians in terms of popularity in their circles. The existence of the Aceh party in Bireuen Regency so far has not had a very constructive impact in the aspect of development in all fields or sectors. So it is not surprising that politics is less interesting for the Millennial generation. Related to the Aceh Party, which did not fully approach persuasively so that it was unable to boost political support. However, the millennial generation's perception of the current political situation tends not to be too interesting, so they are less familiar with the Aceh Party.

The pattern of behavior of local political parties has become less attractive to the millennial generation. This is due to the less than ideal practical political process in Bireuen Regency in the existence of the Aceh Party. So a shift in values occurs that does not describe the desires of the millennial generation. Millennial involvement in politics in Bireuen Regency does not lead local political parties in Aceh and tends to be approached by national parties periodically approaching the millennial generation. Of course, the political process that occurred in Bireuen Regency did not have a major impact on the existence of the Aceh Party. This political process is what makes support by the millennial generation. So what emerged was apathy towards the process that took place in seeing the existence of the Aceh Party in gaining political support.

The political direction of local parties is not very attractive to the millennial generation, so many tend to choose to support national parties. However, the factor of minimal political education has increasingly made the millennial generation not care about the political process that occurs and tends to care about the upcoming elections only seen in Bireuen Regency. Millennials in the Regency provide a political view related to the existence of the Aceh Party. It is true that the Aceh party is a local party that is solidly concerned about the issue of the unrealized peace agreement in the Helsinki MoU between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement. However, the millennial generation sees that the behavior of politicians from the Aceh party does not only prosper the party but also the politicians themselves. The existence of the Aceh Party is less meaningful in the eyes of millennials who consider practical politics only ceremonial elections. Whereas the existence of the Aceh Party is a strength in building the local political framework in Bireuen Regency. So the strength of the Aceh Party in the political process lies in the mentality and enthusiasm that arises because practical politics discusses strategies and planning in achieving power in government. The stigma that states the existence of the Aceh Party in politics is ineffective because it only sees from the side of ideals and hopes, so it is considered less representative of the wishes of the millennial generation. This aspect makes the millennial generation very skeptical of the existence of the Aceh Party.

Millennials themselves in providing support have their own perspective in seeing party A or party B so that the existence of the Aceh Party in the 2024 elections. Whereas if the pressure on the millennial generation is very often carried out, it is not surprising that the existence of the Aceh Party in politics in Bireuen Regency. This is what makes millennial views more skeptical and considers all political parties the same, including the Aceh Party. So the Aceh Party should have been able to read the political situation that millennials are an important generation that needs to be fully approached. In fact, it is necessary to approach so that political support can be achieved by the Aceh Party and the millennial view of the party is very interesting. So for the millennial generation, caring about the political dynamics that occur in Bireuen Regency is not interesting, let alone discussing the existence of the Aceh Party. So it is not strange if the millennial generation that practical politics is just a waste of time. This aspect is due to millennial political participation that still does not interest them.

Aceh Party's Strategy in Increasing Political Electability in Bireuen Regency

The Aceh Party's strategy in increasing electability is something that needs to be traced from the results of the research study. This shows that the political communication patterns carried out by the cadres and sympathizers of the Aceh Party are not optimal. In general, the political process that occurs in Bireuen Regency is indeed very good and all citizens have the right to be elected and vote in the democratic process. Basically, the views of the millennial generation see that in politics there are no problems in Bireuen Regency, but they do not really follow the political existence of the Aceh Party, especially referring to election rules that do not require a person to be forced to support one particular political party in their representation in government. There are two fundamental problems with the existence of the Aceh Party in the political process in Bireuen District.

The most dominant political process is the sectoral ego in determining political party cadres who compete in the 2024 elections. Whereas the strength of the political strategy lies in optimizing the strengthening of the party and raising it. So it is not surprising that the political process that occurs in the Aceh Party makes the views of the people in Bireuen Regency skeptical. In addition, it also does not use the political machine optimally in attracting the interest of Bireuen Regency so that political support in the 2024 elections is very weak, very stagnant and tends to be viewed skeptically by the people in Bireuen Regency towards the Aceh Party is a weakness in political strategy. It is not surprising that dynamics within the Aceh Party emerge and that there are differences in perceptions between fellow cadres and sympathizers in Bireuen Regency.

The foundation of the Aceh Party's political strategy is good, but it does not get more attention from the people in Bireuen Regency. In addition, many cadres are not too familiar in the community. Furthermore, the Aceh Party lacks sufficient political modalities and does not really attract the interest of the people in Bireuen Regency. It is clear from what has been said that political parties exist in Bireuen Regency. The Aceh Party should also provide opportunities for people in Bireuen District who have potential figures and want to join the Aceh Party cadres. It is very likely that the emergence of sectoral ego has made the Aceh Party less favored by the people in Bireuen district. Ironically, the results of the last election showed that the parliament had only six seats from six electoral districts in Bireuen Regency. So the process that occurs is the lack of trust built in the Aceh Party which is seen by the community.

The political dynamics in Bireuen Regency illustrate that the objectivity of people's political views provides an explanation that the existence of the Aceh Party is not maximized. Whereas the discussion of the Aceh Party's role in the political process is very important because the party is a party dominated by former GAM combatants. The results of political competition so far in Bireuen Regency tend to favor politicians from national parties and the lack of support for local parties.

The Aceh Party in carrying out a political strategy does not see which opportunities are most dominant from the elements of society that provide political support in the elections. In fact, the millennial generation is a very significant organ in society that can be used to gain dominant political support in Bireuen Regency. This is also stigmatized in the community environment in Bireuen district which illustrates that the Aceh Party is the same as other parties. This political conception becomes a guideline for anyone in society as a belief that provides an objective assessment. This is what makes the Aceh Party less likely to gain political support in the 2024 elections in Bireuen Regency for practical politics. The most important thing is that the historical political conception is very ineffective and tends to stagnate and reduce the political electability of the Aceh Party.

Conclusion

Aceh Party is basically a local political party that is able to contribute to the progress of Bireuen Regency. However, the existence of the Aceh Party was initially very good and strong, but due to the historical aspects of the struggle that made political support decline. Political patterns can also attract public interest, especially the millennial generation. Political influence illustrates the strength of a party in attracting the interest of the millennial generation. So the millennial generation can support political parties seen from various aspects that they find interesting. The millennial generation's perception of the role and position of

the Aceh Party illustrates its growing popularity. So the tendency is less adaptive in society, the political process will run as it is.

Political communication patterns that have not been maximized have decreased the political electability of the Aceh Party. The political strategies used tend not to be open and broad so that they are unable to gain support from the millennial generation in Bireuen district. This millennial generation views that every political process must be rational and objective so that the political direction run by the Aceh Party will be clear. This is what is not done by the Aceh party itself in Bireuen Regency. The Aceh Party still believes that the conception for the sake of the struggle of the Acehnese nation has not been able to fully provide space for the interest of the millennial generation who have an objective view. In the public sphere in Bireuen Regency, realizing people's expectations is necessary to strengthen political support in the next election process.

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