

# An evaluation of a special government's legal structure for alleviating poverty: Role of local government in North Aceh, Indonesia

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**Abstract:** We examine the role of the North Aceh Government in implementing the Law on the Governing of Aceh (LoGA) as a legal structure in development policy. As a symbol of peace, the LoGA is a reference for accelerating development to alleviate poverty, including North Aceh as a conflict region. However, until now, the area remains the poorest in the province of Aceh. This research used descriptive qualitative methods, evaluating the local government's performance as policymakers based on the Law by reconstructing policy theory (Easton) and legal system (Friedman). Our findings indicated that the local government needed help implementing LoGA to form development policies to solve poverty. This research suggested the importance of providing legal certainty in the distribution of authority, capacity building, and strengthening of political will for local government conducting its role.

**Keywords:** legal structure; authority; capacity building; political will; policy-making process

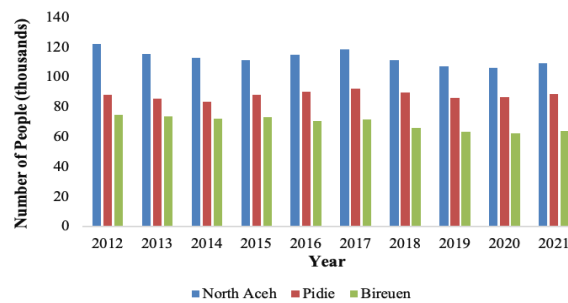
## 1. Introduction

Globally, conflict and poverty are closely linked; poverty encourages conflicts, leading to poverty (Justino, 2011; Okunlola and Okafor, 2022). A stage requires valid policies to solve various problems, including an asymmetrical decentralization policy (Lele, 2019). In recent years, Aceh has become one of the Indonesian regions under these circumstances (Suwanda, 2020). In the 1970s, Aceh was considered impoverished despite its prodigious oil and gas wealth (Dewi et al., 2018). These conditions led to a protracted 30-year conflict between the Aceh Freedom Movement (AFM) and the Republic of Indonesia, exacerbating Aceh's poverty (Ikramatoun et al., 2018), which was at 29%–30% during that time (BPS Nasional, 2022). The Helsinki MoU, as a peace symbol, has become a new hope for the Aceh people's prosperity (Syahbandir, et al., 2021). The Helsinki MoU demanded that the Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono Government issue a Special Law for Aceh, known as Law Number 11 of 2006, on the Governing of Aceh (LoGA) as a foundation of its economic improvement (Thariq, 2019).

The LoGA became the legal basis enabling the local Government to ensure its specific autonomy (Januar and Marziah, 2019). It is required that the local Government should be able to manage the specific autonomy of Aceh well and ensure its prosperity (Setiawan et al., 2020). However, after two decades of specific autonomy, it could not significantly decrease the poverty rate (Setiawan, 2022). The province could only reduce the poverty rate by 12.95% and 0.9% per year (Bappeda Aceh & Kompas, 2022). The Government's inability to reduce poverty in the province showed an incongruity of indigenous development despite the support of 6.1 billion USD in

autonomy finances from 2008 to 2021. North Aceh is one of the regions affected by that condition.

North Aceh, located in the northern Aceh Province, became the Freedom Aceh Movement base during the conflict (Bin Abu Bakar, 2015). North Aceh has a land area of 3296.86 km<sup>2</sup>, which accounts for 5.59% of the total provincial area. It is the most populous region in Aceh, with a population of 608,110 people, representing 11% (BPS Aceh, 2022b). As a regency in Aceh with a high potential for natural resources, North Aceh has the highest poverty rate among 109,490 people (BPS Aceh, 2022a). It is considered the poorest populated region in the country for over ten years (**Figure 1**).



**Figure 1.** Top 3 ranking of poverty rate of regencies/cities in Aceh (BPS Aceh, 2022a).

The LoGA has widely allowed local governments to implement development policies (Bertrand, 2019). Based on the data shown above, the researchers of the current work assume that the local government could not implement the Law via the appropriate development policy. Thus, it is vital to analyse this phenomenon more deeply to understand the factors related to the problems of producing policy recommendations and increasing the role of the regional institutions.

A legal system can regulate state affairs through policies and decisions, including investment and development (Liu et al., 2021). A legal system requires the government's role to identify and implement it (Chen, 2022). The existence of the government makes the relationship between Law and development closer (Davis and Trebilcock, 1999). The Law governing a development plan is known as the Development Law. Otherwise, development policies comply with the Law (Alterman, 2013). Development can flourish if poverty is reduced (Todaro and Smith, 2012). These conditions have prompted the importance of analysing the government's role in implementing the legal system in development policies.

A legal can resolve problems and conflicts as an essential part of a legal society (Seidman, 1975). To analyse the law's implementation, we must place it in a legal system (Astutik and Trisiana, 2020). As a legal system, a law has three components to run the system, one of which is the legal structure that carries out the substance of the legal system (Friedman, 1987). Analysis related to the legal structure is mainly carried out on the role of law enforcement officials. Ratnawati et al. (2017) analyzed legal structure as law enforcement tools, including the police agency and court jurisdiction, until the legal pattern is formed and functioning well. Similarly, Handayani (2012) analyzed the implementation of the forestry law and placed the legal structure into the power of law enforcement in terms of quantity, quality, and facilities. More

researchers analysed the legal structure as the role of law enforcement officials. Even though the legal structure is not only law enforcement officials, a government's role is in implementing the law through its policies (Nugroho, 2017).

Furthermore, Zulfahmi (2017) and Januar and Marziah (2019) analyzed the implementation of the Law on Governing the Aceh (LoGA) and the role of local government (executive and legislative). Zulfahmi found that differences in perceptions regarding the content of the Law, vested interests, and sectoral egos constitute obstacles to both roles in implementing the Aceh Government Law, resulting in suboptimal outcomes for the Aceh Special Autonomy policy. Januar and Marziah found that the lack of cooperation between the executive and legislative branches and differences in the law are the causes of the suboptimal performance of the local government. The weak role of regional institutions has led to suboptimal policy outcomes, making it challenging to reduce poverty rates in Aceh. The law has provided the local government's role as a legal structure, performing the tasks of governance and developing agendas for poverty alleviation (Singh and Chudasama, 2020). The legal structure covers law enforcement and law implementation as the local government conducts (Friedman, 1987).

This paper attempts to address the limitations of previous studies. In particular, it addresses the local government's role as a legal structure in implementing the LoGA to solve poverty, especially in the North Aceh Regency, Indonesia. We ask, "How effective is the role of the North Aceh District government in carrying out its authority based on the LoGA for regional development?". This paper will be analysed through in-depth interviews with informants, local stakeholders, academics, and political groups, supplemented by secondary data and observations from North Aceh, Indonesia.

The study is structured as follows. First, it gives an overview of the literature on legal structure in the legal system, the public policymaking process, and the role of local government in the legal application. Second, it outlines the research methodology, including an overview of analysing tools. Then, this paper is followed by a discussion of the study's findings in the North Aceh Regency. The concluding remarks summarize the analysis and open up questions for future research.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1. Legal structure role in a legal system**

The law implementation must consider the law a legal system (Astutik and Trisiana, 2020). Legal as a system has a function to perform a process that converts inputs into outputs (Mima et al., 2020). This input is in the form of demands and community reports related to conditions or problems that arise from a legal environment. The output is a form of policy, regulation, legal decision, or sentence on the ideals of the society in the system (Ippoliti and Tria, 2020). The process of the legal system requires three legal subsystems. The three subsystems include structural, substantive, and cultural (Friedman, 1987). Friedman elaborated that these subsystems cannot work independently but are connected in building the system to reform input into output. The legal structure is the foundation covering the legal framework or institutions that perform tasks based on their respective functions and authorities. The legal substantive is identical to the existence of law in the content that governs the

process in the system. Legal culture is the social community's influence or feedback on the output produced. LoGA is a legal system described in a schematic elaboration of Friedman's theory (Figure 2).

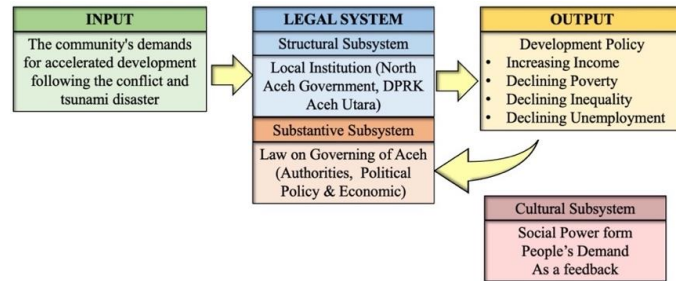


Figure 2. Legal system scheme of LoGA (Friedman, 1987).

As inputs, this legal system has the Helsinki MoU, asymmetric decentralization policies (special autonomy), and demands for accelerated development post-conflicts and post-natural disasters. The legal system provides the Law on Governing of Aceh (LoGA) as a legal substance that regulates authority, political policies, and economic affairs. As legal structures, local institutions perform the executive and legislative roles of government. The Legal Structure conducts its authority based on the existing legal substance to produce outputs through development policies. However, during the 14 years of the enactment of the LoGA, it has not significantly reduced poverty, especially in North Aceh. So, there are demands and encouragement for acceleration from the community as feedback and as the legal culture in the system. The problem of this research is in the development policies of North Aceh. Friedman's theory will be used to analyse how the legal structure conducts its authority.

## 2.2. Policy making process

Policy and law are two unseparated matters (Fink, 2016). Laws are policy products, and public policies are always standardized in the legal rules or laws (Mima et al., 2020). The relationship between policy and law occurs because Indonesia adheres to a continental system that brings public policies as legal derivative products or equivalent to the law (Nugroho, 2017). An institutional process has cyclical suitability and similarity between a policy's formulation and a law's rule. Easton (1965) described a policy made through processing inputs into outputs in a political system. It is the same as Friedman's theory in explaining the implementation of a legal system (1987). Both processes go through the input, throughout, and output stages, as shown in Figure 3 below.

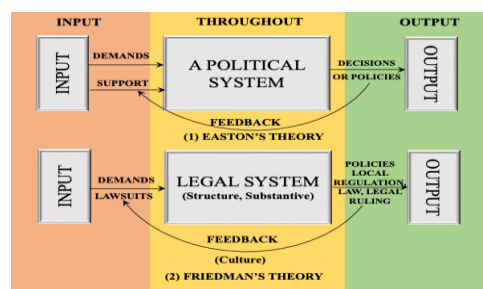


Figure 3. Comparison visualization between Easton's and Friedman's.

The policy is a political product and requires policymaking actors. Anderson (2003) explains that official policymakers are institutions authorized under the law to engage in policymaking. The institutions are Government institutions consisting of the executive, legislative, and judiciary (Hamzah et al., 2021). Each institution must have good skills as a policymaker, including the government at the local level (Datta et al., 2018). The existence of decentralization of authority in the regions should be used to formulate regional policies optimally for local governments (Pramusinto, 2016). With their authority, local government officials should use proper research and data to formulate policies that benefit the community (Blomkamp et al., 2017).

As a political product, a policy is highly dependent on the political will of its actors (Post et al., 2010). The influence of political will to bring the behaviour of actors will systematically collaborate with other actors with similar ideologies as “homophilic beliefs” in a policy network (Henry et al., 2011). The policy network emphasizes the core beliefs of shared policies that form coalitions (Parsons, 2020; Weible, 2005; Weible and Sabatier, 2005). Policy-making actors with solid beliefs are likelier to engage in coalition activities (Henry et al., 2011). On the other hand, the influence of particular political interests and certain economic benefits will reduce the political will of policy-making actors (Karnik, 2000). The danger of inconsistent political will from policy actors will produce in not pro-people policies (Sari and Satmoko, 2022).

### **2.3. The role of local government in Aceh, Indonesia**

Recognizing regions, provinces, and districts/cities as integral parts of the state, the Indonesian Constitution, also known as the 1945 Constitution, extends extensive autonomy to regional governments for administrative control (DPR RI, 1945). The rationale for this broader autonomy lies in Indonesia’s status as the world’s largest archipelagic country, encompassing five major islands and over 18,000 smaller ones (Cribb and Ford, 2009). Additionally, Indonesia ranks fourth globally in population, yet its distribution remains uneven, resulting in development disparities (Firman, 2004; World Population Review, 2022). The prevailing underdevelopment contributes to societal conflicts, prompting the government to adopt regional autonomy policies to address this challenge (Fisher and Rucki, 2017).

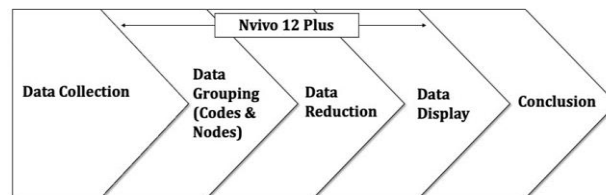
Aceh carries out autonomy as an asymmetric decentralization policy through specialities and privileges (Abdurahman and Dewansyah, 2019; Lele, 2021). Derived from Law No. 44 of 1999 concerning Aceh’s privileges and distinct characteristics, Aceh possesses the autonomy to exercise specific powers, encompassing: 1) executing religious affairs; 2) conducting traditional practices; 3) overseeing education; and 4) involving religious leaders in policy decisions (Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, 1999). In addition, the LoGA also strengthens Aceh’s special arrangements in carrying out several governmental affairs, such as managing natural resources, airports, ports, and local political parties and receiving special autonomy funds aimed at Aceh’s prosperity (Kemenkumham RI, 2006). This authority is not only the province’s authority but also the authority of the district/city government within it. So, that should be based on the existing legal system; districts/cities can use it for society’s welfare and maintain Aceh’s peace (Fujikawa, 2021).

As a whole, there is an essential role for the district government, both the executive and legislative elements, in carrying out the tasks and functions of regional development based on the LoGA as its legal system to reduce poverty.

### 3. Methodology

The research occurred in North Aceh, Indonesia, an area with the highest poverty rate in the Aceh region despite its potential wealth of natural resources. A qualitative descriptive approach was utilized for data collection, involving semi-structured interviews (for primary data), on-site observations, and secondary data.

The study followed the following procedures: 1) data collection; 2) data categorization (coding); 3) data reduction; 4) visual presentation of data (Project Map); and 5) concluding the data (**Figure 4**) (Busetto et al., 2020). Throughout the research process, NVivo 12 Plus software was employed for analysis at all stages to enhance the process (Salahudin et al., 2020). Code nodes were used to facilitate data categorization. We categorized the data into two codes: “North Aceh Regency Government” and “North Aceh Regency House of Council (RHoC).” Data reduction was achieved using word frequency analysis. Data reduction was conducted to extract highly relevant information connected to the research theme, with details provided in frequency counts and weighted percentages. The reduced data was presented as a mind map using the Project Map feature in NVivo 12 Plus. Data presentation included concise descriptions, charts, inter-category relationships, flowcharts, and similar visual aids. The displayed data was further supported by secondary sources, on-site observations, and theoretical frameworks to substantiate the findings.



**Figure 4.** Qualitative method using NVivo 12 plus (modified from Busetto et al., 2020).

The researcher obtained primary data through semi-structured interviews utilizing purposive and snowball sampling techniques (Sugiyono, 2013). These approaches aimed to collect information from well-informed sources and ascertain the primary concerns of the study (Patton et al., 2013). The interview questions revolved around the North Aceh Regency Government’s implementation of the LoGA. Therefore, the selected informants are officials, prominent figures, and academics from North Aceh, Aceh Province, Indonesia. The demographic characteristics of the North Aceh regional officials represent a transition from bureaucratic elites to former combatant elites of the Aceh Freedom movement. Meanwhile, the prominent figures and academics are native residents of Aceh who profoundly understand the developments in North Aceh as a district. The selected informants are presented in the **Table 1**, which are chosen with both sampling technique.

**Table 1.** Informants in the field research (modified by researcher).

Informants	
Purposive sampling	Snowball sampling
Regent/Meyer	Inspectorate Officer
Assistant II/Economic and Government	Chief of Regional Police
Head of Development Agency	Commander of the District Military Command
Head of Public Work Service Agency	Representative of civil society organization
Head of Regency Financial Management Board	(Bytra) Head of Legal Division
Centre Statistic Agency Officer	Academics
Chairman of Regency House Representative	Citizen of North Aceh
Member of Local Party	
Member of the National Party	

Throughout the research process, we acquired secondary data in the form of documentation, including legal documents, government regulations, presidential regulations, ministry regulations, regional regulations, and development planning documents. Secondary data was obtained directly from the local government authorities and indirectly from the official websites of the respective regional governments. Alongside this secondary data, we conducted on-site observations. Observations related to LoGA implementation were carried out at the government offices of North Aceh Regency and the North Aceh RHoC, the political institution of North Aceh. Observations of poverty, inequality, and unemployment conditions were conducted in sub-districts with a high incidence of poverty, according to data from the Central Statistics Agency (CSA). Furthermore, we also verified the data’s validity through source triangulation (multiple informants) and technique triangulation (between interview results, secondary data, and observations).

Regional institutions in North Aceh consist of two main elements: the executive and the legislature. The executive agency is the North Aceh Regency Government, led by the Regent, who formulates and implements regional development policies. The RHoC is the legislative body as a balancing power for North Aceh District. The RHoC carries out its legislative, budget, and supervisory functions, so the two roles are a priority for discussion in this case study.

Based on the role of regional institutions and the theoretical framework employed, the researcher formulates diagnostic questions to serve as guidelines for data collection in the research. This information is presented in the following **Table 2**.

**Table 2.** Diagnostic questions for the implementation of local government’s role (modified by researcher).

Component	Diagnostic questions
Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the LoGA regulate the authority of these two government roles?</li> <li>• Are there other regulations governing this authority?</li> <li>• Are there any problems found with it?</li> <li>• What is the impact of these problems?</li> </ul>
Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the condition of the district government’s ability to carry out its duties by the Law?</li> <li>• What are the conditions for the implementation of the legislative function, budget function, and supervisory function of the RHoC?</li> </ul>
Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there any influence of political interests in implementing government policies?</li> <li>• What is the impact on policy?</li> </ul>

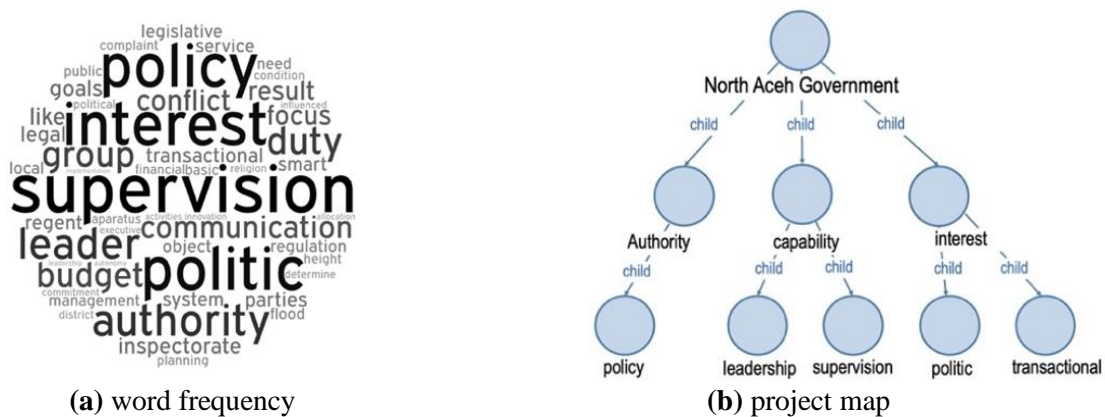


The existence of the LoGA aims to accelerate development to achieve the prosperity of the people of Aceh (Kemenkumham RI, 2006). Todaro and Smith (2012) reinforces that development aims to increase people’s income and must reduce poverty and unemployment. According to the statements, we raise a big question: Why has the North Aceh government yet to improve its economic conditions? Even though the LoGA has regulated the duties, functions, and authorities of the North Aceh District Government. North Aceh has also received a sizable special autonomy fund. We found that these problems need to be analysed more in this study.

## 4. Findings and discussion

### 4.1. Role of the north Aceh regency government

The analysis related to local government conducted using NVivo 12 Plus with word frequency revealed several issues, namely supervision (40/1.23%), interests (34/1.05%), politics (32/0.99%), policies (30/0.92%), authority (27/0.83%), leadership (25/0.77%), and communication (19/0.58%) (**Figure 5(a)**). Subsequently, this data was further reduced and recoded to identify more intensified issues related to the role of the North Aceh District Government. The results were then presented using a project map, identifying three main issues: authority, capacity, and interests (**Figure 5(b)**).



**Figure 5.** Analysis result of data frequency related to North Aceh Government role (processed by researcher).

#### 4.1.1. Authority of local government

Local governments play an essential role in running the political system and managing positive governance for the prosperity of their people (Krishnamohan, 2016). In order to run well, the regional government gets the authority to run the government system from a higher government (Rhodes, 2018). One of the authorities of the regional government is to create regional economic development policies that can develop their economic capacity (Tello, 2011). The LoGA becomes this authority’s legal basis in the Indonesian constitutional legal system. However, according to the research process, we found some things that could be improved in its implementation.

We found that the LoGA needs to be more specific to regulate local government authorities’ distribution effectively. Informants confirmed these statements: “The powers regulated in the LoGA are still too general. In Implementing Aceh’s autonomy,



there was a tug-of-war between the centre and the regions, especially regarding power division. In the LoGA, which is still general, and at the level of implementation, the Aceh Government tends to still refer to the division of authority in Law No. 23/2004 on Regional Government (LoRG)” (Dadek, personal communication, 8 July 2022).

Drawing from the statement mentioned above, our analysis of the LoGA highlights that the local government exercises jurisdiction beyond the obligatory matters managed by the central government. These encompass areas such as foreign policy, defence, security, justice, monetary and national fiscal policies, and specific aspects within the realm of religion (Article 7, paragraph 1). Law No. 23 of 2014 regarding Regional Government (LoRG), as outlined in Article 10, similarly outlines the obligatory responsibilities of the central government (Kemenkumham RI, 2014). Nonetheless, an augmentation to the term “specific affairs” in the religious domain of the LoGA introduces the concept that the religious sector constitutes an exclusive matter of the central government. However, the Aceh government has distinct authority to oversee the religious sector within particular domains of Aceh’s societal framework, notably Islamic law. Law No. 44 of 1999, which pertains to the Execution of Privileges within the Province of the Special Region of Aceh, became the legal basis to reinforce this unique implementation of Islamic law.

Article 17 of LoGA also provides regulations covering the local government authorities up to the district/city government level. The Law on Regional Government (LoRG) also regulates similar affairs in Article 12. We compared local government authorities’ divisions in both laws (**Table 3**) and found that the LoGA regulates affairs more generally than the LoRG. Even the formation and preparation of regional apparatus, as indicated in the North Aceh Qanun No. 6 of 2016 (local regulation), also refers to the LoRG, including the nomenclature of the regional apparatus used.

We also found that the legal distribution of authority needs to be clearer among the central, provincial, and district/city governments. The following are some informant statements regarding this issue: In the delegation of authority, there is no difference between Aceh and others (especially general authority, not Aceh specificity). Many derivatives or points of the LoGA have not been implemented, including the division of authority between the central and regional governments (Marwan et al., 2022). The second informant encouraged the statement, “This bias is seen in the division of authority between the provincial and district governments. There needs to be a fair effort in dividing the authority of the task to achieve the goals and ideals of the MoU” (Risawan et al., 2022).

The LoGA has yet to evolve in terms of implementing legal appropriately. Continentalism in the Indonesian legal system affects its implementation if it has been well-completed by the lower-level components of the legal system. The LoGA needs nine government regulations, three presidential regulations, and 59 Qanun (local regulations). However, until June 3, 2002, only 5 of 9 government regulations (55.55%), 2 of 3 presidential regulations (66.67%), and 59 to 47 Qanuns (80%) have been completed (Prang, 2020). These implementation issues also include two government regulations and two Qanuns that regulate the authority division of the LoGA (**Table 4**). Even though Article 271 of the LoGA prescribes a time limit, the government must stipulate the implementing regulations by two years post-ratification.

**Table 3.** Comparison of local government affairs between two national regulation and district apparatuses (Kemenkumham RI, 2006, 2014; Setda Aceh Utara, 2016).

Affairs for Regency/City Government (LoGA)	Affairs for Provincial/District/City Governments (LoRG)	North Aceh District Apparatuses (North Aceh Qanun No. 6 of 2016)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spatial planning, utilization, and supervision</li> <li>Development planning and control</li> <li>Implementation of public order and public peace</li> <li>Provision of public facilities and infrastructure</li> <li>Handling of the public health sector</li> <li>Overcoming social problems</li> <li>Services in the field of providing employment and employment</li> <li>Facilitating the development of cooperatives, small and medium enterprises</li> <li>Environmental control and supervision</li> <li>Land service</li> <li>Population and civil registration services</li> <li>Government general</li> <li>Administration services</li> <li>Investment administration services, including the implementation of other basic services</li> </ul>	<p>Basic services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education</li> <li>Medical/Public Health</li> <li>Public works and spatial planning</li> <li>Public housing and residential areas</li> <li>Peace, public order, and community protection</li> <li>Social</li> </ul> <p>Nonbasic services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour</li> <li>Women empowerment and child protection</li> <li>Food</li> <li>Land</li> <li>Environment</li> <li>Population administration and civil registration</li> <li>Community and village empowerment</li> <li>Population control and family planning</li> <li>Transportation</li> <li>Information and communication</li> <li>Capital investment</li> <li>Youth and sports</li> <li>Statistic</li> <li>Cipher</li> <li>Cultural</li> <li>Library</li> <li>Archives management</li> </ul> <p>Choice affairs: Marine and fisheries, tourism, farmer, forestry, energy and mineral resources, commerce, industry, and transmigration</p>	<p>Basic services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of education and culture (type A)</li> <li>Public Health office (type A)</li> <li>Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning (type A)</li> <li>Department of Public Housing and Settlement Areas (type A)</li> </ul> <p>Nonbasic services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office of Investment, Transmigration, and labour (type A)</li> <li>Youth, Sports, and Tourism Offices (type B)</li> <li>Department of Agriculture and Food (type A)</li> <li>Department of Environment and Hygiene (type B)</li> <li>Department of Population and Civil Registration (type A)</li> <li>Office of Community Empowerment, Population Control, and Family Planning (type A)</li> <li>Department of Transportation (type C)</li> <li>Department of the Plantation, Animal Husbandry, and Animal Health (type A)</li> <li>Department of Industry, Cooperatives, and Small and Medium Enterprises (type A)</li> <li>Department of Marine and Fisheries (type A)</li> <li>Library and Archives Service (type C)</li> </ul>

**Table 4.** List of unimplemented articles concerning authority division (Aceh Provincial Legal Bureau, 2022b; 2022a).

Name	Basis legal (law on governing of Aceh)	Result
National Government Authority in Aceh	Article 270	Government Regulation No 3/2015 (12-2-2015) on proposed revisions
Procedures for performing the duties and authorities of the governor as a representative of the government	Article 43 paragraph (6) needs government regulation; Article 43 paragraph (7) needs Qanun	Both regulations don't exist
Authority of the Aceh government and district/city	Articles 16 and 17	Regulation implementation spread across several <i>qanuns</i> , not in specific Qanun

**Table 4** lists several articles of the LoGA that regulate authority. 1) Article 270 of LoGA concerning national government authorities in Aceh. This article was regulated later in Government Regulation No. 3 of 2015. However, at this time, the

government regulation is still proposing a revision so that it cannot serve as guidance in implementing its authority; 2) Article 43, Paragraphs 6 and 7 concerning procedures for implementing the duties and authority of the Governor, which must be regulated more technically by Government Regulation and Aceh Qanun. However, a draft from the central Government and the Aceh government regarding this matter has yet to be drafted; 3) Articles 16 and 17 explain the authority of the Aceh and Regency/City governments. These are not specific Qanun used for regulation (Aceh Qanun and Regency/City Qanun). However, the separated Qanun regulates the authority. The limitations of implementing regulations related to this authority mean there are no legal certainties in the LoGA. This needs to be clarified because the limitations create ambiguity in the distribution of local government authority.

Otherwise, the law on Regional Government (LoRG) stipulates the distribution of local government authorities in its appendix. Moreover, the LoRG has operational regulations until the ministry regulation level, such as the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 70 of 2019 concerning Regional Government Information Systems (e-budgeting) and the Ministry Decree Number 050–5889 of 2021 concerning Verification, Validation and Inventory Results of Updating Classification, Codification, and Nomenclature of Regional Development Planning and Finance. The e-budgeting rules and nomenclatures regulate the technical authority covering government and district development planning from programs and activities to sub-activities, complete with performance and indicators. This provision also serves as the basis for the specific regional development plans, including the North Aceh District. However, this condition creates duplication or legal uncertainties on the part of the LoGA, which will affect the process of formulating regional development policies.

These two conditions mentioned can be analysed using the theory of autonomy. The theory has two perspectives of autonomy, namely, the political autonomy perspective and the administrative autonomy perspective. “Political autonomy” is defined as follows:

“Political autonomy exists when a group of persons or a territory is self-governing, thus not under the control of a higher level of government. Complete autonomy consists of an independent state, but autonomous regions have a degree of self-governance greater than the rest of the country” (Foldvary, 2011).

Political autonomy occurs when a group is provided with the most extensive possible authority in running its government without any restrictions made by a higher level of Government. The LoGA allows the Aceh authorities (provinces and districts/cities) to perform all government affairs outside the central government. Thus, politically speaking, the central government has given the autonomy right to Aceh through the LoGA.

In this case, “administrative autonomy” is defined as follows:

“An administrative autonomy can be defined as a governing philosophy about discretion and the extent to which an agency can decide matters important to the organization authorities and mandates which delegated to civil servants at the lower levels of the organization” (Tusemererwa, 2020).

This definition implies that autonomy is a form of mandate and authority given to the lower government. This form of autonomy is identical to that recognized in other regions in Indonesia through the decentralization policy of regional autonomy from

the central government completed with funding sources. Thus, administrative rules are the basis for implementing regional autonomy in Aceh.

The analysis above found that the LoGA only regulates in general terms and needs to be appropriately implemented. On the one hand, this makes the law a mere product of political autonomy. On the other hand, administratively speaking, the implementation of Aceh's autonomy (province or regency/city) still has national regulation, including ministry regulation, as its legal basis.

#### **4.1.2. Bureaucratic competence of North Aceh leader**

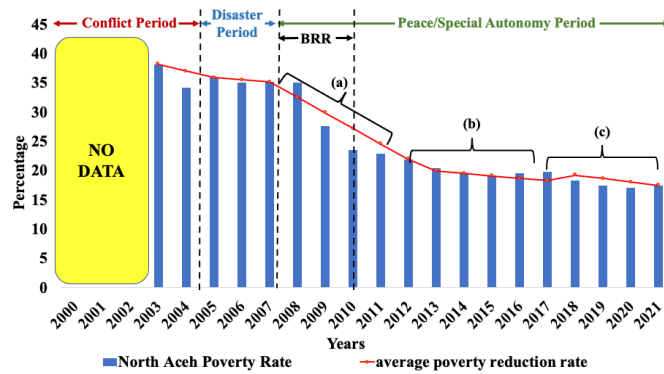
The conditions of leaders and public officials are analysed in this subsection. This analysis is significant because they are the main ones who have policy-making roles in overcoming various problems found in a political environment (Abdullah et al., 2017; Datta et al., 2018). Easton (1965) reinforced that a leader holds political power, whether executive, legislative, or judicial. Therefore, we need to analyse the condition of North Aceh leaders and public officials in carrying out their roles. Based on the data, the researcher found two essential capabilities: bureaucratic ability and aspirational ability. Bureaucratic capability is of significance because, according to Atkinson (2017), it has the potential to drive leaders to fulfil their roles effectively and efficiently. This competence promotes public officials' understanding of connecting the two interrelated government entities: politics and administration.

Concerning bureaucratic competence, we recorded the following statements from some informants. The informants 1 said:

“The fundamental problem in the special autonomy fund management is not suitable on target. This condition is because the elite/leaders have a low capability for management. So, finally, with that amount of funds, we are no longer surprised that Aceh is the second poorest region in Sumatra” (Effendi, Personal Communication, 2022). Another informant states: “Actors of government officials are confused in managing the area with their policies, like dead rats in the rice barn because they cannot manage it properly” (Nazaruddin, Personal Communication, 2022).

These statements illustrate the perception that the North Aceh District Government's current elite bureaucracy cannot conduct its main task properly. Because of post-conflict, the elite transformed from the bureaucratic group to the ex-combatants of the Aceh Freedom Movement (AFM) and thus became the weak point of the bureaucratic elite.

We conducted a bureaucratic capabilities analysis comparing economic development achievements between the bureaucrat leadership era and the ex-combatant's leadership era. The analysis of the bureaucrat leadership covers the periods under conflict (2000–2005) and the tsunami disaster (2006–2007), while the ex-combatant's leadership era was during the peace and particular autonomy period (2008–2021) (**Figure 6**).



**Figure 6.** Poverty rate reduction graph per government period (BPS Nasional, 2021).

The results indicate that the bureaucratic government during the conflict reduced the average poverty rate by 1.15%. However, due to the tsunami, there was an average decrease of 0.36%. This condition occurred because the disaster heavily affected North Aceh (Doocy et al., 2007). After the peace, the government shifted from bureaucrats to ex-combatants. There were three eras in the peace period: a) The era of Ilyas Hamid significantly reduced the average poverty rate by 2.65% (2007–2011). The Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (RRA) budget and a special autonomy fund for Aceh supported Ilyas’s successes. However, during this period, Ilyas and his former deputy regent, Syarifudin, became involved in a corruption case that eventually tarnished his success (Sugiyarto, 2016). Furthermore, during the Muhammad Thaib (Cek Mat) period, North Aceh could only reduce poverty rates by an average of 0.42% in the first period; b) and 0.59% in the second period; c) even though support for a special autonomy fund was still running. This slowdown in poverty reduction occurred due to the capability of the leadership bureaucracy in regional management and governance.

The analysis of the North Aceh government’s bureaucratic competence can be also seen in terms of performance accountability, community satisfaction index, and capacity of government officials (**Table 5**).

**Table 5.** Implementation of bureaucratic competence in North Aceh Administration (Bappeda Aceh Utara, 2020; Kemenpan, 2010; Setda Aceh Utara, 2018; 2021).

Objective	Aim	Indicator	Target	Result			
				2018	2019	2020	2021
Improve local government accountability and transparency	Increased accountability of local government performance	Performance accountability value of government agencies	B	CC	CC	CC	CC
Improve public service	Public service bureaucracy	Community satisfaction index value	80	81,41	86,8	70,07	78,79
-	Increase the capacity of government officials	Percentage of personnel who attended education training	75	66,67	65,83	66,69	-

AA (>85–100): Excellent; A (>75–85): Very good; B (>65–75): Good, need to a little bit transformation; CC (>50–65): Good enough, need more transformation basically; C (>0–50): A little less, need a lot of transformation; D (0–30): Deficient, need transformation very much and transformation more basically.

The achievement data above show several significant findings: 1) The achievement of the accountability index only reached CC from B as the score target. This score cannot quickly achieve the target set in the Medium-Term Development

Plan 2017–2022 (MTDP). Increasing the score to B will encourage the achievement of the “good governance” principle for North Aceh; 2) The community satisfaction index has not yet reached its target; 3) The North Aceh Regency Government does not focus on developing the capacity of its apparatus, and there is a lack of education and training for government officials. The capability of the bureaucracy cannot be developed by itself, and it is necessary to provide human resources training for the apparatus. It can achieve the Government’s tasks in development planning.

Atkinson (2017) describes the importance of bureaucratic competence as the capacity of government officials to perform the government’s role effectively and efficiently. Competence is the awareness of public officials about the existence of two entities in the government, namely, administration and politics. The ability of these public officials must be able to link these two entities. In the North Aceh Regency, the vision and mission of the elected Regent serve as the direction of political policies implemented in the Development Plan for a certain period. The role of leaders must be able to direct the government’s bureaucratic apparatus appropriately, effectively, and efficiently to achieve the vision and mission that has been prepared. The leaders, public, and government officials should possess bureaucratic competence (Datta et al., 2018).

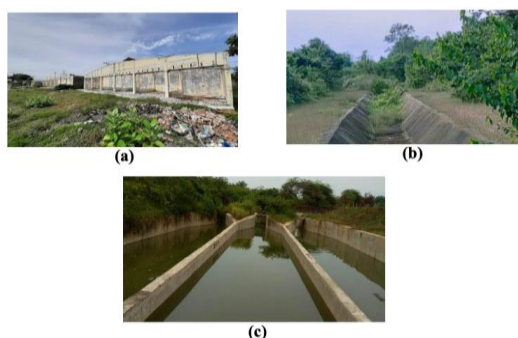
#### **4.1.3. Aspirational capabilities of North Aceh leader**

Aspirational capability is a leader’s ability to accommodate their community’s needs through appropriate policies (Finnemore and Jurkovich, 2020). The political will of the leader greatly influences this capability. The analysis related to leaders and public officials in the North Aceh District then narrows down to the ability of leaders to accommodate the interests of the community. Several statements from the informants support this notion. The first informant said: “The political will of the leaders/regional heads is low; they do not fight for the people’s interests because they are influenced by political interests so that the community does not feel their presence” (Effendi and Personal Communication, 2022).

Moreover, a second informant said: “The Regency’s Special Autonomy Fund should be effective if the government looks at the factual community’s needs. For example, school development (Elementary School) because there was land owned by public officials or RHoC members in sub-district A, even though the residents in Village A did not need schools, schools were still being built. As a result, the school was abandoned in the end” (Hamdani and Personal Communication, 2022).

The informants above expressed doubts about the aspirational abilities of North Aceh Leaders. This capability is needed in the democratic era, where policies are more participatory and accommodating (Triningsih and Agustine, 2018)—analysis related to the level of government aspirational by observing local development. Due to leaders’ lack of aspiration and accommodativeness in formulating development policies, several development projects in North Aceh were abandoned (**Figure 7**).





**Figure 7.** Abandoned infrastructure development in North Aceh (Hidayat, 2020; Jaffarudin, 2019; Raja, 2022).

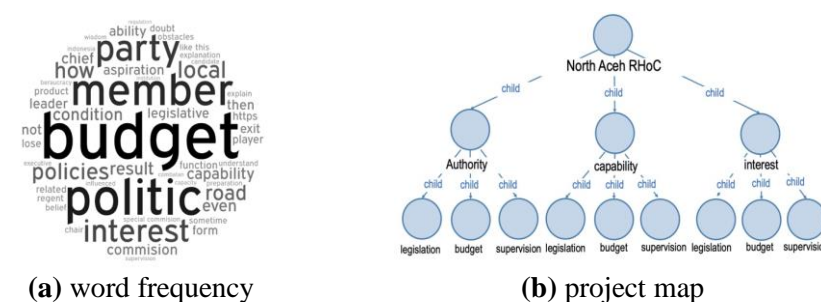
(a): The Kreung Geukuh integrated market is not operational and has suffered from damages. Thus, the residents still operate the old market even though its condition is shabby, and it causes traffic jams. (b): Irrigation canals in Gampong Cot Keupok (West Baktiya sub-district) to Cot U Sibak (Lhoksukon Sub-district) are not operational because they are in locations that need clean water sources. (c): The Kreung Pase irrigation dam in the Meurah Mulia sub-district was abandoned. Since the laying of the first stone in 2012, the construction stopped in 2013, even though the community needs irrigation.

The lack of aspiration of the North Aceh Regency Government, as illustrated in the data above, is due to the significant influence of political interests in the development planning process (Finnemore and Jurkovich, 2020). Such an interest arose because of the high cost of politics throughout the country, and in particular, the source of this problem lies in the magnitude of the authority of political parties and coalitions in determining candidates, resulting in severe competition for candidates' positions (Indarti et al., 2020). These political interests or groups tend to weaken the political will of public institutions. By definition, "political will" represents the desire of a group of effective and efficient political policymakers who are intensely committed to solving problems (Post et al., 2010). The absence of commitment and the high level of political interest in the policies could not accommodate the needs of a community.

#### **4.2. Role of North Aceh Regency House of Council (RHoC)**

The analysis concerning the role of RHoC with NVivo 12 Plus yielded findings of prominent issues (word frequency), namely budget (14/1.80%), politics (14/1.80%), members (13/1.67%), Party (10/1.28%), interests (8/1.03%), and even policies (6/0.77%) (**Figure 8(a)**). These data were subsequently reduced and recoded to identify more specific issues related to the role of RHoC. The results of the data analysis are presented through the Project Map, revealing three main issues: authority, capacity, and interests. These three problems are interconnected and influence the execution of the check and balance functions of the North Aceh RHoC, namely legislative, budgetary, and supervision functions (**Figure 8(b)**).





**Figure 8.** Analysis result of data frequency related to North Aceh RHoC Role (processed by researcher).

#### 4.2.1. The authority of North Aceh RHoC

Based on the analysis, the LoGA has provided the Regional House of Council (RHoC) authorities well. We tried to find duplication or ambiguity between this law and other national regulations. Related to this, an informant shares the following insight: “I have been in the RHoC since 2014. I was re-elected in 2019, and God willing, I got the most votes and entrusted the leadership of the Aceh party as chairman of the RHoC. Currently, I am in my third year. As our task for the RHoC, we conduct functions of legislation, budgeting, and supervision. We continue to encourage all commissions by their respective main tasks to improve, such as in particular, Commission C (Budget) and Commission B (infrastructure) (Regulation of RHoC No. 1 of 2019 concerning the RHoC Standing Orders in 2019–2024)” (Arafat and Personal Communication, 2022).

The statement above explains that there are no obstacles in the LoGA in performing the duties and authorities of the RHoC. The law has regulated the details by directing the operational tasks in the RHoC ordinance regulations and the authorized regulations (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Comparison of the Aceh Government Law and the RHoC regulation concerning its function (Kemenkumham, 2006; Pimpinan DPRK Aceh Utara, 2019).

Law on Governing of Aceh (LoGA)	North Aceh RHoC Regulation No.1 of 2019 concerning RHoC rules
<p><b>Chapter VII: Aceh HoC and RHoC</b>                      Article 22 (1): Aceh HoC and RHoC have legislative, budgeting, and supervision functions; Article 22 (2): Aceh HoC and RHoC have a right to create organs of RHoC based on Aceh exclusiveness.</p> <p>Article 24 (3): Procedures for the implementation of duties and authorities are regulated in the RHoC rules based on the laws and regulations above.</p>	<p><b>Chapter II: Functions, duties, and authorities of RHoC</b>                      Part one: Function                      Paragraph 1: General                      Article 2: North Aceh RHoC has functions:                      1) Legislation;                      2) Budgeting;                      3) Supervision.</p> <p>1) Paragraph 2 Legislation function explained in Articles 3–14; procedures of legislation and qanun development function implementation                      2) Paragraph 3 budgeting function explained in Articles 15–20; procedures of budgeting function implementation;                      3) Paragraph 4 supervision function explained in Articles 21–22; procedures of supervision function implementation.</p>

These two regulations complement each other in implementing the RHoC’s function as a balancing power for the North Aceh Regency Government. The researcher found no obstacles in implementing the RHoC functions regulated by the LoGA.

#### 4.2.2. Capabilities and political will of North Aceh RHoC

Based on the LoGA above, there are three functions as capabilities that should be possessed by RHoC and could be influenced by political interests. First, the Analysis

of North Aceh RHoC members' capabilities are elaborated by implementing the legislation functions. Legislation is a function of the house representative in forming regional regulations or Qanuns (Strøm, 1997). As the regional house representative, the RHoC has this function. However, the process of regulatory policy planning can come from the initiative of the North Aceh Regency Government as a part of its executive power (Kemenkumham RI, 2011; Mustari, 2015). In this case, legislation products serve as guidelines for technical implementation in local government affairs. However, several sources doubted the competence of North Aceh RHoC members in conducting their legislative roles: "Qanun is a policy, and this policy is a political product. We know that the quality of RHoC members is still low, which impacts the Qanun that is made. Through qanuns, it can be a means for local governments to build wisdom and share interests, which is the obstacle" (Yusuf and Personal Communication, 2022).

This doubt incompetence is due to the shift of the political elite. The results of the analysis of the legislative competence of the North Aceh RHoC can be seen in the productivity of the formation of a regional regulatory policy by the district/city legislation program (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Priority and Achievement of Qanun Bill (2019–2021) (DPRK Aceh Utara, 2018, 2019, 2020).

Proposing institution	Total Qanun Bill priority			Lawful
	2019	2020	2021	
North Aceh Regency	13	10	10	4
RHoC	6	9	12	-

The data above illustrate the achievements of the legislative functions in North Aceh. The data are taken from the legislative program, compiled from both parties (executive and legislative) and determined through a decision of the North Aceh RHoC (Kemenkumham RI, 2006; Pimpinan DPRK Aceh Utara, 2019). The Qanun Bill priority above is outside the routine Qanun, including the preparation or amendment of development plans. In terms of productivity, we can compare the executives who are more productive in generating Qanun or policies. Data from 2019–2021 depict 23 Qanun Bill proposals from the North Aceh Regency and 16 Qanun Bill proposals from the RHoC. Furthermore, 23 proposals have been implemented in 4 Qanuns ratified, while 16 proposals from the RHoC have not yet been implemented. Thus, it is clearly illustrated that the productivity of the RHoC is lower than the North Aceh Regency Government in performing its legislative functions.

The low productivity of the RHoC is disproportionate to the amount of the budget allocated for the Qanun production. Researchers found data on the regional revenue and expenditure budget for the 2020–2022 period from both institutions. The RHoC received an average budget support of 53 thousand USD for the Regional Regulation Discussion program. Meanwhile, the North Aceh Regency Government only received an average budget of 9 thousand USD for the legal facilitation and coordination program. The size of the budget shows that the leading sector for making regional regulations is the responsibility of the RHoC. However, the situation is the other way

around; the North Aceh district government is more active in drafting local regulations, even though the North Aceh district government is the executor of a policy. If the executive doubles as a regulator and has more substantial power than the legislature, it will create a democratic deficit in local government in Indonesia (Page and Wouters, 1994). More than that, excess power in the executive will lead to corrupt government, as stated by Lord Acton: “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely” (Martin, 1998).

Additionally, the low role of public participation in the Qanun drafting process exacerbated the RhoC’s competence. The existence of public participation ensures convenience in the effective implementation of these regulatory policies (Bayley, 2014). The obligation of community participation has been regulated in Article 238 of the LoGA and reinforced by Aceh Qanun Number 5 of 2011 Article 22 (Kemenkumham RI, 2006; Setda Provinsi Aceh, 2011). However, in discussing several Qanun Bills proposed by the RHoC from 2019 to 2021, only three Qanun Bills went through the public participation mechanism or Public Hearing Meeting. The Qanun Bill for implementing Local labour, the Qanun Bill for the Prevention of Drug Control, and the Qanun Bill for Preserving Culture and Customs in North Aceh Regency (Secretary of RHoC, 2022).

The second analysis of the RHoC’s competence is the supervisory function. This supervision ensures the implementation of regional development policies via the established plans and the achievement of regional development goals. However, the supervision has yet to run optimally and is still largely considered a formality. One informant’s statement strengthens these assumptions: “Problems with the role of RHoC are 1) RHoC actors or members cannot conduct their roles optimally due to capability problems; 2) unclear supervision mechanisms even tend to be formalities” (Nazaruddin and Personal Communication, 2022).

The statement above elaborates on the idea that the abilities of RHoC members and perceived formalities become the problem of supervision function in RHoC. The capacity of the RHoC can be seen from the quality of human resources, and the political balancing role influences the formality factor in North Aceh (Kumar, 2014; Patel and Annapoorna, 2019). These two factors must be validated with valid data to determine the condition of the RhoC’s actual ability to carry out this function. In order to analyze the quality of human resources for North Aceh RHoC, we analyzed the following data on educational levels. The results are shown in **Table 8**.

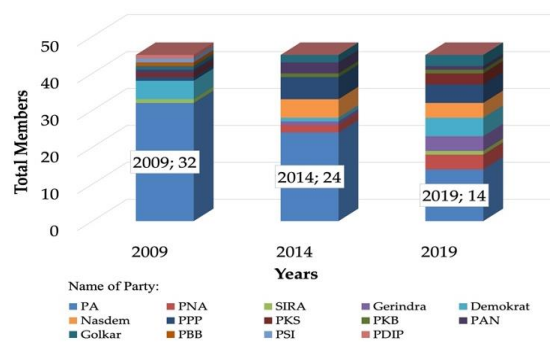
**Table 8.** Educational levels of the RHoC’s members (2019–2024) (BPS Aceh Utara, 2022).

Party’s name	Education level				
	High school	Associate degree	Bachelor	Master	Doctor
Partai Aceh	9	-	3	2	-
Non-Partai Aceh	13	3	13	2	-
Total	21	3	16	4	-

The data explains that most board members-as many as 21 people (42,22%) are high school graduates; of them, three are graduates of Package C (equivalent to high

school). The second highest level of education is a graduate school (16 people, 35.56%) and a postgraduate school (at least four). This data indicates the actual educational levels and the human resources quality of the North Aceh DPRK members (Wijatmoko et al., 2023).

On the other hand, the formality of the supervision function implementation occurred because of the weak role of the political opposition in North Aceh (Effendi, 2022; Hariri, 2020). The loss of the opposition ability was due to the strength of local parties in the executive and legislative branches (Seeberg, 2022). Researchers found that the local party, Aceh Party (Partai Aceh/PA), always won on implementing post-peace general elections and regional heads. The PA has enormous power that could weaken the opposition’s role in RHoC (**Figure 9**).



**Figure 9.** Composition of the North Aceh DPRK opposition forces (KIP Aceh Utara, 2009, 2014, 2019).

Based on legislative election data, PA won 32 of 45 seats in 2009 and 24 of 45 seats in 2014, and it could win 15 out of 45 seats in 2019. Non-PA only won an average of 1–2 seats in the North Aceh legislature with up to 13 parties. A large number of PA seats shows the superiority of the Aceh party in carrying out its role in North Aceh RHoC, although, until recent years, the number has decreased. As for the regional head election, candidates of the PA won for three consecutive periods. In 2006, Ilyas Hamid-Syarifuddin from the PA won the election with 163,540 votes (67.36%) (KIP Aceh Utara, 2006). Although this elected regional head did not reach the end of his term of office because he was involved in a corruption case, trust in regional heads of PA remained strong. In fact, in the periods 2012–2017 and 2017–2022, a candidate from the PA was re-elected, namely Muhammad Thaib, with an average vote of 55.79% for those two periods (KIP Aceh Utara, 2012, 2017).

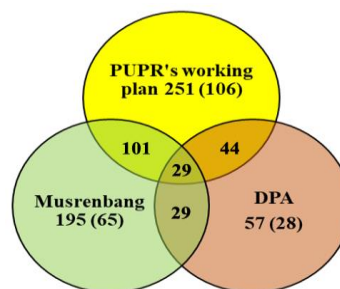
The data above illustrates that the strong influence of the PA in the executive and legislative branches can eliminate opposition forces in North Aceh politics (Wijatmoko et al., 2023). The strong influence of the Partai Aceh in North Aceh politics is inseparable from the long history of the Aceh conflict. North Aceh, with Lhokseumawe and Pidie, became the base area for the Aceh Freedom Movement (AFM), which is currently peaceful and has joined the PA (Bin Abu Bakar, 2015). Thus, the PA’s power in North Aceh politics is as strong as the influence of former Aceh Freedom Movement combatants in the government. Several informants also stated that the arrogance of the PA’s political elite affected the comfort of government

officials in performing their duties. Finally, it also weakened the supervision function of the RHoC.

This perception is exemplified by the following statement: “[The] RhoC’s arrogance is currently quite high, including conditions in North Aceh, which used to be based on AFM (Pasee region). Currently, 60%–70% of those in the RHoC are former AFM combatants and are the hardest to deal with” (Hamdani and Personal Communication, 2022).

The last RHoC competence is budget function. The RHoC, with its involvement in the Aceh Utara district budget preparation, has a central role in the entire process (Susanto, 2019). In particular, the North Aceh Regency Government must seek approval from the RHoC, mainly through the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget, as a requirement in preparing development planning products for tax and levy policies (Head of RHoC, 2019). The RhoC’s solid role is due to its inherent budget function, which enables it to arrange a budget committee as a permanent council complement to oversee the process of preparing the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget. However, there were often conflicts of interest in the budget preparation, indicating the RhoC’s weakness in this function. Some sources’ statements corroborate this finding: “Sometimes there are conflicts with the legislature in preparing the budget due to inconsistencies with applicable regulations; this condition often happens not only in North Aceh but also in other regions. As an example of the planning deliberation result, several points became priority scales, but when political interests occur, the points will be exchanged. Political bargaining in Aceh Utara is also causing” (Hamdani and Personal Communication, 2022).

The analysis of the RhoC’s budget competence depends on the magnitude of interests influencing the community participation quality in development planning. Related to this, the current study’s researchers used the infrastructure development planning process of the North Aceh Public Works and Housing Agency in 2022 (Figure 10).



**Figure 10.** Comparison infrastructure development sub-activities (Bappeda Aceh Utara, 2021; Dinas PUPR Aceh Utara, 2022b, 2022a).

The figure shows that among the 195 community proposals in the results of the development planning deliberation, only 101 proposals are included in the Department of Public Works work plan and discussed with the legislature, down to the budget execution document, and only 29 or 14.87% of the development planning deliberation proposals can be implemented. Alternatively, 28 proposals did not come from the planning deliberation but were implemented in 2022. This analysis shows the need for

more participation of the legislature in the preparation of regional development budgets due to the soaring influence of elite political interests.

The analysis of the authority implementation of the North Aceh RHoC also indicates that political ability and interest are the main influencing factors. The low capability and high interest set a bad precedent for the North Aceh RHoC in performing its functions. The RHoC should be able to conduct the fiduciary duty principle, which means that they can perform the function or balance the power of local governments properly as representatives of the people elected and trusted by the community (Mandey, 2016). This principle not only convinces the community but also implies its demands on the competence of the RHoC members. The analysis results indicate the opposite: low capabilities and high political interests override the trust given by the community. Thus, the North Aceh RHoC is no longer pro-people but more pro-interest.

## **5. Conclusion**

In summary, this study found that as a legal structure, the role of regional institutions (along with their functions and roles) needed to optimally implement the LoGA in producing appropriate development policies. In addition, the researcher expands the findings that the legal structure in implementing the legal system is not only seen from the boundaries and authorities regulated in its substance (Friedman, 1987). Instead, The actual abilities and strengths of regional institutional political interests will also affect the role of the legal structure in producing development policy outputs based on the law (Datta et al., 2018; Post et al., 2010).

Problems related to the non-optimal role of regional institutions as legal structures in implementing the LoGA through appropriate development policies are due to these three things. 1) the division of governmental authority in the LoGA indicates the absence of legal certainty for the regional government of North Aceh. This legal uncertainty has encouraged the North Aceh Regency Government to use other national laws with ministerial technical levels; 2) the low capability of the North Aceh Regency Government's and the RHoC's human resources resulted from the shift in the leadership of the political elite; 3) the strong influence of political interests that eliminate elite political will in North Aceh.

In this regard, efforts must be exerted to strengthen the LoGA as a legal basis, increase capability and strengthen political commitment to encourage the achievement of regional development targets. This research has limitations, as it only analyzes the implementation of LoGA from the perspective of the structural subsystem, specifically the role of the North Aceh district government. The study has yet to examine the other two subsystems, which are the legal substance of LoGA, analyzing regional development policies, and the role of the community as feedback in the implementation of the law. Therefore, it is hoped that future research can strengthen the analysis of these two subsystems and their more profound impact on the economy of North Aceh.

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investigation, EW and AA; resources, EW, AA, and TFF; data curation, AA and TFF; writing—original draft preparation, EW; writing—review and editing, AA and TFF; visualization, EW and AA; supervision, AA and TFF; project administration, EW and AA; funding acquisition, AA and TFF. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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